

Writing in social work:
A case study of a discourse community

Anthony W. Pare

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

McGill University, Montreal

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Anthony W. Paré

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TABLE of CONTENTS

Abstract	v
Résumé	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
 <u>Chapter One: An Overview</u>	 1
Introduction	1
From Text to Context	5
The text: The product approach	8
The writer: The process approach	10
- The expressive view	13
- The cognitive view	15
- Cognition and context	21
The context: The social approach	28
Writing as Social Action	30
Writing as knowledge-making	31
The writer in context	36
The text in context	40
The reader in context	45
Discourse Community: Toward a Definition	48
Community regulation of discourse	52
The role of conflict	55
The Present Study	59
 <u>Chapter Two: Review of the Literature</u>	 63
Introduction	63
The Writing Process: Early Studies	74
The Audience in Later Studies	80
Audience in Context	90
What surveys tell us about writing contexts	94
Writing in academic and scientific contexts	102
Writing in nonacademic contexts	118
Conclusion	128

<u>Chapter Three: Methodology</u>	131
Introduction	131
Finding and Entering the Setting	134
Procedures	139
Initial interview	140
"Think-aloud" protocols	141
Discourse-based interview	153
Method of Analysis	160
A note on the presentation of data	164
 <u>Chapter Four: Text and Context</u>	 167
Description of the Setting	167
The Texts	173
Forms	174
Notes	174
Reports	177
- Psychosocial Assessment	177
- Predisposition Report	182
 <u>Chapter Five: Writers and Readers</u>	 190
Writers	190
Sophie	193
George	198
Alice	203
Micnel	206
Readers	209
The judge	212
The lawyers	214
The client and family	217
Other readers	222
Court Services as a Discourse Community	223
 <u>Chapter Six: Action and Interaction</u>	 233
Introduction	233
Process in Context: A Profile of One Report	233
Roles and Relationships	242
Expectations and Relations	251
Report guidelines: Admissible evidence	253
Legal restrictions: Inadmissible evidence	261

<u>Chapter Seven: Implications</u>	271
Introduction	271
Implications for Theory	272
Writer-reader relations: The audience metaphor	273
Autonomy versus authority	282
Implications for Research	289
A focus for research: What to look for?	290
A method for research: How to look?	297
Implications for Teaching	300
Conclusion	310
 <u>References</u>	 313
 <u>Appendices</u>	 327
Appendix 1:	
Initial interview questions	328
Appendix 2:	
"Think-aloud" protocol instructions	330
Appendix 3:	
Letter to participants	332
Appendix 4:	
Standard discourse interview questions	335
Appendix 5:	
Guidelines for the Psychosocial Assessment	337
Appendix 6:	
Guidelines for the Predisposition Report	345
Appendix 7:	
Sample of rough notes from interviews	350
Appendix 8:	
Sample of Progress Notes	352
Appendix 9:	
Sophie's Predisposition Report	354

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the theoretical basis for composition research and pedagogy has expanded. A social perspective on writing has been added to the cognitive view which dominated composition studies throughout the 1970s and early 80s. This social perspective has radically altered conceptions of the writing process. Whereas cognitive theory placed a creative and isolated individual at the centre of the writing act, social theory locates the writer in community, and shifts much of the control of discourse from the individual to the group.

This research takes the form of a case study of social workers attached to Quebec's Youth Court system. The specific focus within that setting is the preparation of reports about adolescents in trouble with the law. Data were collected through "think-aloud" protocols and interviews, including discourse-based interviews. The study offers a detailed description of the complex and dynamic relationship between the individual writer and the community, and provides a new perspective on the concept of "audience" and the notion of genre as social action.

Résumé

Au cours de la dernière décennie la base théorique de la recherche et de la pédagogie dans le domaine de la composition écrite s'est élargie. Un point de vue social sur l'écriture s'est ajouté au point de vue cognitif qui a prévalu au cours des années 70 et au début des années 80. Cette dimension sociale a radicalement modifié l'approche théorique relative au travail d'écriture. Alors que la théorie cognitive isolait l'individu en le plaçant au centre de l'acte créateur, la théorie sociale le situe dans la communauté et transfère de beaucoup le contrôle du discours de l'individu au groupe.

Cette recherche se présente sous la forme d'une étude de cas réalisée auprès de travailleurs sociaux rattachés au Tribunal québécois de la Jeunesse. Un intérêt particulier a été porté à la rédaction des rapports sur les adolescents ayant des problèmes avec la loi. Les données ont été recueillies à l'aide de protocoles "penser à haute voix" et d'entrevues, y compris des entrevues axées sur le discours. L'étude comporte une description détaillée de la dynamique complexe régissant la relation entre l'auteur et la collectivité et jette une lumière nouvelle sur la notion de "public" ("audience") et celle de genre en tant que résultat d'activités sociales répétées.

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CHAPTER ONE: An Overview

Introduction

One person puts words on a page; another person reads them. It seems an unremarkable activity. For thousands of years, human beings have been writing and reading, and now, in the late 20th century, we have developed the most literate society in history. In North America, most people learn to read and write in elementary school. In fact, literacy is the basis of our educational system, and a key to our economic, political, and social lives. Texts surround us, at home, at work, and in between. Those who cannot read and write are disenfranchised like never before. And yet, despite the centrality of written language, we are no closer to agreeing on the nature and function of writing than we were when the first disagreements and controversies about rhetoric were recorded, approximately twenty-five hundred years ago.

On superficial observation, written communication seems straightforward enough. The writer, wishing to convey a message, makes marks on a surface. The marks are standard and correspond to the sounds of the spoken language. A speaker of the language, trained to recognize the marks, reads them and receives the writer's message. On reflection and closer observation, however, this apparently simple act becomes increasingly complex.

First, as anyone who has tried to write anything more complicated than a shopping list will attest, there is no direct transfer from the message-in-the-head to the blank page. Saying what you want to say is no mean feat. Even for apparently direct statements of description or explanation, the writer must harness considerable cognitive, linguistic, rhetorical, and social resources. As topics become more abstract and intricate, as the writer's intentions become more subtle, each act of writing becomes, in T. S. Eliot's memorable phrase, "a raid on the inarticulate."

Second, the marks on the page, like the sounds they represent, are arbitrary and have meaning only by mutual agreement. The sound made by the word "lake" and the four characters used to inscribe the sound bear no direct relationship to the phenomenon they symbolize and have no specific, universal referent. Though a picture is said to be worth a thousand words, a single word can conjure a different picture for every writer and reader, as each interprets the symbol "lake" to mean something different. In other words, the text itself bears no meaning, except as a potential that is realized in each reading.

Third, reading is not merely the passive absorption of the writer's message, like the sponging of clear water. Readers come to the text with their own histories, knowledge, reasons for reading, preconceptions, and so on. They cannot simply receive the writer's meaning, they must recreate it. Even someone else's carefully written shopping list can be difficult to interpret. White or brown sugar? What

sort of cereal? How many apples? Beyond its printed words, the text is mute. The reader must make sense, because the meaning is never all on the page.

Finally, setting, or context, can influence meaning. The simple written message, "Protect yourself," means something quite different in a gun shop, on the side of a box of condoms, or in an insurance policy. Similarly, the warnings on a toxic product, perhaps skimmed when first noticed, take on critical meaning when the poison has been accidentally swallowed. Location, circumstance, time, and other contextual factors affect meaning.

These four elements of the writing act -- the writer, the text, the reader, and the context -- are individually complex and multifaceted; in combination, they create an intricate human phenomenon of limitless variability. Our fascination with writing also appears to be limitless. Philosophers, rhetoricians, psychologists, linguists, literary critics, educators, historians, even sociologists and anthropologists, are intrigued by the activity of writing. How does writing create meaning? What is the relationship between writing and knowledge? What does the activity of writing tell us about ourselves? Why do we do it? When did it start? How can we best teach it? Writing is the grist for many mills, and each discipline poses different questions, different problems.

This study began as an inquiry into the link between two elements in the act of writing: the writer and the reader. The questions it set out to consider originated in the dis-

cipline of composition studies, a recently established and rapidly changing field. Initially, the study sought to determine how the writer conceived of the reader and the influence of that conception on the composing process; as such, it was concerned with what is usually called the writer's "audience."

However, fundamental shifts in composition theory and research have altered the focus of the discipline and, therefore, the study. For much of the past two decades, writing has been considered from a cognitive perspective, and the central issue of concern has been the individual writer's intellectual processes. More recently, a social perspective has emerged and broadened the definition of writing by reconceiving it as a social activity. Though the two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, the social view challenges the possibility of isolating for examination any single element of the act of writing. Consequently, the study which follows examines the writers, texts, and readers in a particular context; rather than focusing on individual elements, the emphasis here is on the interactions among all the aspects of writing.

The writing described in the study takes place in a unit of Ville Marie Social Services, a Montreal-based agency responsible for a wide variety of social services, including adoption, youth protection, and the treatment of young offenders. The specific unit represented in the study is the Youth Court Services, which is responsible for adolescents who have committed crimes.

There are seven chapters in the study. The first chapter examines some of the differences between the cognitive and social perspectives on writing, and presents the issues and questions that now occupy the discipline and that support this research. The second chapter reviews previous writing research, with an emphasis on those studies which focus on the writer's awareness of and relationship to readers and contexts. The third chapter explains and justifies the methodology used in the study. The fourth chapter describes the Court Services unit, including its goals, activities, procedures, and texts. The fifth chapter focuses on the unit's writers and readers and their relationships. The sixth chapter joins the elements introduced in the two preceding chapters in order to describe patterns in the unit's writing activity. The final chapter explores some of the implications of the study for writing theory, research, and pedagogy.

From Text to Context: The Expanding Focus of Composition

A major preoccupation of composition studies has been its status as a discipline; more specifically, the question of whether it is a viable enterprise in its own right, or merely the handmaiden of rhetoric, English studies, psychology, or some other field of inquiry. Composition theory is a precarious and jerry-built structure, a patchwork of issues and concepts begged, borrowed, and stolen from a dozen different sources. Composition research has a limited tradition

and relies, instead, on questions and methods adopted from elsewhere and adapted to its own concerns. Composition pedagogy has a history and identity, but much of it is atheoretical and uninformed by research; as a result, recent composition instruction has been shaped mostly by reaction against the past. The older disciplines, defined by academic faculties and departments, have not yet recognized composition as a reputable area of intellectual inquiry. Consequently, within North American universities, composition instruction is perceived as a service course, a poor relative of literature, and composition teachers are often relegated to the lower reaches of the English department.

In response to this hodgepodge of theory, research, and practice, and in an effort to define a discipline, scholars have begun to sketch the broad historical forces that have shaped contemporary composition. One of the most ambitious of these projects is Stephen North's The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field. North's book attempts to capture the big picture, the full range of historical, philosophical, pedagogical, and research trends that led, as he puts it, to "the birth of Composition, capital C" (15). A similar effort, though more narrowly restricted to theory, is made by Louise Wetherbee Phelps in Composition as a Human Science. Other wide ranging attempts to codify the tradition and activity of composition have taken bibliographical form, such as Lindemann's 1987 and 1988 Longman bibliographies and the two editions of Gary Tate's collection of bibliographical essays. A variety of

books have systematically documented the rapidly increasing body of composition research (e.g., Beach and Bridwell; Hillocks; Mosenthal, Tamor, and Walmsley), and there are a number of historical accounts of the evolution of writing instruction (e.g., Berlin Rhetoric and Reality; Connors, Ede, and Lunsford; Knoblauch and Brannon). The cumulative effect of these and similar commentaries is convincing: composition clearly has a respectable genealogy, with roots deep in rhetorical, literary, and humanist traditions; moreover, since its recent inception, it has generated a lively discussion of theory, an impressive, if erratic, corpus of research, and a variety of innovative approaches to writing instruction.

Although it is impossible to fix with any precision the beginning of contemporary composition studies, most commentators refer to the late 1950s and early 1960s. Reasons for identifying this period range from the launch of Sputnik (1957), which led to a series of reforms in American English education, to the publication of Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's Research in Written Composition (1963), which set out a challenge and an agenda for composition research (see Berlin, Rhetoric and Reality, 120-138, and North, 9-17, for descriptions of this period). It is possible, however, to identify three broad stages in the development of composition studies in the thirty years since 1960, although a more detailed analysis would reveal variations within each stage. The three stages can be thought of as a series of concentric circles representing the expanding focus of composition. In

the first circle, the text; in the second, the writer; in the third circle, the context of writing -- including the text, the writer, the reader, and the scenes of writing and reading. Ross Winterowd describes it this way:

It is defensible (though hardly neat and incisive) to say that composition theories and practices can be classed as text-centered, author-centered, or transactional. The images are clear: that of pages in an open book; that of a lone writer producing text; and that of a writer on one side, a text in the middle, and a reader on the other side.

(xi)

The Text: The Product Approach

The text in the first circle of emphasis indicates the concern with the formal features of writing that characterized composition three decades ago. This formal approach, or "current-traditional rhetoric," as it is often called, "emphasized structure: sentence structure, paragraph structure, essay structure, even the proper structures for term papers, business letters, resumes" (Coe 14). Young ("Paradigms") expands on this definition:

The overt features [of current-traditional rhetoric] are obvious enough: the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity, emphasis); the preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper; and so on. (31)

This is the composition that many of us grew up with, the composition of topic sentences, five-paragraph essays, and what we did on our summer vacations. It is an approach which stressed correctness and compliance to rules and convention.

Of the five parts of discourse handed down from classical rhetoric -- inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio -- the current-traditional approach limited its concern almost entirely to cramped definitions of dispositio, or arrangement, and elocutio, or style.

Under the assumptions of a "current-traditional" approach, reality exists prior to and separate from human consciousness. An important precedent for this conception is obviously Plato, but other traditions in Western thought support it as well (for a discussion of these ideas as they relate to composition see Berlin, Rhetoric and Reality, and LeFevre). The writer's responsibility is to discern that external reality and to describe it in language. The best language is that which most accurately encodes reality, or meaning, in the text; the reader's responsibility is to decode that meaning. If the writer has thought clearly about what she wishes to say, and if she expresses that thought within the restrictions of correct form, the reader need only take the meaning that is there.

At the same time as this approach held sway in writing pedagogy, the New Critical movement dominated the study of literature. Brooks and Warren's Understanding Poetry is representative of the New Critical approach, which demanded "close reading" of the text with little consideration for the personal, historical, or social contexts in which the literary text was produced. As Brooks and Warren warned, "We must not confuse information about the life of the poet, or his time, or his materials, with the poem itself" (515). And

Wimsatt, whose book The Verbal Icon also influenced literary reading in this period, described two pitfalls: the "intentional fallacy" and the "affective fallacy." A reader committed the "intentional fallacy" by speculating about the writer's intentions, which could not be ascertained from the text. The "affective fallacy," to quote its inventor, "is a confusion between the poem and its results (what it is and what it does)" (21). In other words, at the same time as the current-traditional approach determined composition instruction, New Critical methods influenced the study of literature. Both approaches valued the text over, even to the exclusion of, the writer and the reader.

The current-traditional stage of contemporary composition studies is of interest primarily because of the reaction against it, for this is the "product" approach, and dissatisfaction with it caused composition to expand its focus to include the process of writing.

The Writer: The Process Approach

As composition broadened its perspective, a second focus or circle of emphasis was created and attention shifted from the text to the individual writer and the writing process. To fully appreciate the import of this change, it helps to consider what went before. The product approach paid attention almost entirely to the text, with little regard to the writer or the process of writing. Composition instruction was a peculiar blend of rhetorical prescription, grammar, linguistics, and stylistics. There was little mystery and

less reason for debate. Language was a logical and analyzable system; once the basic rules were learned, students needed only to study the elements, read the masters, and practice in order to become proficient. Through a process of memorization, imitation, and osmosis, the best students would learn to write well.

However, with the writer and his process at the centre of inquiry, a whole new perspective emerged, one with a primary emphasis on inventio, or discovery. This larger concern with both text and writer marks the beginning of composition's claim to disciplinary status. Indeed, following Kuhn, a number of commentators referred to this switch in focus as a "paradigm shift" (e.g., Young, "Paradigms"; Hairston) a term Kuhn used to describe major changes in the orientation of scientific disciplines. Suddenly writing was more than words correctly and pleasantly arranged on the page; instead, it could be seen as a creative and cognitive act, one involving internal and invisible processes. Conceived as a process, writing became exploration and invention, and composition became more than mere rote learning and imitation. A landmark of the process approach is Rohman's 1965 article, "Pre-Writing: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process," and the seminal research supporting this perspective is Janet Emig's 1971 study The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders.

Under the assumptions of a process approach, reality and meaning reside in the writer, and their discovery entails a search within. The text, through the ever closer approxima-

tions inspired by "conferencing," peer feedback, revision, and other techniques, eventually contains the writer's meaning in a form accessible to the reader. This movement from the inside out is at the heart of the process approach. Variations on it can be found in the work of such key theorists of the period as Linda Flower (e.g., "Writer-based prose"), Donald Murray (e.g., "How Writing Finds") James Moffett (e.g., Teaching), and James Britton (e.g., The Development of Writing Abilities, 11-18).

The inside-out movement is used by Flower to describe the evolution of a single piece of writing from writer-based to reader-based; similarly, Britton calls personal ("expressive") writing the "seedbed" from which more public ("transactional") writing grows. Supporting many discussions of this transformative, outward movement is Piaget's concept of "egocentrism," which he explains as a characteristic inability of young children to appreciate an other's perspective. By "decentering," the child is able to move from reflection, or "Intrapersonal communication between two parts of one nervous system," to publication, or "Impersonal communication to a large anonymous group extended over space and/or time" (Moffett 33).

A number of commentators have divided proponents of a process approach into two camps, though overlap clearly exists. Perhaps the earliest such division was made by Richard Young ("Arts"), who distinguished between "the new romantics" and "the new classicists," a distinction he made on the basis of their differing conceptions of art:

For the new romantics, art contrasts with craft; the craft of writing refers to skill in technique...a skill which can be taught. Art, on the other hand, is associated with more mysterious powers which may be enhanced but which are, finally, unteachable. Art as magic, as glamour. For the new classicists, art means something quite different: it means the knowledge necessary for producing pre-conceived results by conscious, directed action. As such, it contrasts not with craft but with knack, i.e., a habit acquired through repeated experience. An art, for the new classicists, is the result of an effort to isolate and generalize what those who have knacks do when they are successful. (56)

Since Young, others have made a similar distinction, although the two perspectives have generally been re-labelled as the expressive, rather than romantic, and the cognitive, rather than the classical (see, for example, Faigley, "Competing Theories"; Berlin, "Rhetoric and Ideology").

The expressive view

One of the charter texts of the expressive view of writing is Peter Elbow's Writing Without Teachers, in which he gives the following advice to students:

think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start thinking at the very beginning -- before you know your meaning at all -- and encourage your words gradually to change and evolve. Only at the end will you know what you want to say or the words you want to say it with. (15)

Another influential adherent of an expressive view of writing is Donald Murray. In articles, books, and conference presentations, Murray, a writer as well as teacher, has offered his own and his students' experience as evidence of this particular perspective. Like Elbow, Murray believes in the generative ability of writing -- that is, in the tendency for meaning to emerge from the act of writing :

I do not like writing when I come to my desk, but then language begins to move under my pen. It is alive, and I can not help but watch it because it is the piece of writing which instructs me. The sound of the writing, its shape, its pace, its direction, its emerging form tells me what its meaning may be. ("The Feel" 69)

Other notable proponents of an expressive view of writing, according to Berlin ("Ideology"), are Ken Macrorie, Walker Gibson, and William Coles.

It may be unfair to excerpt these particular quotes from Elbow and Murray, since they do make writing sound like magic, as Young suggests above. It is too easy to criticize ideas out of their historical contexts, and both Elbow and Murray have offered many ideas. At the time of their greatest influence, the words of Elbow, Murray, and the others were a refreshing and welcome reaction against the dry and rule-bound current-traditional approach. Perhaps their most important contribution was to return inventio, or discovery, to the act of writing. Whereas, previously, writing was considered the expression of thought, now it was recognized for its ability to initiate, extend, and complement thought. With its new status as a cognitive and creative process, writing could be approached differently, both as a subject for instruction and as the object of research.

Along with other reformers in English education, such as James Moffett and James Britton, these theorists were rejecting "skills-based" and "cultural heritage" models of instruction, to use the terms John Dixon reports from the Dartmouth Conference. They were making the student the centre of English, rather than the handbook of grammar and

punctuation or the canon of "great" literature. These changes in emphasis were revolutionary; they shifted the central focus from the product to the process and they wrestled authority away from tradition and gave it to the writer. Their influence continues to be felt.

The cognitive view

However, aside from freewriting and various forms of "conferencing," the expressive approach did not lend itself easily to deliberate or systematic methods of instruction or research. That was left to the cognitive view of writing which, in its classicist garb, saw the art of writing as "the knowledge necessary for producing preconceived results by conscious, directed action" (Young, "Arts," 56). Everyone associated with writing theory, research, and pedagogy in the 1970s and 80s was deeply influenced by a cognitive perspective, so it is not as easy to pigeonhole the members of this camp as it is the expressivists. Nevertheless, certain names do stand out: Flower and Hayes, Graves, Bereiter and Scardamalia, de Beaugrande, Kroll, Pich, Rubin, Lunsford, Bracewell, Frederikson, for example.

As mentioned above, Jean Piaget's studies in developmental psychology were instrumental in laying the groundwork for a cognitive theory of writing. They supplied theoretical and methodological bases for much of the early work in social cognition (e.g., Flavell, et al.) and provided a starting point for empirical research in composition. Emig's study owes an obvious debt to Piaget, as does The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), the extremely influential

text by Britton and his colleagues, and James Moffett's Teaching the Universe of Discourse. Vygotsky (e.g., Thought) also had an early impact, one that has grown with the years. Indeed, one is more likely now to find references to Vygotsky than to Piaget in discussions of composition.

Another source of theory and method for composition came from the problem-solving work done by cognitive psychologists, particularly Allen Newell and Herbert Simon. This influence, as it was manifested in the work of Linda Flower and John Hayes, became the dominant conceptual framework in composition from the late 70s through most of the 80s. Michael Carter explains this significance: "At the time when we began to conceive of writing as a process, problem solving, especially as it was interpreted by Flower and Hayes, showed us how to understand the writing process --how to observe it, talk about it, and teach it" (551). In a sense, cognitive psychology was in the right place at the right time. Composition studies was a discipline looking for a meaning and a method; cognitive psychology offered both. Andrea Lunsford put it this way: "As the field with the most clearly defined and most generally accepted interdisciplinary base, cognitive studies offers those of us in the field of composition studies a community of scholars with whom to collaborate" (160).

Early descriptions of the writing process, like those offered by Elbow and Murray, were usually murky, almost mystical. Many of them came from published writers of poetry and prose fiction. Though they made writing sound interest-

ing and complex, they were difficult to grasp; the creative process they suggested did not seem susceptible to speculation, observation, or instruction. But cognitive psychology, a discipline that "tolerates the assumption of complex mental processes" (Bracewell 401), seemed made-to-order for the questions and issues being raised by people interested in writing. An overview of this period of composition studies can be gained by reference to the following texts: Barritt and Kroll; Bracewell; Bereiter and Scardamalia ("Levels"); de Beaugrande; Flower and Hayes ("A Cognitive Process Theory"); and Lunsford.

In the long run, cognitive psychology's greatest contribution to composition studies will probably be in the area of research (see Chapter Two for a review of the cognitive-based research relevant to this study). The theory describing writing as a cognitive process has come under increasing attack and is no longer as influential as it once was (for sample critiques of cognitive writing theory, see Bizzell, "Cognition, Convention, and Certainty"; Carter; Cooper and Holzman, "Talking"; Berlin, "Rhetoric"; Clifford). Even some of its staunchest supporters have conceded that the cognitive theory that dominated composition studies is in need of expansion and reinterpretation (e.g., Flower, "Cognition"; Freedman, Dyson, Flower, and Chafe). However, that early theory raised questions that remain relevant, and the research program that responded to those questions gave the discipline some solid footing on which to advance.

Briefly, that theory posited a writing process consisting

of a variety of sub-processes. In initial accounts, there were only three sub-processes, and they described a linear activity: pre-writing, writing, re-writing. As research proceeded and cognitive writing theory grew, composing was portrayed as a process of far greater complexity than the three-stage model suggested. Re-writing, for instance, was seen as an ongoing activity of revision, rather than as a clean-up procedure tacked on to the end of writing. In addition, theorists believed that revision was only one of a number of mental acts performed by the writer:

Writing consists of several main processes -- planning, transcribing text, reviewing -- which do not occur in any fixed order; rather, thought in writing is not linear but jumps from process to process in an organized way which is largely determined by the individual writer's goals. (Freedman et al. 16)

According to cognitive theory, the writer's goals are set in response to his or her sense of a rhetorical problem. That "problem representation," to use Flower and Hayes' term ("The Cognition"), is developed from two sources. First, the writer attends to the variables in the "task environment," or rhetorical situation, which include the writing assignment, or "exigency," and the audience. Once words are put on the page (or screen), a new factor enters the environment: the text. Second, the writer relies on "long term memory" -- that is, past experience and knowledge; specifically, knowledge of the topic, audience, and writing plans developed from previous but similar writing tasks.

From a cognitive perspective, development in writing ability results from, first, obtaining sufficient experience

with a wide variety of rhetorical situations and, second, employing the various sub-processes effectively. Although every situation has some similarity to other situations, each rhetorical act requires a "unique representation." That representation, or mental image, guides the sub-processes of writing. Differences in ability can be attributed either to varying degrees of previous writing experience or variations in the effective enactment of the sub-processes. So, for example, a person who finds himself writing in unfamiliar circumstances may not know about the conventions, rules, or readers in that setting; or, the writer may have plenty of experience but not plan or review the writing carefully enough.

The cognitive theory of writing was a godsend for composition teachers. It described a systematic and logical process and identified some of the intellectual activities that resulted in better writing. Cognitive-based research appeared to confirm the theory's prediction that experienced writers had greater control of the sub-processes of writing than novice or basic writers did. Thanks to such methods as protocol analysis, by which writers were tape-recorded while composing aloud, researchers were able to demonstrate how effective writers planned, generated ideas, considered readers, set goals, translated goals into words and sentences, reviewed and revised texts, and so on. This was, in Richard Young's words, "the knowledge necessary for producing pre-conceived results by conscious, directed action" ("Arts" 56). By transforming those intellectual routines into teach-

able strategies, teachers were able to help students expand and control their writing processes. In effect, writing instruction inspired by cognitive theory was designed to help students think like experts without the long apprenticeship that expertise normally requires.

However, even as it grew in influence, the cognitive account of writing was subject to criticism. In particular, cognitive process theory seemed to ignore or downplay the importance of the writer's social context. At the centre of the cognitive writing act was an autonomous writer: she analyzed and defined the rhetorical situation, set goals, planned, and produced a text she believed was appropriate to her intentions and audience. But as early as 1979 a different explanation began to emerge:

Even prior to forming the site for the writing's purpose and reception, the social context has helped shape the writer's consciousness and even sense of self. The writer's social history will influence perceptions of reality, knowledge accepted as given, the designation of situations considered appropriate for written comment, the topics and approaches of interest, the writer's stance and purposes with respect to the audience, and the linguistic and rhetorical tools at the writer's disposal. (Bazerman, "Written Language Communities," 9)

By wresting much of the control of writing out of the hands of the individual writer and placing it in the social context, Bazerman was foreshadowing the current social view of writing. That view represents the third circle of focus in composition's expanding perspective. (A full discussion of that perspective follows in the section titled The Context: The Social Approach.) However, before leaving this

discussion of cognition, it is worth examining an article by Linda Flower, in which she proposes a "more integrated theoretical vision" ("Cognition" 282), one which explains the relationship between cognition and context. If a cognitive perspective on writing is to continue its influence, its proponents will have to clarify the nature and function of that relationship.

Cognition and context

As a social constructionist view of writing gains ground, cognitive theory is criticized more and more frequently for its focus on the individual writer, often to the exclusion of important factors external to the writer. Even Linda Flower is critical of this tendency; as an example, she points to her own early work with John Hayes on the development of a cognitive process model of writing:

Although this model suggests key places where social and contextual knowledge operate within a cognitive framework... early research did little more than specify that the "task environment" was an important element in the process; it failed to account for how the situation in which the writer operates might shape composing, and it had little to say about the specific conventions, schemata, or commonplaces that might inform the writer's "long term memory." ("Cognition" 283)

Although no one would disagree with Flower that some sort of rapprochement between the cognitive and social perspectives is important, there are a number of comments in her essay that point out the gulf between the two positions. Perhaps the most contentious aspect of Flower's argument is her continued separation of cognition and context, despite her apparent effort to present a unified theory. When Flower

says that "context cues cognition" ("Cognition" 282), she implies a distinction which social theorists find hard to accept. That distinction, captured by the metaphor of cueing, suggests that cognition is a potentiality, a human behaviour-in-waiting. However, from a social perspective, cognition, or the way we think, cannot be separated from where and when and what we think. In other words, cognition is not a latent human response waiting for a stimulus; nor is it a universal process, the sub-processes of which are "switched-on" by particular features of various contexts, as Flower suggests when she says that "Context selectively taps knowledge and triggers specific processes" ("Cognition" 288). Rather, from a social perspective, individual human cognition is the intellectual enactment of the values, beliefs, and ideas of the contexts within which it was formed. John Trimbur speaks for many social theorists when he says that "consciousness is the extension of social experience inward" (604). The question for social constructionists, then, is not how context "cues" cognition, but how it creates cognition.

Underlying these different conceptions of the cognition-context relationship is a fundamental distinction between what Richard Rorty calls "foundationalism" and "anti-foundationalism." These philosophical positions are elaborated below, in the next section, but they may be briefly defined as follows: "foundationalism" refers to a world view which subscribes to the belief that reality and truth transcend human experience. Such a belief holds that certain

knowledge is fixed and immutable, the result of discovering "facts" or "truths" which are external to us and accessible through observation. "Anti-foundationalism" describes a belief that reality and truth are human constructs, that knowledge is a temporary phenomenon shaped by social and historical forces and subject to constant change.

Flower and others concerned primarily with the cognitive process of writing are, to use Patricia Bizzell's term, "inner-directed": "Inner-directed theorists seek to discover writing processes that are so fundamental as to be universal" ("Cognition, Convention, and Certainty" 215); in other words, they take a foundationalist approach to the writing process, searching for intellectual activities which remain constant, though variable, across writers and writing situations. The Flower and Hayes' model, for example, was meant to describe the writing process. The "task environment" might change from one writing occasion to another, but the knowledge and activity inside the writer's head -- that is, the long term memory and the sub-processes -- did not change substantially. Writing and life experience increased the store of knowledge in memory and the effectiveness of the sub-processes, but the basic structure and sequence of thought was presented as relatively stable. That is not to say that cognitive theorists deny individual creativity; on the contrary, human cognition is portrayed as something inherent to the individual, with no apparent source or formative process. Although social experience produces knowledge, in the form of information about topics, audiences,

and writing plans, that knowledge only determines what people think about, not how they think. Knowledge can expand and change, but knowing cannot.

The cognitive model, especially as presented by Flower and Hayes, raises two related questions for social theorists. Crudely stated, they concern locale and priority: Where do thinking and knowing happen? And does cognition preexist context? Clifford Geertz, an anthropologist whose work has had an important impact on the theory and research practices associated with the social view of writing, articulates the first question thus: "I distinguished between two reasonably different approaches to the study of human 'thought' currently in vogue: a unific one, which conceives of it as a psychological process, person-bounded and law governed, and a pluralistic one, which conceives of it as a collective product, culturally coded and historically constructed -- thought in the head, thought in the world" (Local Knowledge 14). Although no one would deny that writers think as they compose, social theorists would argue that the mental activity enacts the social consciousness. When Flower speaks above of "social and contextual knowledge" operating "within a cognitive framework," she locates knowledge in the head.

The second question, concerning priority, is a version of the chicken and egg question: which comes first, the context or the cognition? Bazerman gives primacy to the former when he says that "social context has helped shape the writer's consciousness and even sense of self" ("Written Language

Communities" 9). Flower appears to say the opposite: "Context in its many forms is mediated --at all levels of awareness -- by the cognition of the individual writer."

("Cognition" 289). If by "mediated" Flower means interpreted or, to use another of her terms, "represented," then cognition exists before and separate from context and must "explain" or represent context to the individual.

But the question remains, what is the origin and nature of that individual cognition, how can it interpret context? The answer, from a social constructionist perspective, is that context determines individual cognition. All contexts are already mediated. We do not experience contexts firsthand, the way our heads might experience a low doorway. Instead, through our in-context interaction with others, we gradually come to understand, that is, to represent to ourselves, an already mediated context. We interpret interpretations. This is how Geertz explains it: "Human thought is consummately social: social in its origins, social in its functions, social in its forms, social in its applications" (Interpretation, 360). It is this pervasive influence of context on cognition that leads Faigley to argue that a social view of writing

rejects the assumption that writing is the act of a private consciousness and that everything else -- readers, subjects, and texts -- is "out there" in the world. The focus of a social view of writing, therefore, is not on how the social situation influences the individual, but on how the individual is a constituent of a culture. ("Competing," 535)

In other words, as Bizzell puts it, "we as individuals

are constituted by our discourse" ("Foundationalism" 47). Such a view turns the cognitive picture of writing inside-out. Instead of focussing on the internal, mental processes of writing that occur inside the writer, the emphasis moves to the external, social processes that surround the writer. This shift does not negate the value of cognitive theory or the findings of research, but it does put them in a different perspective and, as a result, under a critical light. The following example serves to illustrate how that new perspective challenges cognitive theory.

Much cognitive theory and research has been concerned with the nature and function of planning during writing. In the Flower and Hayes' model, planning is the most complex mental process, consisting of a number of sub-processes: generating ideas, goal setting, and organizing. Following planning in the model is translating, or "the process of putting ideas into visible language" ("A Cognitive Process Theory" 373). Bizzell has criticized the model for separating planning from translating, ideas from words: "Language itself is not seen as having a generative force in the planning process.... What's missing here is the connection to social context afforded by recognition of the dialectical relationship between thought and language" ("Cognition, Convention, and Certainty" 223). Again, the social or contextual phenomenon -- language -- is seen as separate from and secondary to the cognitive activity. Of greater concern is what Flower and Hayes say about goal setting:

The most important thing about writing goals is the

fact that they are created by the writer. Although some well-learned plans and goals may be drawn intact from long-term memory, most of the writer's goals are generated, developed, and revised by the same processes that generate and organize new ideas. ("A Cognitive Process Theory" 373)

By "processes," Flower and Hayes mean intellectual activity, but a social theory sees ideas and goals originating from social processes. Indeed, many writers must follow writing goals that are either explicitly or implicitly set by features of their writing context: genres, readers, guidelines, standardized documents, and so on. Although the individual must interpret, the goals themselves are often created, even dictated, by the context. Indeed, much of the process and product some writers experience is predetermined. As Charles Bazerman points out, "A political scientist or a medical researcher writes as part of an evolving discussion, with its own goals, issues, terms, arguments, and dialect" (Shaping 5; see Stotsky for a thorough critique of Flower and Hayes' discussion of planning).

Because cognitive theory ignored or downplayed such social phenomena, it portrayed writing as a closed system. In many ways, a social theory of writing is an attempt to correct, not replace, cognitive theory; quite literally, it tries to put cognition in context. As mentioned above in relation to the work of the so-called expressivists, it is easy to criticize ideas out of their historical context. It is no exaggeration to say that Flower and Hayes created a tradition of research in composition studies. However, although Flower's recent efforts to build a bridge between

cognition and context do redress some of the more glaring problems with early cognitive writing theory, a substantial gap still exists between her present position and that taken by social theorists. To examine that position, we expand the focus of composition outward to include the context.

The Context: The Social Approach

By the mid-80s, "social" had replaced "process" as the major buzzword of composition studies. Like the process movement before it, the social perspective was, initially, less of a theory than a reaction against what came before. Unlike the process view, which was influenced almost entirely by the single discipline of cognitive psychology, the social perspective has had a great variety of influences. Faigley identifies four: "poststructuralist theories of language, the sociology of science, ethnography, and Marxism" ("Competing" 535). Bazerman cites three: "the practical imperatives of writing across the curriculum, the intellectual enticements of modern literary theory, and the research consequences of adopting the investigative tool of ethnography" ("Difficulties" 2). To those lists should be added feminist theory, especially as it relates to literary criticism. Contemporary discussions of composition draw on an international and multi-disciplinary group of theorists: Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva, Cixous, Kuhn, Geertz, Showalter, Fish, Moi, Rorty, and others. Partly because of these multiple influences, the social view of writing "is less codified and less constituted at present

than the expressive and cognitive views" (Faigley, "Competing," 534; see also Petraglia). However, the term "social constructionist" has been used with increasing frequency to describe the social view (e.g., Bruffee, "Social Construction"; Petraglia; Clark).

A social constructionist theory of composition is concerned with the context for writing and its effect on the writer and the text. However, it is important to note that "context" does not refer only to the office, institution, or discipline within which a writer composes; the term suggests location but should point, as well, to time and circumstances. The context for writing includes the broad sweep of history, the ever changing culture, and the ongoing "conversation" of humanity, as well as the specific time, individuals, locations, and activities related to a particular text. Ironically, many of the activities or processes considered important by social theorists are identical to the processes studied by cognitive theorists: generating ideas, setting goals, organizing texts, considering readers, reading and revising. The difference is the arena for those activities. Whereas cognitive writing theorists look to the individual, social constructionists look to the world.

To get a fuller picture of the writing context, some of the intellectual antecedents of a social theory are examined in the next section. Although those antecedents are varied, a number of individual commentators and concepts have come to the fore.

Writing as Social Action

Richard Rorty, a philosopher who has had a major influence on contemporary composition theory, says this: "It is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions" (12). The metaphor which best captures the central philosophical conviction of the emerging social theory of writing is the image of discourse as conversation. The following quotes are eloquent elaborations of that metaphor.

As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves.... It is the ability to participate in this conversation, and not the ability to reason cogently, to make discoveries about the world, or to contrive a better world, which distinguishes the human being from the animal and the civilized man from the barbarian.... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation.... the final measure of intellectual achievement is in terms of its contribution to the conversation in which all universes of discourse meet. (Oakeshott 199)

Imagine you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them had got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers, you answer him; another comes to

your defense; another aligns himself against you.... However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (Burke 110-11)

The pictures painted by Oakeshott and Burke display some of the broad lines of thought which define contemporary discussions of composition. They point to knowledge as a social construct, with language as its medium of creation. They describe the intensely interactive, dialogic nature of discourse. They group all manner of language, including writing, under a single, unifying image -- that of people speaking to people. And they suggest the forces of history and time within which all discourse exists. According to Gregory Clark, whose study explores the origins of such concepts as conversation, dialogue, and dialectic, "This conversational perspective on writing designates the exchange of texts as the way people discover and validate the common beliefs and values that allow them to live and work together -- the shared knowledge that provides the foundation upon which they construct community" (xvi-xvii). In the following pages, the image of written language as conversation is examined in more detail. And, in the final section of the chapter, those details are collected together in a discussion of the concept of "discourse community," the unit of study (more accurately, the site of activity) which most clearly demonstrates writing as social action.

Writing as Knowledge-Making

Language is, without question, a social artifact, the

result of social action and interaction. The grunts and gasps we make when we speak, and their corresponding written symbols, have no intrinsic meaning except by mutual agreement. We grow up to speak English (or French or German, etc.) because the people around us speak English (or French or German, etc.). Dialects and other language variations are regional: they are shaped by social circumstances. We may have innate capabilities which allow us to speak; certainly the vocal chords, tongue, and lips are marvelously adept at producing sound. Beyond that we might wish to speculate about genetic programming or inherent cognitive potential for language, but all we can say for sure is that language acquisition and development are profoundly social.

However, a social perspective on writing takes this relationship between language and context one step further. Language is not simply the symbol system we use to discuss, explain, and exchange ideas; rather, it is the way we create ideas, and the discussing, explaining, and exchanging are the social processes which cause knowledge to grow and change. In other words, language is not the expression of thought, it is its crucible; it not only conveys knowledge, it creates knowledge. This view of language as epistemic -- that is, as knowledge-making -- is a radical reversal of the usual conception, which sees reality as something "out there," a phenomenon independent of human experience that can be known and, once known, expressed in language.

By turning the tables and viewing knowledge as the product of social interaction, we can see it, not as the

description of a transcendent reality, but as "the social justification of belief," to use Rorty's phrase (170). In explaining this conceptual shift, Rorty also invokes the image of conversation:

If...we think of "rational certainty" as a matter of victory in argument rather than of relation to an object known, we shall look toward our interlocutors rather than to our faculties for the explanation of the phenomenon. If we think of our certainty about the Pythagorean Theorem as our confidence, based on experience with arguments on such matters, that nobody will find an objection to the premises from which we infer it, then we shall not seek to explain it by the relation of reason to triangularity. Our certainty will be a matter of conversation between persons, rather than a matter of interaction with nonhuman reality. (157)

The relationship between language and knowledge that Rorty describes is at the heart of his distinction between foundationalist and non-foundationalist views of the world. As John Trimbur explains, "For Rorty, the term conversation offers a useful way to talk about the production of knowledge as a social process without reference to metaphysical foundations" (606).

According to Rorty, foundationalism seeks "a...way of formulating an ultimate context for thought" (5). There is not one foundationalism, of course; rather, in any field of human thought there is a tendency to believe "that an absolute standard for the judgment of truth can be found, and that employment of this standard in evaluating knowledge enables the individual mind to transcend personal emotions, social circumstances, and larger historical conditions, and to reflect critically on them" (39), which is how Bizzell ("Foundationalism") explains Rorty's term. As should be

clear by now, the social perspective on writing is an attempt to reject foundationalism, based on the belief, again in Bizzell's words, that "the individual mind can never transcend personal emotions, social circumstances, and historical conditions" ("Foundationalism" 40). In fact, social constructionists would argue that these are the very forces which, through the medium of language and other symbol systems, form the individual mind.

The distinctions made between foundational and anti-foundational views of the world recall the old (and probably unresolvable) debate about whether nature or nurture is the more influential force in forming human behaviour. The prevailing tradition of inquiry in many disciplines within the humanities and social sciences has been, until recently, the search for a unified or universal theory. Such a theory would identify the fixed or repeated patterns in all areas of human endeavor; in other words, it would establish human common denominators: intrinsic -- that is, natural -- human qualities shared by all. However, there is now a tendency to look for multiple explanations and changing circumstances. This "pluralistic" approach, to use Geertz's word, while not denying the possibility that certain human universals exist, looks instead for variation and variety in human conduct. The difference between the two positions is not so much a question of right and wrong as a shift in focus and a leap of faith. The major issues being pondered from either perspective are, for the most part, not resolvable in any final sense, so adherence to one view or the other is based on

belief, not fact, and conviction is won by argument, not proof.

However, if one accepts the relationship between language and knowledge posited by proponents of a social theory of writing, the next step in the argument seems less controversial: knowledge, like language, is shaped by regional, or contextual, forces. We speak and think the way we do because of where, when, and with whom we speak and think. As Clifford Geertz has put it, knowledge is "local": "thinking...is a matter of trafficking in the symbolic forms available in one or another community (language, art, myth, theory, ritual, technology, law, and that conglomerate of maxims, recipes, prejudices, and plausible stories the smug call common sense)" (Local Knowledge 153). Berlin makes a similar point:

Knowledge...is a matter of mutual agreement appearing as a product of the rhetorical activity, the discussion, of a given discourse community. (Rhetoric 166)

A number of approaches to language and learning are based on this dual recognition: first, that language creates knowledge; and, second, that knowledge is contextual -- like language, it is shaped and defined by its circumstances. Consider, for example, the different ways an ichthyologist, a cook, an artist, a taxidermist, or a fisherman would talk about and "know" a fish. The language-across-the-curriculum movement is a response to this duality; it is an attempt to locate knowledge in the language of the various academic communities. In addition, the social constructionist argument has been used extensively by Kenneth Bruffee to justify

his collaborative approach to learning. He explains: "A social constructionist position in any discipline assumes that entities we normally call reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves, and so on are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers" ("Social Construction" 774). In other words, a social constructionist position is anti-foundational: "It assumes that there is no such thing as a universal foundation, ground, framework, or structure of knowledge" (776-77). As a result, Bruffee argues for a social construction of knowledge in the classroom through constant interaction among students: "Collaborative learning is related to social construction in that it assumes learning occurs among persons rather than between a person and things" (787).

In the following sections, we will look at some of the ways in which writing and knowledge occur as social actions. To do that, I have made an artificial division of writing into three parts: the writer, the text, and the reader. This split falsifies because it suggests static entities in what is essentially a dynamic process. My purpose, to quote James Moffett in similar circumstances, "is to trade a loss of reality for a gain in control" (23). In the chapter's final section, on discourse communities, the parts are returned to the whole.

The Writer in Context

The writer has always held an exalted position in the study of literature. The romantic image of the muse-inspired

poet in his (always "his") garret, overflowing with powerful emotions, still captures the public imagination. But in contemporary literary theory the writer's star has dimmed; indeed, Barthes has proclaimed the death of the author. Similarly, after a brief and brilliant time at the centre of composition studies, the image of the individual writer has fragmented. Most composition textbooks continue to treat the writer as if he or she created text in cognitive isolation, but the picture of the lone writer struggling to bring forth unique ideas has come under increasing attack. One of the most comprehensive critiques of this image is offered by Karen Burke LeFevre in her book, Invention as a Social Act. Towards the end of her book, LeFevre sums up her argument:

...a view of [rhetorical] invention as the act of an atomistic individual producing a discrete text is severely limited...it misleadingly divorces the individual from the social realm and fails to account for much of what happens when writers invent. Invention should be reconceived...as a social act: one in which individuals interact with society and culture in a distinctive way to create something. With this view, invention may be seen as an act encompassing symbol-using activities such as speaking and writing, often involving more than one person, and extending over time through a series of social transactions and texts. The generation of what one comes to know and say is brought to completion by others who receive and execute the action. (121)

LeFevre marshalls an impressive array of arguments in defence of her position, from explanations of the essentially social nature of language to descriptions of the often intense collaboration behind the creation of supposedly single-authored texts. She also traces the roots of individualism in composition and literary studies, and iden-

tifies its unfortunate implications for theory, research, and practice.

The work of Ede and Lunsford (sometimes Lunsford and Ede) has also been influential in changing the image of the writer. Relying on their own experiences as co-authors, as well as on an extensive study of writing practices in a variety of disciplines, Ede and Lunsford attack the myth of individual authors. In its place, they offer a picture of writers whose "scenes of writing are peopled, busy -- full of the give-and-take of conversation and debate" (Singular Texts 42). Their explanation of how the concept of authorship has been "constructed" over the centuries, and their discussion of contemporary challenges to that concept, contributes to the social perspective on writing (see Singular 72-102).

Some of the many practices that challenge the image of the author as autonomous -- including peer review, document cycling, and collaborative writing -- are only now being understood and appreciated, mostly as a result of research into nonacademic writing. These practices, as they are described in research, are slowly changing the concept of the writer in composition theory. How can one speak of the author when a text may cycle through a whole variety of readers and readings, writers and re-writings before final drafting? What about the many documents that are patched together from separate reports and made public, sometimes without indication of authorship? In articles and books, we rarely acknowledge, except by footnote, the assistance of

editors and reviewers. And in certain fields, such as medicine, it is not uncommon to find articles authored by up to ten people. The image of the individual writer has begun to dissolve.

Also influential in this regard have been the writings of such poststructuralists as Derrida, Barthes, and Foucault. As Sharon Crowley argues, "post-structural thought raises serious objections to the metaphysical fiction that would place a sovereign, self-aware consciousness at the center of any composing act" (32). Literary critics such as Stanley Fish have challenged the romantic conception that individual genius lies at the heart of great literature, or any other type of text, for that matter. That traditional notion constrained readers and limited the possible readings provided by any single text. After all, if the writer had meant one thing, what right did the reader have to read something different? The writer's intention was valued over the reader's interpretation. Foucault explains it this way: "since the eighteenth century, the author has played the role of the regulator of the fictive, a role quite characteristic of our era of industrial and bourgeois society, of individualism and private property" ("What Is an Author?" 119). Foucault argues that "we must entirely reverse the traditional idea of the author," because "the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition

of fiction" (118-19).

No one is attempting to deny the fact that individuals sit down to create texts by themselves. However, theory and research have seriously challenged the traditional image of the atomistic author. The language authors use is a social construct; it precedes the writer and is learned through interaction with others. Social-epistemic theory suggests that the very ideas we work with originate in our historical and social contexts. And a considerable amount of recent research into writing has shown us that writing is often a collaborative activity, even when a single name appears as author. To quote Faigley paraphrasing Bakhtin, "our words carry with them the places where they have been" ("Competing" 535).

The Text in Context

At the same time as the notion of the individual author has come under attack, the idea of an autonomous, fixed, and meaning-full text has been questioned by poststructuralist literary theories, genre theory, and contemporary writing research. Although we may be able to point to the words on the page, we can no longer speak with any conviction about the meanings that reside there. Deconstructive criticism has pointed out that texts are unstable and open to multiple meanings. "On a deconstructive model of textuality, literary texts do not hold still and docilely submit themselves to repeated identical readings; they can be read and re-read, and each reading differs from the last" (Crowley 20). At one

extreme of deconstructive theory, there are no texts, only readings.

For those who subscribe to a conversational model of discourse, reader-response theory offers a far more acceptable version of the act of reading. As Louise Rosenblatt and those she has influenced have shown again and again, meaning occurs in the "transaction" between the text and the reader. The text speaks to the reader and the reader speaks to the text. Furthermore, both text and reader come with histories; that is, they are both shaped by their time and place. As a result, the transaction and subsequent meaning is shaped by context -- by the variations, expectations, locations, and occasions of any given reading and reader. Dias and Hayhoe put it this way: "The literary work is much more than an object that exists in and of itself, much more than the creation of the literary artist; it is also the product of an act of reading and of readers" (15).

We have come to understand textual meaning as variable and contextual mostly as a result of such perspectives on literature as deconstruction and reader-response theory. However, non-literary texts are also susceptible to multiple readings. Readers come to all sorts of texts -- essays, editorials, memos, contracts, reports -- with different expectations, knowledge, reasons for reading, and relationships to the writer(s). Moreover, even those texts we traditionally conceive of as least open to interpretation -- scientific, medical, or technical writing, for example -- have been shown to contain layer upon layer of embedded metaphors

and messages. No discourse escapes interpretation and, therefore, potential variations in meaning are possible. After an extensive study of scientific prose, Bazerman concludes that "scientific formulations are a human construction and thus are heir to all the limitations of humanity" (Shaping 294).

Another way of speaking about the multiple meaning of texts is to refer to "intertextuality," a concept from literary criticism which composition theorists (e.g., Porter) have used to help explain the social nature of writing. Porter offers this explanation of the term:

Not infrequently, and perhaps ever and always, texts refer to other texts and in fact rely on them for their meaning. All texts are interdependent: we understand a text only insofar as we understand its precursors. This is the principle we know as intertextuality, the principle that all writing and speech -- indeed, all signs -- arise from a single network: what Vygotsky called "the web of meaning".... The most mundane manifestation of intertextuality is explicit citation, but intertextuality animates all discourse and goes beyond mere citation. For the intertextual critics, Intertext is Text -- a great seamless textual fabric. (34)

Or, in the words of Mikhail Bakhtin, "Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (69). Intertextuality offers a complementary notion to the metaphor of discourse as conversation. It suggests texts talking to and through other texts, and so points to their contribution to the social action of writing. As Porter indicates, citation is the most common form of intertextuality. When we refer to another's words, we bring that person's text into our own; that is, we include it in our conversation. Foucault explains that each book "is caught up

in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" (Archaeology 23). There is more to intertextuality, however, than direct quotation or the list of works cited. Oblique, even unintentional, references are possible through paraphrase and allusion. Stylistic similarities, grammatical parallelism, or repetitions in tone can all bind texts together. Bakhtin, for whom all language, according to Schuster "is a conversation where a great many people talk at once" ("Bakhtin" 605), describes the interconnectedness of language thus:

Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. These mutual reflections determine their character. Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word "response" here in the broadest sense). Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account. (91)

Like other contemporary conceptions of text, the intertextual perspective challenges traditional notions of the location of meaning by linking the meaning of a given text to other texts, thereby denying it autonomy. Ironically, further textual instability is created by recent discussions of genre, a concept normally associated with fixed patterns.

Carolyn Miller has argued that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (151). By looking for patterns in the context rather than the text, Miller radically alters the idea of genre

from a set of textual features to a social act. Bazerman, following Miller, offers this definition of genre:

A genre consists of something beyond simple similarity of formal characteristics among a number of texts. A genre is a socially recognized, repeated strategy for achieving similar goals in situations socially perceived as being similar.... A genre is a social construct that regularizes communication, interaction, and relations. (Shaping 62)

Based on this definition, the full implications of any genre are available only by reference to the situation in which it developed. In other words, the meaning of the genre, and therefore the text itself, are context-dependent.

If genre is the repetition of social action, rather than the mere modelling of textual features, a further dimension is added to the text-context relationship. Rather than considering genre as the response to situations, a "repeated strategy," as Bazerman calls it, we might also think of genre as the creator of certain situations. For, by initiating or enacting a genre, the writer affects the context: "Institutionalized patterns of representation [i.e., genres] not only shape the form of the utterance, but all the activity leading up to, surrounding, and following after the utterance" (Bazerman Shaping 316). Such a view complicates enormously the creation and location of meaning by highlighting the reciprocal nature of the text-context relationship: the meaning of the text is defined by the situation; the situation is defined by the text. Just as challenges to the autonomy of the writer do not negate the individual act of writing, doubts about textual independence do not deny the existence of separate poems, novels, essays, articles,

or books. However, the nature of those texts and the influence of their historical and social contexts is being questioned. The relationships created and sustained by texts do not exist only between writers and readers; texts also create relationships with, against, for, and among writers and readers. In other words, most texts do not form a simple "channel" of communication, with writer at one end and reader at the other. Rather, they weave an intricate pattern of relationships: some are between writers and readers, but others are between writers and other writers, or between readers and other readers. A social theory of writing places the writer, the text, and the meaning in the midst of dynamic and intricate settings. An essential aspect of those settings is the reader, without whom there is no text, and with whom writing becomes a truly social act.

The Reader in Context

Perhaps the most significant change in our conception of readers has been the increased responsibility for the creation of meaning now ascribed to them. No longer is reading portrayed as a passive act of reception or a mechanical task of decoding. Readers are recognized as active participants in the making of meaning. In fact, at the extremes of deconstructive criticism, "readers of any discourse become its writers as they re-construct a 'meaning' for it" (Crowley 36). Moreover, readers are seen to be active within a context; in other words, just as writers compose collaboratively, even when writing alone, so too do readers read as part of collectives: groups defined by language, activity,

age, taste, class, school, economics, and other social and cultural factors.

"The influence of contexts is apparent in the first place in the intentions readers bring to literary text" (Dias and Hayhoe 38), and other texts as well. Rosenblatt has distinguished between two broad types of reading, based on the reader's intentions and context. One type she calls "efferent": "in which the primary concern of the reader is with what he will carry away from the reading." The second type Rosenblatt calls "aesthetic": "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (24-25). In regard to efferent reading, it is certainly possible to make finer distinctions, since why and where readers read will obviously determine what they "carry away" from the text and how they carry it. For example, reading a textbook the night before an examination and reading a recipe while cooking dinner, though both are instances of efferent reading, are also clearly different occasions and readings. The point is that, like writing, reading is essentially a contextual activity; it is not possible to read in a social vacuum, and the circumstances of the reading help shape the reader's intentions and, inevitably, the text's meaning.

The influence of intertextuality and genre extends as well to the reader. The reader of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead is better off for having read Hamlet and Waiting for Godot. And familiarity with the genres of drama allows the reader to experience the play more fully. An

important consequence of familiarity with preceding and succeeding texts, factors of genre, and other features of context, such as life experience and prior knowledge, is the expectations the reader brings to the reading. An experienced reader expects value judgments in a movie review, and may well be able to anticipate the nature of those judgments during the reading, even before they are explicitly stated. Indeed, the context for reading may carry enormous meaning-potential before a single word is read, simply because expectations are raised by setting. As a result, readers, again like writers, often have their goals and even their meaning determined, in part, by the context or community within which they read.

In addition to literary theory, some current thinking and research in composition has also put our traditional notions of the reader into a new light. Usually, we think of the reader as the end of the writing process, the factor that brings life to the text. However, along with the writer and the text, the reader has been thrown into the social whirl. Sharon Crowley: "if all writing is collaborative and contextual in its composition, its reception is multiple, public, as well" (38). For example, it is becoming clear that many texts have multiple readers, some of whom serve as surrogate readers in complex document cycles. Quite literally, such readers stand in for others, often people elsewhere or higher up in an organization. Similarly, editors and manuscript reviewers read, in a sense, as representatives of their fields or disciplines. Finally, the multiple readers

of some texts attend to different parts of the text or attend differently to the same parts of the text. All in all, such variations on the traditional image of the reader alone with her text are cause enough to reconsider the nature and function of the reader in the act of writing.

Although they have been presented separately, I hope it is clear that the writer, text, and reader are inextricably bound together within changing contexts. The relationships are reciprocal and symbiotic. In other words, each element in the act of writing creates, is created by, and cannot exist without the other elements. As a result, the relationship among them is best understood when they are viewed together, in action. I believe that the concept of discourse community offers the best contemporary description of the scenes of writing activity, and we will move toward a definition of the concept in the final section of this chapter.

Discourse Community: Toward a Definition

The social constructionist theory of writing that supports the notion of discourse community resists the reification that tends to come with definition. Previously fixed concepts such as writer, text, and reader do not sit still; instead, as we have seen, they are dynamic and elusive, with no stable reality outside their relationships to each other. A social perspective places an emphasis on writing as social action, and any attempt to define apparently fixed entities, rather than activities, almost inevitably produces instant

rigidity. For example, a description of discourse regulations, writers' and readers' roles and relationships, channels of communication, and other contextual features -- without reference to their reciprocal influence -- puts the focus on the elements in the structure rather than on their interactions. As Marilyn Cooper explains, a discourse community "can...be thought of as an accomplished fact, a social structure that exists separately from the individuals who are its members." The danger of this, says Cooper, is that "features such as shared values, conventions of language, and norms of behavior, which I think of as continually in flux, determined in an ongoing way by people who are in the discourse community, instead become static standards" ("Why" 204).

There is a certain comfort in resisting the precision of definition. As Bruce Herzberg notes, "discourse community...is suggestive, the center of a set of ideas rather than the sign of a settled notion" (1). To a discipline wary of absolutes, a term with rich connotative power is welcome. However, a number of attempts have been made to limit the term, to define criteria by which a discourse community might be recognized and described. Perhaps the most cited of those attempts was made by John Swales. Swales' definition has been criticized (e.g., Cooper), but it has been influential and serves as a good starting point on a journey toward a definition, especially since many of the criticisms levelled against Swales were applicable to other early conceptions of discourse community. Swales sets out six criteria:

- a) The discourse community has a communality of interest; i.e., at some level the members share common public goals.
- b) The discourse community has mechanisms for intercommunication between members...it will have "a forum". The participatory mechanisms may be various: meetings, telecommunications, correspondence, bulletins and so forth.
- c) In consequence of a) and b) the discourse community survives by providing information and feedback.
- d) The discourse community has developed and continues to develop discursual expectations. These may involve appropriacy of topics, the form, function and positioning of discursual elements, and the roles texts play in the operation of the discourse community.... these discursual expectations create the genres that articulate the operations of the discourse community.
- e) As a result of all of the above, the discourse community possesses an inbuilt dynamic towards an increasingly shared and specialized terminology.
- f) The discourse community has a critical mass of members with a suitable degree of expertise. Discourse communities have changing memberships; people enter as apprentices and leave, by death or in other less involuntary ways. (4-6)

Swales' definition brings together writers, texts, and readers and places them in evolving contexts. However, subsequent to this and other early definitions of discourse community, commentators added to the complexity of the concept by examining the problems and contradictions associated with it. One such commentator is Marilyn Cooper, whose analysis includes an extensive critique of Swales' definition.

Cooper says Swales' attempt is "One of the most explicit foundationalist definitions of discourse community" ("Why" 211-12). But is it Swales' definition that is foundationalist, or are discourse communities, to some extent, inher-

ently foundationalist? That is, do communities set standards which are separate from and external to their own members? Do they create and maintain a status quo which appears to be beyond the control of historical and social forces? Although Swales does imply a conservative tendency in discourse communities, an ongoing attempt to stop change through the imposition of standards and rules, he does not condone this characteristic of communities, he merely describes it. Cooper's objections appear misdirected. For example, Cooper objects to Swales' criterion of "participatory mechanisms," or "forums." She says that "participatory mechanisms keep some people from participating at the same time as they enable others to participate" ("Why" 214). And in response to Swales' fifth criterion, "the discourse community possesses an inbuilt dynamic towards an increasingly shared and specialized terminology," Cooper says that "specialized language can be used to withhold power from new group members or marginal group members by effectively excluding them from the discourse" ("Why" 215). While both of Cooper's observations are accurate, it hardly seems fair to blame Swales for the exclusionary practices of communities. Besides, Cooper apparently overlooks Swales' third criterion, "the discourse community survives by providing information and feedback"; it is this dialogic nature of discourse communities, this give and take of ideas and opinions, that can protect them from the very foundationalism that Cooper criticizes in Swales' definition.

It may be that Cooper objects to what is missing from

Swales' definition: a critique of restrictive practices and a description of the place of conflict in communities. She is not alone in this particular concern. A number of commentators (e.g., Harris; Faigley, "Competing"; Cooper herself), citing Raymond Williams, have pointed out that "community" has a warm and welcome sound. "Unlike 'society,' community is not usually thought of as being opposed to the needs of the individual" (Cooper, "Why," 203). Although his criterion of "discoursal expectations" hints at regulation and restriction, Swales does not directly address this darker side of community. By adding the social forces of regulation and conflict to Swales' definition, a more dynamic picture of writing emerges.

Community Regulation of Discourse

Although her own definition is not so radically different from Swales' as her critique might suggest, Cooper's discussion does acknowledge the regulatory and exclusionary practices of discourse communities:

The notion of discourse communities has been offered as a corrective to foundational notions. What it is possible to say and what language is appropriate to say it in is determined not by some set of universal truths but rather by conventions that serve the purposes of distinct communities of people who are drawn together by common interests and goals. A discourse community, like a speech community, a dialect, an interpretive community, or, in fact, like any social group that can develop into a discourse community, has compelling social functions. As it standardizes rules and expectations and begins to establish traditions, it makes discourse both possible and necessary. But at the same time and in the same way it establishes a mechanism of exclusion: standards for the type of discourse that will be -- and will not be --

accepted by the community. ("Why" 210-11)

Others have emphasized this dual nature of community. David Russell: "First community implies unity, identity, shared responsibility. Second, it implies exclusion, restriction, admission or non-admission" (53). Harris believes that communities "both instigate and constrain... the sorts of things we can say" (12). Freed and Broadhead suggest that communities "legislate conduct and behavior, establishing the eminently kosher as well as the seemly and untoward" (156). And James Porter indicates a similar distinction in his succinct definition: "A 'discourse community' is a group of individuals bound by a common interest who communicate through approved channels and whose discourse is regulated" (38). Finally, Piazza believes that a social perspective on writing highlights "the way in which social norms, roles and relationships, status, and other social factors place certain constraints on the functions and uses of writing in a particular setting" (113).

This regulatory side of community has not been much explored. As Lester Faigley argues, "commentators on writing processes from a social viewpoint have neglected the issue of what cannot be discussed in a particular community" ("Competing" 539). Just as discourse can be promoted and supported in community, so too can it be prohibited, and in many different ways. Explicit and implicit taboos block community members from addressing certain issues, in certain ways, at certain times, in certain places, and with certain people. Foucault describes this phenomenon:

in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality.

In a society such as our own we all know the rules of exclusion. The most obvious and familiar of these concerns what is prohibited. We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything.... these prohibitions interrelate, reinforce and complement each other, forming a complex web, continually subject to modification. (Archaeology 216)

In commenting on Foucault's view, Shumway says this:

"Discourse is no longer to be understood as the expression of the speaker, but rather the speaker is to be understood as part of a system of discourse practice" (102). Indeed, it can be argued that the relationship between the individual and the community is one of the central problems posed by the social constructionist perspective. As composition has adopted that perspective, expanding its focus outward from the text to the writer to the context, so too has it shifted the locus of responsibility and power in writing. Petraglia echoes Shumway in this explanation:

Compared to current-traditional and cognitive rhetorics which focus on the individual writer and how he or she can and/or should shape discourse to gain the audience's assent, one might say that constructionists focus on the ways in which the audience (that is, the community) shapes the discourse of its members. (40)

This shift in emphasis is not superficial. It wrests control of writing from the individual, and locates impetus and motivation -- even invention itself -- in the community. Such a view, in the extreme, transforms the writer into a

type of scribe: an agent of the community, whose task is to produce the discourse and knowledge the community desires. Though Swales does suggest that communities have expectations that determine the "appropriacy of topics, the form, function and positioning of discoursal elements, and the roles texts play in the operation of the discourse community" (5), his definition does not refer to what cannot be said and, therefore, it suggests only the positive or approving function of the group. More specifically, it lacks a reference to the power invested in the community and the exercise of that power through the application of discourse rules.

No limitation to discourse is value-free; a community's regulations are based on beliefs about what constitutes appropriate or desirable discourse. Naturally, such precepts result in controversy and conflict, as some individuals and some topics are silenced and others are permitted. However, in adding a regulatory function to the definition of discourse community, it is important to note that both positive and negative conflicts result.

The Role of Conflict

Where there are rules, there are those outside the law, those whose discourse is considered inappropriate or undesirable. As a result, one of the debates about conflict has focused on what Trimbur calls "the conflicts inherent in an unequal social order and in the asymmetrical relations of power in everyday life" (609). This is the conflict between

the people in power and the voices of difference or dissent. It is the conflict that underlies current challenges to the literary "canon," challenges that call for inclusion of works by women, racial minorities, Third World writers, and other marginalized groups. As Patricia Bizzell has warned, "we must acknowledge conflict as a frequent and perhaps inevitable concomitant of discourse community interactions" ("What" 14).

Acknowledging conflict is an important first step, because it takes the rosy sheen off early descriptions of discourse community and points to the forces of repression that cause some people to be in conflict with mainstream discourse. As composition studies has evolved, it has become politicized (see Myers, "Reality"; Trimbur). That is, some of the links between discourse, control, and conflict have been clarified. However, though acknowledged, there is much more to discover about the political dynamics of community and the role of conflict in the hierarchy of power.

Conflict within community occurs not only between the marginalized or repressed and those in power. Indeed, the agonistic nature of discourse -- the conflict inherent in human dialogue and conversation -- is so important to the life of the community that opportunities for dissent are sanctioned and organized. Debates, elections, panel discussions, editorials and letters to the editor, adversary and advocacy procedures in law and legislature, and dozens of other mechanisms invite and organize conflict. These opportunities for statement and counter-statement animate a com-

munity by introducing conflicting arguments, competing theories and, in truly democratic circumstances, the voices of discontent and dissent. According to Joseph Harris, we need "to view a certain amount of change and struggle within a community not as threats to its coherence but as normal activity" (20).

Another source of conflict is the variety of discourses within any given community. Although most theoretical and empirical accounts of discourse communities imply a single "conversation," there are many concurrent discussions in progress: "A key problem with the metaphor of a discourse community is that within real communities many discourses are simultaneously operating, some of which we participate in, some of which we are aware of but relate to passively, and some which operate behind our backs.... Those discourses we actively participate in often conflict with each other" (Faigley, personal communication). Moreover, Bizzell points out that we are likely to belong to more than one community and, therefore, may find ourselves caught in the "value contradictions that arise when discourse communities overlap" ("What" 3). In other words, we are engaged in many conversations, within and across communities.

How, then, can any sense of direction be maintained in what Foucault calls the "incessant, disorderly buzzing of discourse" (Archaeology 229)? In order to keep the conversation going, and to prevent the breakdown that acrimonious debate might cause, it is essential that a community have what Swales calls "common public goals"; this is what Biz-

zell says is "the crucial function of a collective project in unifying the group" ("What" 1). In the face of inevitable, even essential, conflict, there must be some reason to keep talking. That reason is a search for consensus. However, in an anti-foundationalist discipline, consensus is understood as a "utopian desire" (Trimbur 612), a permanently deferred agreement. We keep talking because we are all working on the same project -- understanding writing so we can teach it better, for example. Since knowledge is socially constructed, and the ideas and membership of discourse communities are in a constant state of flux, we cannot know something once and for all time. In other words, we will never have the answers to our questions about composition. Ironically, it is dissent that moves the community's conversation toward consensus. This dynamic seems a necessary paradox in discourse communities; where regulations or contexts for producing dissent do not exist, we create them. Berlin states it concisely: "Knowledge is dialectical, the result of a relationship involving the interaction of opposing elements" (Rhetoric 166).

We can return now to Swales' definition and make some alterations. To his "common public goals" a warning must be added not to expect attainment. Because there are no final answers, and because communities constantly change, the discourse of a community moves toward agreement but never arrives. The "collective project" of the community is the on-going construction of knowledge through discourse. Swales' notion of "mechanisms for intercommunication," which

keep the community alive through "information and feedback," seems not only acceptable but absolutely essential. This is the conversation. However, it is not always a balanced dialogue: some voices are louder than others, some ways of speaking and some topics are restricted or forbidden. The discourse of those who dissent causes conflict within the community's forums. Further conflict arises from a community's "discoursal expectations," the fourth of Swales' criteria. These expectations often take the form of genres and occasions which welcome and organize dissent.

These alterations to Swales' definition of discourse community enlarge the concept and bring it more into line with current discussions of community and discourse. Also, an expanded definition increases the types of group that might be considered by those interested in written discourse. Both Bizzell and Cooper argue that Swales' definition is too restrictive. Finally, the new definition sets the stage for the present study. (The setting described in this research is compared to this revised definition in Chapter Five.)

The Present Study

The purpose of this study was to paint a detailed portrait of a discourse community. Actually, "portrait" proved too static a metaphor and, instead, what emerged looks more like a film: a series of moving and interconnected images. The curiosity which motivated the study was central to the discipline of composition: How is writing social? That very

large question easily spawns a multitude of other, more specific questions having to do with writers, writing, and community:

What is the structure of the community?

- How does it operate?
- Do members have set roles and relationships?
- Are there levels of power?

What is the community's "goal" or "collective project"?

- What is its "business"?
- What knowledge does it create?

What are the forums for discourse?

- When and where does written discourse appear?
- Are the "mechanisms for intercommunication" (Swales) set or are they spontaneous?
- Where does feedback fit into these mechanisms?

Why are texts written?

- What purposes do they serve?
- How are these purposes determined?
- What are the implications, the consequences, of texts?

What is the form of texts?

- What variety of text exists? Why?
- How are generic features of text (e.g., format) decided ?
- How is form related to context?

Who writes texts?

- How are writers chosen?
- What is the role and status of the writer?

-- How do writers fit into the larger context?

How does context affect the writing process?

-- What activities surround and support texts?

-- What activities precede and follow texts?

-- When, where, and how do writers compose?

-- Do writers know their readers?

Who reads texts?

-- What reasons are there for reading?

-- When and where do people read?

-- Are texts public? Can everyone read them?

What rules of discourse are in effect?

-- Who can speak? When? Where? Why?

-- Who or what determines what can be said?

-- What control do writers have over their texts?

-- How do writers learn the rules of discourse?

What role does conflict play in the community?

-- Does conflict result from unequal power relations?

-- Is conflict sanctioned and organized by the community?

-- How does conflict help/hurt community members?

Discourse communities are complex and dynamic; these questions are only some of the many that could be asked. For example, this study examines a legal context -- the Youth Court -- but does not make a close analysis of legal discourse. Neither does it explore in any depth the roles or responsibilities of some members of the community, the judges and lawyers, for instance. Instead, the questions above focus primarily on the community's central texts and

the writers of those texts. This is largely a matter of my own curiosity and the genealogy of the study, which began as an inquiry into the writer's sense of audience and became an investigation of community. In the following chapter, the research literature supporting that evolution is reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO: Review of the Literature

Introduction

As the focus in contemporary composition theory has expanded to include the text, the writer, and the context, so too has the attention of composition researchers broadened. A study that was instrumental in this evolution was Janet Emig's 1971 monograph The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders. This seminal study was an important turning point for a number of reasons: "Emig provided a new direction for the field. Besides shifting the research emphasis from the written product to the writing process, she influenced research methods" (Freedman et al. 15). It is possible, then, to describe composition research as either pre- or post-Emig. Although not everyone adopted her questions or her methods, it was not possible after 1971 to conduct writing research without being influenced by Emig.

In her own review of the literature, Emig reported that "Most pieces of empirical research on the adolescent writer focus upon the product(s) rather than upon the process(es) of their writing.... Of the 504 studies written before 1963 that are cited in the bibliography of Research in Written Composition [Braddock et al.], only two deal even indirectly with the process of writing among adolescents" (19). There was a similar paucity of research on the writing processes of adults, with the exception of the Paris Review interviews

(Cowley; Plimpton), which are personal reflections on writing by authors of fiction. Most of the literature on composition at the time dealt with "dicta and directives about writing by authors and editors of rhetoric and composition texts and handbooks" (Emig, 7).

Between 1963 and Emig's study, writing research was concerned mostly with structure and form in completed texts. Christensen's 1967 study, Notes Towards a New Rhetoric, exemplifies this period. This particular strand of research was not abandoned when Emig's study appeared, of course, but instead continued to develop into what is now commonly called discourse analysis. Likewise, studies of various pedagogical approaches to composition continue to the present, and there is no shortage of contemporary "dicta and directives" about writing.

In the following review of research and related literature, three areas will be emphasized. First, I will review some of the most influential studies of the development of audience awareness or, more broadly, social cognition. These studies focus on when and how sensitivity to the reader appears in writing. Second, I will review some studies of the writing process, beginning with Emig's research and a few others from the early stages of writing process research, and including much of the work done by Flower and Hayes. Special attention will be paid to the concept of audience in these process studies. This area of research is most heavily influenced by the theories and methods of cognitive psychology and, generally, the audience in these

studies is conceived of as the writer's mental construct or representation. The third and final part of the chapter will focus on the concept of audience in studies of the writer in context. These studies are affected by a variety of disciplines -- most notably anthropology, sociology, and sociolinguistics -- and the ethnographic research methods associated with them. Typically, such studies describe the writer's audience as part of the setting or environment within which the writer works. It is within this group of studies that the present research most comfortably belongs.

Audience in the Development of Writing Abilities

The studies reviewed in this section can be distinguished from general studies of the writing process by their specific attention to the development of audience awareness or social cognition. In the majority of these studies, the subjects are children, usually of varying ages. Generally, these studies have two goals: first, to determine at what age people become sensitive to the needs of others when they write and, second, to identify how that sensitivity is demonstrated in different types of text.

An underlying assumption of these studies is that children are egocentric -- a phenomenon described by Jean Piaget. Wilkinson has pointed out that the term may have suffered in translation from Piaget's native French to English: "'Egocentric' might seem to imply the child is a selfish little beast, whereas no such moral judgment is intended" (75).

Rather, Piaget was referring to the tendency for children to occasionally use language which is not, primarily, communicative. The child, says Piaget, "does not bother to know to whom he is speaking nor whether he is being listened to.... This talk is ego-centric, partly because he does not attempt to place himself at the point of view of his hearer" (9), and partly, it is assumed, because he cannot put himself in his hearer's place. Two of the most important incarnations of Piaget's work in early discussions of the development of writing ability were those found in Moffett and Britton et al. Both Moffett and Britton encouraged instructional approaches which challenged students with ever more distant or "general" audiences. (For a review of Piaget's influence on early writing process and writing development research, see Kroll, "Cognitive.")

A further assumption is that degree of egocentrism is age-related: "the inclination and ability to delve beneath the surface attributes and actions of other individuals is a developmental product" (Flavell et al. v). In other words, the older the child, the less egocentric he or she is likely to be. Research in language development has indicated that children's egocentrism lasts longer in writing than it does in speech; that is, until a certain age children have more trouble decentering -- moving away from the self to see the concerns of others -- when writing than when talking. For example, Carl Bereiter suggests that, in speech, "toddlers appear capable of adapting messages to salient characteristics of intended receivers," but "under the difficult condi-

tions of one-way communication to unobserved or unrevealing receivers [i.e., when writing], much older subjects behave as if they could not take the receiver's point of view into account" (86). And Scardamalia, Bracewell, and Bereiter argue that "children as young as four years of age are able to adapt their speech in sophisticated ways depending on whom they are talking to" (2), but cannot or do not do so in writing. Barry Kroll ("Cognitive"), in his study of grade four students writing and speaking instructions for a game, found that "the evidence seems to warrant the general conclusion that decentration in writing [tends] to lag behind decentration in speaking for these fourth-grade children" (279). And, finally, the results of research by Crowhurst and Piché suggest that "variations in syntactic complexity for different audiences appear much later in writing than in speech" (106).

The reason egocentrism remains in writing after it has disappeared in speech is not clear. Vygotsky suggests that writing and speaking are separate dialects, and require quite different cognitive processes. Bereiter, Scardamalia, and Bracewell speculate that "writers have to develop in writing an executive function that is not learned from oral experience, a function that has the effect of keeping discourse production going from segment to segment" (8). Such a function is required because "the interactive nature of conversation makes it quite a different activity from the solitary nature of writing text" (Bracewell 410). In one of the most often cited discussions of the relationship between

speaking and writing, Bereiter and Scardamalia ("From Conversation") have proposed that writers must make up for the "solitary nature" of writing by creating a "conversational partner" during writing: "When people converse they help each other in numerous, mostly unintentional ways. They provide each other with a continual source of cues -- cues to proceed, cues to stop, cues to elaborate, cues to shift topic, and a great variety of cues that stir memory.... In written composition, all these supports are removed" (1-2). Rubin draws this implication: "any kind of normal composition requires an audience, and this audience must be constructed abstractly in cognition, construed, imagined, fictionalized, represented" (215).

Of course, there are other factors besides the loss of a listener that make writing more difficult than speech. Young writers are struggling with a remarkable variety of new discourse demands, from the physical difficulty of forming letters to the often arbitrary and "unnatural" conventions of written language. Bereiter: "it would seem that egocentric writing arises from an incapacity to take account of the reader and cope with all the other demands of writing at the same time" (86).

When do people begin to show concern for their readers and how does it manifest itself? Scardamalia, Bracewell, and Bereiter (also reported in Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter) conducted studies with students in each of grades four, eight, twelve, and third-year university. Students were asked to perform a variety of different tasks in the

studies, including describing geometric figures to students their own age as well as to general or undefined audiences; in addition, some tasks included the possibility of feedback from the audience while other tasks did not. There was evidence in one study to suggest that the "ability to use context-creating sentences was present in students as low as grade 4. Use of these audience-oriented devices increased markedly between grades 4 and 12, but not until grade 12 was their use clearly differentiated according to the needs of the audience" (16).

A number of other studies have confirmed the approximate age at which children appear to have overcome their egocentrism in writing. Smith and Swan note a significant difference between the audience-related adaptations in the compositions of sixth graders and college freshmen. Rubin and Piché found that twelfth graders and adults used more and more varied types of appeal in their persuasive writing than did students in grades four and eight. In a study of memo writing, Beach and Anson report that "college students and adults were more likely than younger participants to focus their memos on presenting their roles and establishing a relationship with their audience" (157n). Finally, Kroll ("Rewriting") found that among students ranging from fifth graders to college freshmen there was an increasing ability to modify a text for children, with younger writers being "word-oriented," and older writers (grade nine and up) becoming increasingly more "meaning-oriented."

These studies offer persuasive evidence that the ability

to modify texts increases with age, but are those modifications improvements or simply alterations? Kantor and Rubin: "Communication is first of all a social act, one which involves some kind of intention to affect and be affected by others. In order to successfully realize this intent, individuals must infer information about their audiences: their beliefs and attitudes, their experience" (58). If a person is able to make those inferences about others, can they use this knowledge to improve their discourse and, if so, how?

To answer the first part of the question, Rubin et al. ("Social Cognitive Ability") gave fourth graders four tests of "social cognitive ability" and compared their results to the scores given to the students' written work: "The results unambiguously sustain the view that social cognitive ability contributes substantially to overall quality of written composition" (304). In a similar study with college freshmen, Rubin and Rafoth found that there was a significant correlation between indices of social cognition and judged quality of persuasive discourse. Correlation between social cognition and expository discourse was not significant, possibly because readers are not as strongly implied by exposition as by persuasion. Nonetheless, the researchers state that "results of the present study indicate that sensitivity to audience provides an additional resource, beyond genre competency, upon which proficient writers draw even in writing tasks that are not manifestly persuasive" (19). Finally, Piché and Roen compared the social cognition and persuasive writing of high and low ability grade 11 students and found

that test scores on the former were "positively related to judgments of overall quality of the persuasive writing" (79).

What is it that audience-aware writers are doing that makes their texts better? The answer to this question is complicated by a variety of factors, including type of discourse, writer's relationship to readers, and writer's purpose in writing. However, it is apparent that sensitivity to the audience can influence a writer's lexical, syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical decisions.

Smith and Swan had sixth graders, freshmen, and college seniors rewrite a passage for three different audiences: readers at the same level ("make this passage better"), new readers, and "superior" adult readers. To compare among the rewritten passages, Smith and Swan used mean number of words per t-unit and words per clause for each level writing for each audience. They found that the college students reduced the complexity of the passage when they rewrote it for new readers by lowering the number of words per t-unit and clause (however, as one might expect, there was no significant difference between the passages the college students wrote for people at their own level and for adults). The grade 6 students rewrote the passage showing no significant syntactic changes. Crowhurst and Piché found evidence to support these findings in a study of students in grades 6 and 10 writing in three modes of discourse (narration, description, and argument) for two different audiences (friend, teacher). The students' writing was scored for

average number of words per t-unit and clause as well as average number of clauses per t-unit. In general, their findings suggested an increase in syntactic complexity (i.e., increase in all means) at both grade levels when students were writing argument and, for grade 10 students, when they were writing to their teacher.

Kroll ("Rewriting") used other measures to gauge the effects of audience awareness on the writing of students in grades 5, 7, 9, 11, and first year university. He asked the students to make a lexically difficult story more appropriate for children in grade 3. His general finding was that students at all levels were able to make the story more readable (as measured by Flesch's readability formula) by choosing either to retain, replace, or delete difficult words. Although the older students were, in Kroll's terms, "meaning-oriented" in their revisions while the younger students were "word-oriented," Kroll found that "students at all levels tended to replace more words than they either retained or deleted" (131). This last finding indicates a high degree of sophistication in the attention paid to their audience by all the writers, since it suggests they were substituting lexical items for a particular audience while attempting to retain the story's original meaning. However, by their attempts to simplify the story's moral, the older students demonstrated greater attention to semantic modifications.

Finally, some studies (Rafoth; Beach and Anson) indicate that reader-aware writers have more of what might be called

social or rhetorical strategies when dealing with audiences. Rafoth found that proficient freshman writers used more of the audience information available to them than did nonproficient freshman writers. For example, they acknowledged their reader's opinions and were sensitive to his concerns, even when they disagreed with him. Likewise, Beach and Anson, in a comparative study of students in ninth grade, twelfth grade, junior college, and graduate school, found that older students used "situational strategies": "rhetorical strategies which focus on the situation, self, audience, and self/audience relationships" (166). They also report a developmental trend "toward the use of 'situational' strategies with a predominating rhetorical focus on relationships" (174). According to Beach and Anson, "situational strategies" are rhetorical strategies which focus "on the situation, self, audience, and self/audience relationships" (166).

In conclusion, the developmental picture these studies paint looks like this: the young writer, already displaying audience awareness in speech, continues to appear egocentric in writing. That egocentrism is reflected in a failure to appropriately adapt text to different readers, and is probably caused by a number of factors -- including the physical difficulty of writing, a whole set of new discourse conventions, and the lack of a "conversational partner" in writing. As writing is mastered, the writer becomes increasingly more sensitive to the audience. As the writer "decenters," or moves away from herself, she is more able to con-

sider the knowledge, needs, and attitudes of her readers and to establish relationships with those readers. Eventually, that ability is demonstrated in all aspects of the act of writing, from simple word choice to complex rhetorical strategies. Studies of the writing process, the subject of the next two sections, have provided detailed explanations of the place of audience in the writing process.

The Writing Process: Early Studies

As mentioned, Janet Emig's study of the writing processes of twelfth graders represented a major shift in composition research. Her pioneering use of "think-aloud" protocol methodology introduced a radically new way of looking at writing, and her description of the writing process set the research agenda for a decade. Within the "laminated and recursive" (33) writing process, Emig saw ten "dimensions": 1) context of composing; 2) nature of stimulus; 3) prewriting; 4) planning; 5) starting; 6) composing aloud (drafting); 7) reformulation; 8) stopping; 9) contemplation of topic; 10) teacher influence on piece. Within each dimension, Emig identified a number of variables; some she borrowed and/or adapted from other researchers, some she defined herself after case study observations. Emig's own contributions to the list of writing variables continues to occupy researchers. She identified features of the planning, drafting, and revising components of writing, and demonstrated how any of the multiple writing variables might

interact with others to affect both the process and product of writing. In fact, her 1971 depiction of writing processes is far more complex and sophisticated than many of the models of process provided or inferred by subsequent research. For example, in her case studies, Emig set the individual writer's process in the larger contexts of community, family, and classroom.

This same awareness of the importance of surroundings led Emig to identify a range of possible readers for any text -- from the self-as-reader to the teacher to peers and family. Emig even distinguishes between different types of readers: intended readers ("audience"), teacher, family or peer readers ("interveners"), and teachers-as-examiners. In addition, Emig sees the various readers as influential at different times and in different ways throughout the process of writing. Emig does not treat audience separately in her analysis, because she sees readers as having a pervasive influence on the writer throughout the process -- sometimes as respondents, sometimes as judges, and sometimes as audience. Finally, again not directly, Emig appears to include among those she considers "audience" people who may or may not actually read a text but whose influence as a potential reader is felt by the writer. Thus, the student in her central case study, "proceeds as if what she writes will find an audience -- and one wider than a single teacher or investigator" (64). Included in this possible audience are the people from the writer's context: family, friends, and teachers (past and present). Emig, commenting on a concern

that continues to occupy writing teachers, suggests that teachers can have a strong influence, for good or ill, on their students' writing. She argues that an over-emphasis on correctness can inhibit student writers (93).

Although not nearly so influential as Emig's, two other studies of the early 70s also had an impact on the direction and method of writing process studies. Stallard's study examined "certain aspects of behavior of a group of good senior high school student writers" (207). Like Emig, Stallard attempted to delineate some of the external and internal activities of the writer. He observed the students while they wrote and interviewed them afterwards, but did not ask them to compose aloud. To help determine what distinguished the behaviour of good student writers, Stallard compared them to a group of randomly selected (i.e., average) students. He found that good writers spent significantly more pre-writing and total writing time than average students. No significant difference was found between the groups in terms of expressed concern for the audience. Mischel's research followed Emig closely. A single student served as a case study by writing a variety of different types of texts and composing aloud. Mischel used some of Emig's "dimensions" as categories for the discussion of findings. He does not report the student's comments, if any, about readers, but does note that the student "seems to be very aware of the necessity to conform his school writing to what is expected of him" (312).

If frequency of citation is any indication, a number of

other writing process studies completed in the 1970s were more important than Stallard's and Mischel's. Matsushashi video taped writers and reported on their behaviours during composing, especially their patterns of pausing and writing. Matsushashi's work has been praised as "thoughtfully designed and carefully executed" (Hillocks 19) and, although she does not provide much speculation on the nature of the pauses, she does assume that they "reflect time for the writer to engage in cognitive planning and decision-making behavior" (270). In order to confirm that assumption, Matsushashi used retrospective interviews with her subjects while they viewed videotapes of themselves composing. Matsushashi acknowledges the unreliability of such accounts, but believes "they nevertheless buttress the information available from the written compositions and from the videotapes" (280). Although Matsushashi reports no audience-related variation in pause time, she does report that average pause time was significantly greater when her subjects were generalizing than when they were persuading and greater when persuading than when reporting. In other words, amount or difficulty of cognitive activity seemed related to type of discourse, and one of the ways in which discourse types vary is in their implied writer-reader relationship .

In a more direct effort to uncover the writer's cognitive activity during pauses, Perl, following Emig, had her subjects compose aloud. Perl's contributions included a more detailed description of the writing process than had yet been provided, especially the recursive nature of that pro-

cess: "students wrote by shuttling from the sense of what they wanted to say forward to the words on the page and back from the words on the page to their intended meaning. This 'back and forth' movement appeared to be a recursive feature: at one moment students were writing, moving their ideas and their discourse forward; at the next they were backtracking, rereading, and digesting what had been written" (330). In terms of the audience, she reported that "The students in this study wrote from an egocentric point of view. While they occasionally indicated a concern for their readers, they more often took the reader's understanding for granted" (332). On the other hand, Perl says that the students were "prematurely concerned with the 'look' of their papers" (333), an observation which appears to support Emig's and Mischel's comments about the influence of teachers' criticism. Once again, however, as with Stallard's study, it is important to consider the audience identified by the writing task. Perl writes that "in this study it was assumed that the teacher was always the audience" (318).

In another often cited study from this period, Pianko lists 22 variables used to describe the writing processes of college freshmen. Only one variable -- "Writer's concerns - getting ideas across, mechanics (includes spelling) and usage, and the correct choice of words" (8) -- might have captured a writer's sense of the audience. But here again no audience is included in the writing tasks. Pianko suggests that the writing simulated school writing and "took place under fairly usual classroom conditions" (7). Under such

conditions, who is the audience? In indirect answer, Pianko refers to Emig's notion of the "context of composing": "If the writing is school-sponsored and must be written within limits set by the teacher, the composing process is inhibited" (11). This suggests that, by default, an audience is important. Writing for no real reason or reader results in the bleak picture of college writing that Pianko describes.

These earliest of the writing process studies contributed a number of important findings:

- Visible writing behaviour alternates between moments of pause and moments of "scribal activity," to use Matsuhashi's phrase. The ratio of pause time to activity, the pattern of pause and activity, and the duration of pauses and activity appear to be related to a number of variables, including the type of discourse and "location" within the discourse [e.g., longer pauses before paragraphs (Matsuhashi, 1981)].

- Visible and invisible writing behaviours are complex, interactive, and recursive. The writing process actually consists of a variety of sub-processes -- including planning, drafting, reviewing, editing, and revising -- which occur in no predictable or consistent order. As might be expected from Matsuhashi's findings about pause time, the frequency and intensity of these sub-processes appear related to types of discourse.

- In addition to discourse type, there are a range of other variables at work during the composing process. Emig, for example, identifies many factors which might impinge on the process, including a variety of readers and reasons for reading.

- Given the same or similar tasks, writers behave differently. In Stallard's study ("good" versus "average" writers) and in Pianko's study ("traditional" versus "remedial" writers), there appeared to be some similarity within groups and some difference between groups.

- Senior high school students and college freshmen appear to pay too little attention to intended readers and too much attention to such local or surface features of text as spelling and punctua-

tion. Suggested reasons for this include egocentrism and the overly critical audience provided by English teachers.

In conclusion, these early studies suggested a complex and dynamic writing process, one in which a virtually limitless number of variables might interact to influence a recursive set of sub-processes. Although scant attention was paid to audience in the design of early process studies, a sense of audience and/or readers was considered an important variable in the Emig study, and the lack of a real audience appeared to be as profound in the Pianko study. However, it took the next wave of process studies and a substantial corpus of developmental studies to identify just how important the audience is in the composing process.

The Audience in Later Process Studies

In their 1963 review of composition research, Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer listed 504 studies; while preparing his 1986 review of the literature, George Hillocks and his associates collected the titles of over 6,000 research studies (approximately 2,000 were eventually included in the bibliography). What follows, then, is a review of only a brief selection of the many studies on the writing process conducted in the past decade or so. Two methods of narrowing the review have been employed. First, only studies which shed some light on the role of the audience in the composing process are reviewed and, second, studies by Linda Flower and John Hayes predominate. Flower and Hayes are unquestion-

ably the preeminent researchers in writing process studies and were the most prominent proponents of a cognitive model of composition. (The Center for the Study of Writing, which Flower and Hayes presently co-direct, now proposes a social-cognitive theory of writing; see Freedman et al.) Their work may represent the best this area of research has to offer.

In their first co-authored article ("Problem Solving"), Flower and Hayes describe a series of cognitive skills, or "heuristics," some of which they claim are "the underlying problem-solving strategies good writers use" (453). This initial article puts the reader front and centre in the successful writer's mind. Planning and goal-setting is facilitated by focussing on the reader: "you start to write by trying to answer the blunt question readers always ask -- 'so what?'" (453). The process of invention or discovery is improved in a similar manner: "generate better ideas in words by simulating the response of various readers or listeners" (454). Flower and Hayes offer a variety of "constructing heuristics" designed "to help you figure out ahead of time how to structure your private version of a paper so it fills the gaps and fits the needs of another mind, namely, your audience" (458).

Revision of a "private version of a paper" into a public version acceptable and accessible to a reader involves changing "writer-based prose" into "reader-based prose." As Flower puts it in another early article ("Writer-based Prose") "effective writers do not simply express thought but transform it in certain complex but describable ways for the

needs of a reader" (19). Flower explains writer-based prose by drawing parallels to Piaget's notion of "egocentric speech" and Vygotsky's concept of "inner speech," which Flower explains share three features: both are "highly elliptical," both rely on language which is "saturated" with personal meaning, and both share an "absence of logical and causal relations" (21). Her point is that, without serious consideration of the reader, the writer cannot produce effective prose.

As Flower and Hayes' research progressed, the writer's audience was subsumed by a more complex, interactive variable: the rhetorical problem. Reporting on a comparative study of good and poor writers ("The Cognition"), they argue that "Good writers respond to all aspects of the rhetorical problem. As they compose they build a unique representation not only of their audience and assignment, but also of their goals involving the audience, their own persona, and the text" (29). However, good writers do not build that "unique representation" from scratch: "We think that much of the information that people have about rhetorical problems exists in the form of stored problem representations. Writers do no doubt have many such representations for familiar or conventional problems, such as writing a thank-you letter. Such a representation would contain not only a conventional definition of the situation, audience, and the writer's purpose, but might include quite detailed information about solutions, even down to appropriate tone and phrases" (25). The writer struggles to define a unique rhe-

torical problem from his stored representations of similar problems. Elsewhere, Flower and Hayes say that the rhetorical problem "should direct the entire process of generating knowledge and language" ("The Dynamics" 40).

The dynamic activity of writing that Flower and Hayes describe has been depicted in the form of a model (see "A Cognitive Process Theory"), in which three major writing process components are identified: the writing task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the actual writing processes. The task environment consists of the "rhetorical problem" (topic, audience, and "exigency"), as well as the emerging text. The writer's long-term memory contains knowledge of the topic, audience, and writing plans. And the writing processes include all the sub-processes of composing: planning, generating, organizing, revising, and so on.

It should be noted that the audience shows up in two places in the Flower and Hayes' model: in the writer's long-term memory as part of stored problem representations, and in the world external to the writer as part of the rhetorical problem or situation facing the writer. A writer is successful to the extent that she can make a fit between the actual audience and her mental representation of that audience. Hayes and Flower ("Identifying") "assume that writers have knowledge...about many audiences, e.g., children and Catholics, stored in long-term memory" (12).

The advantage of the Flower and Hayes' model was that it reflected the complexity of the writing process, as described by composition researchers of the time. In addi-

tion, unlike earlier depictions of the process (e.g., the so-called "three-stage" model), it captured the recursive-ness of writing that other researchers, most notably Emig and Perl, had identified. Questions remained, however, about the links among the components of the writing process and about the nature of the various sub-processes.

One sub-process to which Flower and Hayes paid particular attention was planning ("Plans that Guide"; "The Pregnant Pause"; "Images, Plans, and Prose"). The evidence from their "think-aloud" protocol research has led Flower and Hayes to speak with confidence: "much of the work of writing is the effort to consciously integrate one's knowledge, purpose, and audience by doing relatively abstract rhetorical planning" ("The Pregnant Pause" 230). Flower and Hayes conceive of planning as a hierarchical activity, with a number of sub-processes. In addition, they suggest that there are at least two layers within planning itself: rhetorical plans, or plans "to do," and linguistic plans, or plans "to say." To be successful, linguistic plans must be embedded within rhetorical plans: "Planning goes on at many levels. Sentence-level linguistic planning...is only part of the process of the mature or experienced expository writer. Writers spend time and conscious attention creating guiding rhetorical plans which represent not only the audience and the task, but the writer's own goals" ("The Pregnant Pause" 242).

Elsewhere, Flower and Hayes refer to rhetorical plans as "reader-focused" plans which "occur when writers spend a

great deal of time considering who their audience is and developing plans or strategies based on what the reader might assume, object to, or need to know" ("Plans that Guide" 48). Their conclusion, then, is that the audience affects all levels of planning, from low-level decisions about word choice to high-level questions of rhetorical intention and strategy. Because of the important and sensitive role played by the audience, Flower and Hayes, like many others, argue that the essentially readerless, arhetorical nature of most school writing, together with the teachers' role as critic, inhibit most young writers.

When the writer's attention turns from planning and producing text to reviewing and revising it, writing process research indicates the continued presence and importance of the audience. In one of the first studies of revision, Nancy Sommers compared freshman students and experienced adult writers. She found that student writers were more concerned with "rewording" than revision (i.e., sentence-level rather than rhetorical concerns), while experienced writers revised for form -- "revising as finding the form or shape of their argument" -- and out of "a concern for their readership" (384). Likewise, Flower ("Revising") argues that there is a "level of revision above correction, that is, the kind of revision that reorganizes or restates one's ideas in recognition of the needs of a reader" (62). Finally, Brian Monahan suggests that his study of basic and competent writers indicates "an interaction between audience, level of [writing] competence, and revision strategies" (300); his compe-

tent writers were "more likely to return during the course of their writing to consider [the] audience than were the basic writers" (301).

However, Faigley and Witte believe that experience or competence are not the only influences on revision:

The volume and types of revision changes are dependent upon a number of variables besides the skill of the writer. These variables might be called situational variables for composing. Included among situational variables are probably the following: the reason why the text is being written, the format, the medium, the genre, the writer's familiarity with the writing task, the writer's familiarity with the subject, the writer's familiarity with the audience, the projected level of formality, and the length of the task and the projected text. (411)

So, revision appears to change both developmentally and contextually; that is, capable writers revise at a higher or more rhetorical level than do basic writers, and the degree and type of revision is influenced by the nature of the writing task. However, in either case, the audience is a major factor in revision.

An interesting perspective on audience and revision is provided by Roth, who studied three college students' sense of audience during the composing of "an essay for publication on their campus" (48). Roth collected the students' notes, drafts, and revisions; in addition, he interviewed the students regularly during the "several weeks" it took them to complete the essay. He concluded that, "Just as the purposes and meanings of an essay grow and change as composing continues, a writer's audience may evolve as well" (50). In other words, Roth is suggesting that the audience is not

just a static mental representation or external reality which allows the "reader-focused" writer to determine needed revisions, but part of the writer's creation -- a projected reader who changes along with the writer's plans and purposes. He claims that his students "dramatically modified their preliminary audience representations as they worked on their essays" (49) and "gradually revised their audience representations until audience definitions more consistent with their own needs emerged" (50). The sort of dynamic interaction Roth describes does not seem accounted for in Flower and Hayes' discussions of the writing process.

Before leaving this discussion, it is worth examining a few comparative studies of the writing process. One of the earliest, by Marshall Atlas ("Addressing an Audience"), examined the differences between expert and novice writers in terms of audience awareness. Concerned that the findings of expert-novice studies were often confounded by differences in subjects' prior knowledge, Atlas designed an intricate study which he hoped would control that variable. All of his subjects were asked to role-play the same person in the same rhetorical situation, provided the same background information (including information about the audience), and asked to write the same documents. His experts were "college graduates with extensive writing experience," and his novices were "first-semester freshmen whose Verbal SAT scores were no greater than 500" (17). His general conclusion was that experts were "far more likely to go beyond the narrow constraints of the task, formulating plans in addi-

tion to listing arguments, generating new ideas in addition to re-organizing old ones... focussing on the concerns expressed by the intended audience" (23-24).

Flower and Hayes' own studies of expert-novice differences support this finding: "one of the major differences between good and poor writers [is] how many aspects of [the] total rhetorical problem they actually consider" ("The Cognition" 25). Studies by Sommers and Monahan, discussed above, add further evidence that experienced writers are more cognizant of more of the variables that writing presents, including the audience, and more likely to fashion texts which are sensitive to audience concerns.

In support of Faigley and Witte's argument that proficiency alone does not determine the nature of an individual's writing process, Rafoth found that information about the audience and writing ability were significant variables in his study of freshmen writers. Both good and poor writers with information about their reader made more adaptations in their texts with respect to that audience than did good and poor writers with no information about the reader.

Carol Berkenkotter ("Understanding") argues that "the internal representation or mental sketch a writer makes of the audience is an essential part of the writing process" (396), but she also points out that other factors besides ability or information can influence the writer's attention to audience. Berkenkotter compared the "think-aloud" protocols of rhetoric and composition professors with protocols from professors in other disciplines, and found that "Writ-

ers who wrote to persuade thought aloud about their audience four times more often and in twice as many ways as those who narrated personal histories" (393).

In a 1987 review of writing research, Freedman et al. state that writing process research has led to four "widely-accepted generalizations about the writing process":

1. Writing consists of several main processes -- planning, transcribing text, reviewing -- which do not occur in any fixed order; rather, thought in writing is not linear but jumps from process to process in an organized way which is largely determined by the individual writer's goals.
2. The writing process is a hierarchically organized, goal-directed, problem-solving process.
3. Experts and novices solve the problem posed by the task of writing differently.
4. The nature of the writing task changes the writer's strategies. (16-18)

To support these contentions, Freedman et al. are able to point to an impressive body of research on writing conducted between Emig's seminal work in 1971 and the mid-1980s, when writing theory and research began to expand its focus.

In summary, studies of the writing process have provided abundant evidence to confirm what developmental studies have suggested: consideration of the audience is a crucial aspect of successful writing. From planning to revising, and from sentence-level decisions to questions of overall rhetorical strategy, the effective writer keeps the intended readers in mind. Furthermore, the findings of process research have given some clues to the complexity of the rhetorical situation, to the interplay between cognitive and situational variables. However, except for the speculation that some

teachers cause student writers to imagine or invoke overly critical readers, process research has not looked to the origins of writers' representation of readers. In other words, we believe that the effective writer keeps the audience in mind, we also have some sense of some of the ways in which that mental representation of readers affects the writer's process and product, but we know very little about how that representation comes about. To learn more, we must observe the contexts for writing.

Audience in Context

As mentioned in Chapter One, dissatisfaction with a purely process approach to composition theory and research was being expressed as early as 1979: "The psychological approaches to writing which look into the well of the self as the source of all statements, have told us much about individual mental operations, but have excluded study of the social and cultural contexts in which writing takes place" (Bazerman, "Written Language Communities," 5). Even proponents of a cognitive theory of writing have suggested that the process focus was too limited: "We have come to understand that the cognitive processes of writers do not exist in the abstract but are, in fact, influenced by the goal and structure of the task to be accomplished, the social roles, shared history, and ongoing interactions of the people involved, and the wider social and cultural milieu" (Freeman et al. 3).

Most critiques of the cognitive process theory of writing have pointed to its limited focus on the individual writer, with little or no consideration for the larger contexts within which writing occurs. Some have attacked psychological approaches to writing (e.g., Clifford); others have questioned the designation of writing as a problem solving activity (e.g., Carter); still others have questioned the methods of process research (e.g., Cooper and Holzman, "Talking"; Dobrin; for a discussion of process methodology, see Chapter 3 of this study); finally, the epistemological basis of the approach has been challenged (e.g., Berlin, Rhetoric and Reality; Bizzell, "Cognition, Convention, and Certainty"; Connors; LeFevre; Reither). However, thoughtful analysis and criticism of the theory and its attendant research has admitted the importance and contribution of the cognitive perspective (e.g., Cooper, "Ecology"; LeFevre).

In the dimension of writing most relevant to this study -- the writer's relationship to the reader -- the process approach created a somewhat misleading impression. The following belief was a central tenet of most writing process research: "the crucial factors in an investigation of audience awareness are not salient characteristics of audiences, but the constructive processes operative in the mind of the writer. We need research efforts aimed at identifying the specific cognitive correlates of audience awareness" (Kroll, Cognitive, " 279-280). Such a research agenda develops naturally from a theory which views writing as primarily a thinking process. Throughout the process research

of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the writer was said to "construct," "imagine," "invoke," or "represent" the audience. Moreover, that audience was often presented as a mass or general readership, knowable (or representable) by such broad demographic variables as age, sex, and level of education. The assumption was that an understanding of the writer-reader relationship could be reached by careful examination of the writer's mental representation of the audience. In the research of the time, this seemed an entirely reasonable approach, especially considering the research tasks that writer-subjects were given. Faced with a request to write on a prescribed topic for a general or simulated audience (and, in many cases, for no stated audience), the writer naturally had to create a mental representation, since no prior relationship existed.

However, from a social or contextual perspective, Kroll's "constructive processes operative in the mind of the writer" are, to a large extent, determined by the "salient characteristics of audiences." In other words, as Freedman et al. argue, cognition and context interact: "writing, as product and process, is shaped by and shapes a social context, a context that includes the nature of the particular task, the roles and interactions of the people involved, and the wider social and organizational structure" (39).

Contemporaneous with a growing critique of the cognitive theory of writing was an increasing interest in the writing done outside of schools and classrooms. The writing-across-the-curriculum movement developed in response to an impor-

tant realization: in just about every possible aspect -- process, product, use, importance -- written discourse varies from one discipline to the next. Studying biology means mastering the discourse of biology; it means learning when, where, why, and how to speak the language of biology. This recognition sparked a new interest in scientific, technical, and nonacademic writing. As researchers began to investigate, they discovered discrepancies between existing descriptions of the writing process and the actual composing activities of writers. For example, Seltzer discovered that the engineer he was studying appeared to have a linear -- rather than recursive -- writing process, a finding which contradicted previous process research (see also Broadhead and Freed). In addition, a number of studies indicated that writers on the job often collaborated and that the very notion of the individual writer was not a stable concept (see Winsor; Ede and Lunsford, "Let Them Write" and Singular Texts).

Further motivation for looking outward from the writer to the larger context has been provided by the success of researchers such as Shirley Brice Heath, who has investigated the social nature of literacy, and the influx into writing of methods from anthropology, sociology, and other social sciences. Armed with reasons and methods to study writing from a social perspective, researchers have begun to take what might be called an "ecological" approach to writing. This approach looks at writing as part of interactive systems or environments. The language of groups, or dis-

course communities, is examined to discover how that language shapes and, in turn, is shaped by the community. Harrison explains:

It is important to recognize that the relationship between rhetoric and the community in which it occurs [is] reciprocal. Communities of thought render rhetoric comprehensible and meaningful. Conversely, however, rhetorical activity builds communities that subsequently give meaning to rhetorical action. (9)

In such a closed system, texts serve as "dynamic mediating mechanisms," to use Bazerman's term ("What Written"), by which he means that the community gives meaning to texts and texts help build communities of meaning. The goal of inquiry into these discourse communities requires a two-way gaze -- out to the community and its dynamics, and into the writer and his text. An initial stage in that approach has been taken by survey research -- studies which have provided a broad picture of many different writing contexts.

What Surveys Tell Us About the Context of Writing

Surveys of the writing done in a variety of business, technical, and professional environments have begun to illustrate the similarities and differences among writing contexts. In addition, such surveys have helped sketch the broad outlines of writing activity in nonacademic settings and laid the groundwork for further research. (Anderson has provided a helpful synopsis of data from 50 surveys.) Based on the findings of these studies, some things seem certain: writing is ubiquitous, time-consuming, and important.

Virtually every university graduate must spend an impor-

tant part of her or his working time writing (Harrison). Anderson's survey of 841 graduates from seven different university departments indicates that the time they spend writing on the job ranges from a low of 10% to a high of more than 40%. Faigley and Miller report that the 200 people they surveyed in a wide range of occupations and types of employment wrote for an average of 23% of their total work time. Within that sample, the people in professional or technical jobs spent as much as 29% of their time writing. (As Faigley and Miller point out, this represents more than one full day writing per work week.) Ede and Lunsford (Singular Text) sent surveys to 1400 members of seven different professional organizations, with a response rate of "just under 50 percent" (46). Their respondents reported spending 44% of their working time writing.

The engineers in Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller's study spent from 33% to 50% of their time writing; however, "writing was neither commonly discussed as a technique nor widely recognized as a key work activity" (286). Anderson also reports that many employers and employees, even those who write, look upon writing as a secondary aspect of work. Nonetheless, 93% of his respondents said that writing was of "some importance," and 57% said it was of "great" or "critical" importance. In Bataille's sample of 600 graduates of six university departments, he found that every group rated writing as important; perhaps unexpectedly, the mechanical engineers he surveyed rated writing as more important than did any other group -- giving it a score of 73 on a scale of

0-99. Ede and Lunsford (Singular Text) report that 98% of their respondents indicated that effective writing is either "very important" or "important" to the successful execution of their jobs (48). Brown's survey of 120 managers in four Montreal area companies provides support for these findings, both in terms of time spent writing and perceived importance of writing.

Most surveys report a remarkable array of document types, from simple memos and letters to complicated, multi-authored reports. Occupation clearly influences the frequency and type of document an employee might produce. Faigley and Miller, whose survey sample included people in a variety of jobs, state that "In a given week the median number of different types of documents that each individual wrote was 7.2" (561). Ede and Lunsford (Singular Text) identify over 13 different types of documents on their survey.

Ede and Lunsford (Singular Text) also report that 81% of their respondents occasionally use "boilerplate" materials to produce documents. Boilerplating consists of lifting sections of text from one or more documents for insertion into a new document. The engineer Selzer observed, "often borrows sentences, paragraphs, sections -- even graphics -- from past documents and incorporates them into new proposals, reports, and correspondence" (181; see also Spilka; Broadhead and Freed; Winsor). This form of collaboration is just one of many; in fact, the variety and frequency of collaboration in on-the-job-writing is perhaps the most consistent and surprising finding of writing context research.

Without citing any figures, Anderson claims that "Many writers collaborate when they write" (50), and Faigley and Miller report that only 26.5% of the people they surveyed never write with others. A full 87% of Ede and Lunsford's (Singular Text) respondents reported "that they sometimes write as members of a team or a group" (60). Perhaps because writing is not often discussed or considered a central part of the business of work (Paradis et al.), many of the respondents were not able to articulate the ways and means of their collaboration in writing. As Ede and Lunsford (Singular Text) put it, "we lack a vocabulary to discuss what people do when they write collaboratively" (63). Nevertheless, they were able to identify seven "organizational patterns," or group writing arrangements.

If all the formal and informal methods of writing collaboratively were tallied, the number of organizational patterns would certainly exceed seven. For example, a number of studies have described variations on the process of "document-cycling" (e.g., Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller). In the typical version of this process, a document goes back and forth between people before going on to its intended reader. Although a single author may be listed on the text, many others may have made suggestions, contributed ideas, and even written or revised sections of the document.

A further, less obvious method of collaboration consists of the formal and informal spoken language which surrounds texts in most settings. In her study of engineers writing for multiple audiences, Spilka found that writers who spoke

often to their colleagues and intended readers before, during, and after writing were more successful than those who did not. In fact, she argues that orality is more important than literacy in achieving writing success in organizations. Most writing in organizations comes out of and leads back into a constant stream of talk: meetings, oral presentations, telephone calls, chats at the water cooler or over coffee, a whole panoply of scheduled and spontaneous talk. Describing the writing process of an engineer he studied, Selzer says this: "he consults with colleagues. Either he speaks with advisors on the telephone...or he engages his coworkers in formal and informal conversation. The sessions amount to a sort of communal brainstorming activities" (180; see also Doheny-Farina; Winsor). Even single-authored documents within organizations may be considered collaborative: they are part of an on-going organizational conversation.

Finally, collaboration in workplace writing is more than the incidents of co-authorship or conversation described here. All writing contexts are imbued with the values, beliefs, and aspirations of the people in them. Texts which emerge from those contexts may be put on paper by individuals, but they are shaped by communal forces. The results of surveys and other studies support the conclusion that "the concept of authorship as inherently single or solitary is both theoretically naive and pedagogically flawed" (Ede and Lunsford, "Let Them Write," 120).

The survey findings which are most relevant to the present study, and most at odds with previous writing theory,

concern the audience or, more accurately, the writer-reader relationships found in most organizational settings. As the habit of collaboration described above makes clear, traditional notions of audience are being challenged by current descriptions of how and by whom texts are read. Not all readers of institutional documents are the intended readers, or those for whom the text is written. Like Emig's "interveners," some readers may comment on, even contribute to, texts bound for other readers. And, as Spilka's study makes clear, the intended readers of a single document may well comprise a disparate and multifaceted group rather than a monolithic audience. Differences in knowledge, attitudes, power, reasons for reading, relationship to the author(s), and even physical location may characterize the readership of a particular document.

Anderson summarizes the findings of many surveys when he comments that the writing done by his respondents "is read not by any single kind of reader, but by a variety of readers" (20; see also Faigley and Miller; Paradis et al.). Naturally, context and occupation are a major influence on the make-up of one's audience. Bataille's survey of graduates from six different academic disciplines found that "one's peers, whether within one's area of expertise (24%) or without (12%), constitute the most frequently addressed audience for all groups.... The second largest audience, at 17%, consists of superiors within the writer's own area"; however, "fully 54% of all writing is directed at people beyond the writer's own field" (278). Also, Bataille found

that "all groups write well over 50% of the time for external audiences" (279). On the other hand, Brown reports that 80% of the managers she surveyed wrote to internal audiences "very" or "most" often. Faigley and Miller, linking genre and audience, and using the median as their measure, report that "the 200 people we surveyed wrote 2.9 letters and memos to persons inside their company or agency and 5.2 letters to persons outside in a given week" (560), but they "wrote 2.4 reports a week to persons inside their company or agency, and 0.4 reports a week to persons outside" (561).

It is abundantly clear, then, that the general or mass audience provided for many textbook and research writing tasks cannot easily be found in actual writing contexts. Instead, writers engage others through their texts in a variety of relationships, with a single text occasionally creating or sustaining multiple and quite different links to readers who differ one from another on any number of characteristics.

A final note on survey findings captures the complex and unique nature of writing contexts. When asked, most survey respondents reported that they had learned to write on the job. Indeed, 83% of the managers Brown questioned said that work experience had taught them how to write and, in a complementary finding, Paradis et al. report that only 15% of their respondents believed that university writing courses were useful preparation for writing at work. Bataille states that the results of his survey "showed about five important kinds of experiences that respondents felt helped

to improve their writing, the most important of which was practice, or simple job experience" (279). Finally, 71% of 265 respondents in another survey identified on-the-job experience as the most useful method of learning to write (Paradis, Dobrin, and Bower, cited in Anderson). Anderson articulates the problem inherent in these findings: "It remains unanswered whether on-the-job experience is so important because of deficiencies in college writing courses or because the writing done at work simply cannot be taught adequately in the classrooms" (68). It may always remain unanswered, but these surveys and other research on writing in context suggests that better writing courses may not be enough. Although the writer may be taught some few universals of organizational writing, the roles and responsibilities of individual writers are shaped by the unique concerns and constraints of the discourse communities for whom and with whom they write. That is, writers may need what Geertz calls "local knowledge": knowledge that is specific to each community and that governs the community's production of discourse.

Descriptions of those concerns and constraints culled from a selection of research follows. First, case studies of academic and scientific writing are explored; second, studies of writing within nonacademic organizations are reviewed. A primary concern in this review will be findings about the writer's audience; however, unlike much process research -- in which the audience was considered a separate, even discrete, variable -- research into writing contexts

has treated the notion of audience somewhat more holistically, as an inextricable strand in the contextual web.

Writing in Academic and Scientific Contexts

As mentioned above, the writing-across-the-curriculum movement and current interest in the contexts of writing developed out of a realization that writing is not a universal skill, learned in English classrooms and easily transferable to all other subject areas. Simple observation shows that each discipline uses language differently. In other words, language is more than a set of discrete forms and structures which can be altered and shaped to fit different topics or bodies of knowledge. It is not just the medium for the transfer or expression of knowledge; rather, language is the way in which knowledge is created. Dorothy Winsor:

knowledge does not originate in an objective observable reality that is first understood and then described in numbers, words, or diagrams. Rather experience has to be encoded in symbols to be understood, and the symbols chosen affect subsequent perceptions. The selection of symbols and thus the understanding achieved are shaped by the social group the perceiver belongs to and in order to be accepted as knowledge must be validated by that group. (271)

A growing recognition of this dynamic and symbiotic relationship between knowledge and language has led to greater interest in the social construction of knowledge. Winsor again: "knowledge equals text, if text is understood as the complex interweaving of socially accepted symbols" (284). Interest in this "complex interweaving" has resulted in new

research goals and methods: "we cannot limit our studies to written texts, or to the controlled observations of individuals developed by cognitive researchers, but must get out into the field and enter the flow of language and work" (Myers, "Writing Research," 606).

One strand of this type of research has investigated the development of writing ability in classroom contexts. Most such studies trace their theoretical and methodological roots back to Donald Graves' work (e.g., "An Examination"; Writing). Over the years, Graves and his colleagues have provided a detailed picture of the classroom dynamics which sustain or subvert the development of writing abilities. Like Britton et al., Graves and others have discovered that many confusing and often contradictory writer-reader relationships can be found in the classroom.

Graves: "At first children are so delightfully self-centered that the audience has little effect" ("Blocking" 15). But later, as the child begins to learn about the conventions of written discourse, things change. One of the first graders in a study by Calkins was initially unconcerned by readers but, "By February, Sarah's audience was beginning to spoil her play. She wrote less.... Her increasing sense of audience deadlocked her into writer's block" (209). Calkins argues that "Mastery of conventions and concern with audience and final product are part of the process of play becoming craft" (213); however, much research suggests that the classroom context, especially the relationship between young writers and their teachers, creates an

overanxious concern for conventions and audience. The reason appears to be that school writing takes place in arhetorical contexts, settings in which a wedge is driven between purpose and reader. In natural communication, it is not possible to separate intention from audience, but in school the "teacher-as-examiner" (Britton et al.) has no authentic reason for reading and so the writer is left without a real communicative purpose.

Although the relationship between the writer and the reader represented by the "teacher-as-examiner" is clearly stifling, other aspects of the classroom context can support and nurture the student writer. Britton et al. have shown that a wide variety of possible audiences are available in the classroom, though not often exploited by teachers. When the teacher acts as a "trusted adult" or a partner in a written dialogue, to cite two of Britton's suggested roles for teachers, the student writer places meaning above convention. Likewise, the student's peers may read written work in different roles, sometimes as intended readers, sometimes as co-authors, sometimes as editors. Since the early work of Graves and Britton and their colleagues, many elementary and secondary classrooms have become more dynamic, social places in which to read and write. Examples of this transformation can be found in issue after issue of such journals as Language Arts and the English Journal.

When researchers moved into university classrooms, they found conditions which often resembled the elementary contexts Graves and others had described. But, consistent with

the findings of the developmental studies reviewed above, they also discovered writers who were ready to be more sensitive to readers' needs. Newkirk, for example, says this about the freshman subject of a case study: "She was worried by the fact that background information was not supplied [in her text]. She worried that the emotions so vivid for her might not be vivid for the reader" (143). But this attention to meaning, to communication, results, Newkirk suggests, because this student and the others in his study were "in the context of a writing course where they could write on topics of personal importance to an interested audience" (144); that audience was the teacher who, quite consciously, avoided the role of evaluator when first responding to student writing.

Kantor's ethnographic case study provides ample evidence of the value of social interaction in the classroom. He acted as a participant-observer in a creative writing course in which students provided plenty of both official and unofficial feedback to each other on works-in-progress; in addition, their talk about unusual or shared experiences often led to writing. His three conclusions are worth noting:

1. ...I perceived a relationship between roles that the teacher assumes and a development of a sense of audience.... [the teacher's] approach helped students move from a more limited view of the teacher as examiner or generalized other to a broader conception of teacher as trusted adult and one with whom they had a particular relationship. (90)

2. ...students can experience growth, both cognitive and affective, from participating with others in a common social and intellectual enterprise. Audience awareness in particular is enhanced as students use their peer group as a transition from

writing for themselves or teachers to writing for wider audiences, as they build images internally of those audiences.... Again, I would call attention to classroom talk as crucial to the development of the sense of community. (91)

3. ...we need to be alert to signs of growth in students' writing and intuitions about writing.... In particular, we can watch for hints of movement from egocentrism to audience awareness -- greater use of concrete detail, infusion of personal voice, or qualities of imagination and humor that suddenly appear in students' writing and indicate that they are seeking to engage their readers. (91)

Herrington reached similar conclusions in her study of two university chemical engineering courses and the contexts they provided for writing. Herrington surveyed students and teachers, acted as a participant-observer in each class, and conducted open-ended and discourse-based interviews with students. She echoes Kantor's emphasis on the importance of the group: "learning to participate in a new forum means learning the ways of that forum: learning, for example, the kind of knowledge claims it is appropriate to make and what counts as good reasons to support those knowledge claims. It also means learning accepted writer and reader roles as well as the social purposes that are to be served by writing" (355). Furthermore, Herrington insists that teachers have an important contribution to make, not just as dispensers of knowledge, but as participants in the community's conversation:

teachers have a good deal of influence over the nature of the community that is created in a given class. One of the ways they exercise this influence is through the role they assume and expectations they project as audience. In this study, the findings show that students' perceptions of their role as writers, the purposes for writing, and lines of reasoning they should use varied with their percep-

tions of their audience's role and expectations.
(356)

In another study, Freedman recorded changes in the writing of six students in a university law course. The six students were followed for a full academic year. The lectures they attended were observed and tape-recorded, they were interviewed weekly, and their essays were subjected to syntactic and rhetorical analysis. A comparative analysis showed that the law essays these students wrote were "more syntactically complex than the other academic essays written by these same students at the same time" (15). Moreover, their law essays began to display characteristics of legal discourse: a dialectical analysis, or what Freedman calls a "contrapuntal" structure, with point followed by counterpoint. In other words, these students were producing a specific type of discourse as a result of their experience in the law course. In addition, they "began to look at and interpret reality in certain prescribed ways" (27-28).

Freedman, like Herrington, believes that the instructor was active in the process of inducting these students into a particular way of thinking and writing. As she puts it, "in his lectures and in the readings he assigns, the professor models both the lexicon as well as the persuasive strategies or lines of reasoning that are conventionally accepted as valid in the discipline" (32). However, this is not simply a case of a teacher telling students how to write and think: "the instructor, the teaching assistant, and the students are all active agents in a complex collaboration which

results in the students' performance as members of a new discourse community" (33).

McCarthy's study of an individual student in three different university courses offers further proof of the influence of context on writing, particularly certain aspects of the context: the writer-reader relationships, the place and importance of talk, and the function of texts in the social dynamic. McCarthy found that the student's success at writing in the three courses, his enjoyment of the courses, his perception of his own learning in the courses, and his development as a writer were all tied to social aspects of the writing contexts. She paid special attention to the student's relationship to the teachers: "This is a particularly important role relationship in any classroom because it tacitly shapes the writer-audience relation that students use as they attempt to communicate appropriately" (256). In addition, she noted the importance of the formal and informal opportunities to talk afforded by the three courses and the uses to which texts were put.

In brief, and in paraphrase, McCarthy's findings were these: in one class, writing was used to test academic competence -- that is, the teacher read as examiner -- and there was very little social interaction between the student and his teacher or his peers. In two classes the teachers served various audience roles -- trusted adult, fellow writer, experienced member of the discourse community -- and provided many opportunities for talk with and among the students. In these classrooms, writing was used for expression,

exploration, communication, and learning. McCarthy's conclusion was that the social conditions of the classroom -- that is, the subtle interactions among writer, readers, reasons for writing and reading, and the formal and informal opportunities for speech which support written texts -- have an immense effect on the student's experience and development of writing.

When the research focus moves from the classroom to the study of discourse in professional academic and scientific contexts, a number of interesting parallels can be drawn. Like the student essay, the academic or scientific article may seem like an asocial text: the product of the individual mind destined for a generalized, even anonymous, audience. To complete the popular image, the writer should be seen sitting alone, hunched over a library carrel or laboratory table. But the reality contradicts the image. Just as the classroom context influences the writing product and process, so too does the larger and less clearly defined context within which professional academics and scientists write. The research in this area, though limited, illustrates the rich social interaction which precedes, accompanies, and follows from publication. But context influences more than the process: even the most "objective" and apparently impersonal scientific and academic articles show ample evidence of social dynamics, as the studies reviewed below indicate.

Ironically, scholars in the area of English studies, ostensibly experts on the products and processes of writing,

are among the last to recognize the value of exploiting a basic social process for writing: collaboration. While people in other fields, especially medicine and science, have long taken advantage of the social interaction afforded by multiple authorship, theorists, researchers, and instructors in such disciplines as literature and composition have stressed the solitary author (for an extensive discussion of this phenomenon, see LeFevre; Ede and Lunsford, Singular Text). However, the emphasis on the lone author has recently begun to change.

Ede and Lunsford have written numerous articles together and, inspired by that experience, have conducted research into collaborative writing in the workplace (see Singular Text for a full report on that research). Underlying their concern and curiosity was a "growing recognition of the dichotomy between current models of the composing process and methods of teaching writing, almost all of which assume single authorship, and the actual situations students will face upon graduation, many of which will require coauthorship or group authorship" (Lunsford and Ede 71-72). But they have also recognized that cooperation among a number of authors is not the only way collaboration occurs in writing: "even in our single-authored essays we are indebted, directly or indirectly, to a whole range of people in ways that we could never fully acknowledge" (Ede and Lunsford, "Let Them Write," 122).

In anecdotal reports on their own collaborative process, Ede and Lunsford have stressed two related aspects of social

interaction which they found of central importance: talk and a variety of audiences. "We wish especially to emphasize the frequency and proportion of talk in the process" ("Why Write...Together?" 152); this talk, of course was the actual conversation which went on between themselves in the act of co-composing, but there was more: "Another, and for us extremely potent, audience was the authors [cited] -- with whom we have seen ourselves in silent dialogue" ("Audience Addressed," 168). Other audiences, including colleagues, editors, and the intended readership helped as well. A single person can provide different readings: "one person can take on the role of several different audiences: friend, colleague, and critic" ("Audience Addressed," 168). And the intended readers constitute a group well known to Ede and Lunsford through conferences, years of discussion, and reading. In other words, they write for their own discourse community -- a group which, though disparate, shares many concerns, questions, issues, and ideas with Ede and Lunsford. Their conclusion following the case study of themselves as writers is this: "the term audience refers not just to the intended, actual, or eventual readers of a discourse, but to all those whose image, or actions influence a writer during the process of composition" ("Audience Addressed," 168).

Berkenkotter ("Decisions") describes a similar multiplicity of audience in her study of Donald Murray's writing process: "Much of [Murray's] planning activity as he revised his article for College Composition and Communication grew out of reading [colleagues' and friends'] responses to his

initial draft and incorporating his summary of their comments directly onto the text" (161-162). In addition, his concern for the eventual readers was an influence: "His most substantive changes, what he calls 'internal revision,' occurred as he turned his thoughts toward his audience" (166; see Spilka for definitions distinguishing "audience" from "readers").

In a similar study, Reither and Vipond examined the various types of collaboration that accompanied and assisted the writing of a coauthored academic article (published in TEXT: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse). Reither and Vipond traced the evolution of the article through all of its drafts. They interviewed the authors and collected information on all of the spoken and written feedback the authors had received. In their analysis, Reither and Vipond identify the writers and readers involved with the article as belonging to one or more of three "realms" of collaboration: literal coauthoring, "workshopping," and "knowledge making."

In the first realm, the two authors, one from English studies and the other from psychology, "accomplish things together that neither could have accomplished alone" (858). They draft separately and together, revise each other's work, and talk frequently. In the second realm, a variety of people -- from friends and trusted colleagues, to editors and anonymous reviewers -- offer feedback and suggestions. In effect, these people participate in a workshop on the article. Finally, in the third realm, the authors "collabor-

ated with others who had written and spoken before them as, collectively, they constructed and reconstructed the field of knowledge in which their project found a fit" (860).

In a different field entirely, Myers ("Texts as Knowledge Claims") followed the revision of two biologists' grant proposals. He collected all major drafts of each proposal, as well as readers' comments on the proposals and writers' responses to the comments. In addition, he examined drafts of articles on the research proposed. Finally, he interviewed the writers. Like Reither and Vipond, Myers found an extraordinary variety of collaboration in the preparation of ostensibly single-authored proposals. The biologists were assisted by colleagues in and out of their labs and by members of their communities who served anonymously on various review panels. As Myers points out, the biologists "learn the rhetoric of their disciplines in their training as graduate students and post-docs, but they relearn it everytime they get the referees' reports on an article or the pink sheet [assessment] on a proposal" (240).

Beyond these immediate readers -- friends, colleagues, reviewers, editors -- there is a larger group of eventual or intended readers. The intended readers of a text, the subscribers to a journal or the members of a discipline, for example, are also clearly involved in the collective construction of discourse and knowledge. Walzer examined three articles by the same authors about the same research data; the data concerned the experience of children of divorced couples. Two of the articles were published in what might be

called professional journals, with slightly different perspectives on psychology, social issues, and family life. The third journal was a popular, though specialized, magazine (Psychology Today). Walzer limited his analysis to the articles' introductions and was able to point to major differences, from word choice to topics covered to organization and style. He makes this interesting speculation: "the analysis suggests that [the authors] discovered the several significances of their data in reflecting on the data from the points of view of several 'interpretive communities,' the readerships of the different journals" (154-155). In other words, the writers did not merely create a different arrangement, emphasis, or level of difficulty for each article, they actually appeared to understand their own experience (data) or construct their own knowledge when they were able to see with the eyes of others.

Walzer offers one more subtlety or dimension to the discussion of audience. Because journals may draw the same readers but focus on different types of knowledge, "the audience changes even if the readers do not" (155); that is, the individuals may remain the same, but their expectations and intentions when reading changes. This observation fits with current discussions in literary criticism, especially reader response theory, where the reader's contribution to the creation of meaning is now recognized. Meaning is not there on the page; rather, it exists in the negotiations among writers, readers, and texts.

This "reciprocal shaping of shared knowledge and shared

documents, each affecting and being affected by the other" (Winsor 284), is perhaps most striking when observed in scientific discourse, since this is a language often considered "objective" and unaffected by personal or social bias. Bazerman's review ("Scientific Writing") stands as a fair record of the work done in this field. A recent example of the study of writing in science is Bazerman's book-length report on the experimental article in science (Shaping). (For another recent example, see Latour.) Since much of this work is heavily influenced by the sociology of science, Myers' ("Writing Research; "Review of") discussions of a number of books in that field, and their implications for composition, offer a valuable introduction to the issues. In commenting on those books, Myers says, "The idea that there could be a sociology of scientific knowledge implies that science, like other belief systems, can be explained in terms of social and historical contingencies" ("Writing Research" 597).

An example of a recent study in this strand of research is the analysis of biology articles conducted by Greg Myers ("The Pragmatics"). The texts Myers examined come from a corpus of articles on the structure of the DNA molecule. By applying to writing the same methods used in the study of politeness in conversation (see Brown and Levinson), Myers was able to show that "the basic framework for the analysis of politeness can be extended to written texts, if one can analyze the relations of writers and readers instead of assuming a simple two-sided Speaker/Hearer relation" (30).

Myers makes this claim based on his close examination of those features of scientific texts which demonstrated complex interrelations between and among writers and readers. But relations between writers and readers, as researchers from Emig (1971) to the present have shown, are not necessarily limited to the relationship between the single author and the intended readers; in other words, writing is also not a simple Author/Audience relation.

Myers joins with Ede and Lunsford, Reither and Vipond, and others in confirming LeFevre's contention that invention is a social act when he describes the process of bringing a scientific article to press: "all the research articles in my corpus have multiple authors, and in each case there would be complex processes of comment by colleagues, review by referees and editors, and embedding of the writing of earlier articles" (4). In other words, even before the text is read by those for whom it was written, other readers intervene with a variety of different kinds of reading. And, although Myers does not address this aspect of politeness, there is a kind of etiquette or protocol in formal and informal review processes. Asking a colleague to read a draft may be collaboration, but it is also often polite and politic.

Within the texts, Myers found considerable evidence of sensitivity to readers. He makes an interesting distinction between the "exoteric audience," that is, "the wider scientific community, to whom a research report is supposed to be addressed," and the "esoteric audience," or "immediate

audience of individual researchers and particular groups of researchers doing similar work" (3). His suggestion is that the esoteric audience represents the intended readership, but that the conventions of scientific discourse require that texts be ostensibly addressed to the entire community. As he puts it, the esoteric audience "overhears" the article. It is this concept of overhearing that produces the need for politeness and the occurrence of what Myers, following (Brown and Levinson), calls "Face Threatening Acts" (FTAs).

FTAs are defined by Myers as impositions on other members of the field. Such impositions include "requests, blamings, thanks, and invitations" (2), and their existence points to the complex interactions that underlie the supposedly impersonal transmission of knowledge in scientific texts. For example, one category of FTA consists of "politeness devices," and a sub-category of these devices, known as "negative politeness and hedging" includes "strategies assuring the readers that the writers do not intend to infringe on their wants, their freedom to act" (12). Myers explains: "Hedging is a politeness strategy when it makes a claim, or any other statement, as being provisional, pending acceptance in the literature, acceptance by the community - in other words, acceptance by the readers" (12). Writers are hedging when they use conditionals (would or could), modifiers (probably), personal constructions (We believe...I would like to argue...), and impersonal constructions (These findings indicate...The data imply...). These strategies, Myers

argues, "work by indicating the writer's deference before the scientific community" (18). His analysis of the DNA articles reveals a variety of other techniques, all of which indicate a subtle interplay among writers and readers. Myers' conclusion is that, "while writing does not involve face to face contact, it is a form of interaction" (30).

Writing in Nonacademic Contexts

The image of the solitary writer composing for the mass audience may continue to prevail in some discussions of academic writing but, as a result of research into nonacademic settings, that image has been shattered in discussions of organizational writing. Much of the research in this area, and certainly some of the earliest, comes from Lee Odell and Dixie Goswami. In fact, a major method in the study of writing in context is the discourse-based interview developed by Odell and Goswami to get at the tacit knowledge expert writers clearly have but apparently cannot articulate (see Odell, Goswami, and Herrington for a description of and rationale for the discourse interview; also, a discussion of the interview can be found in the following chapter).

In their first reports on their research, Odell and Goswami argued that current (i.e., cognitive) theory could not explain ongoing writing activities. The process research of the late 70s and 80s tended to focus on individual, contextless writers who wrote, usually, for an hour or so. No documents preceded or followed these research tasks, as would be the case for documents in most nonacademic (and

academic) settings. Odell and Goswami set out to rectify that situation by devising a method of eliciting information about the choices writers made while engaged in writing on the job. Briefly, what they did was this: they began by identifying choices writers made when writing, including choices about form of address, provision of context (background), references to self, elaboration, level of abstraction, and formulaic conclusions. Then, in a given individual's text, they substituted an alternative form for an identified choice. The alternative forms were chosen from other documents the writer had produced. For example, if a writer had chosen to address "John Smith" as "Dear John," Odell and Goswami offered him "Dear Sir" or "Dear Mr. Smith," forms of address the writer had used in other letters. The writer either accepted or rejected the alternative offered and explained why. Choices as explained by the writer were categorized as either audience-, writer-, or subject-based; some choices were labeled "arhetorical. "

When Odell and Goswami used the discourse-based interview with 5 administrators and 6 caseworkers in a social service agency, they discovered that the great majority of choices made by the writers had rhetorical, as opposed to conventional or rule-based, rationales. That is, the choices reflected "a concern for elements of the rhetorical context: speaker, subject, and audience" (244-45; this research is reported in two places; quotes here are from the 1984 article, and quotes in Chapter Three are from the 1982 article). For example, 66% of the choices made by the admin-

istrators were categorized as audience-based. Perhaps the most interesting finding was that writers "never relied exclusively on one type of reason in justifying a given type of choice" (256). In other words, writers make decisions based on the complex interplay of speaker, subject, and audience. For instance, choosing the level of abstraction might be related to any one element of the rhetorical situation or, more likely, to a combination of elements: "a particular type of choice would elicit numerous references to a reason other than the primary one cited" (245). Despite this apparent recognition of the inseparability of rhetorical elements, Odell and Goswami suggest that "researchers might group writings according to their various purposes or speaker-audience relationships and then determine whether writers vary linguistic features according to their purposes or the speaker-audience relationship" (256). Other studies of writing in context, however, suggest the impossibility of separating purpose from audience.

Knoblauch, for example, argues forcefully that efforts to "taxonomize discourse according to purpose and reader expectation...encourages a static, monolithic view of such concepts as 'purpose' and 'reader,' oversimplifying them after the fact in a way that fails to preserve the vitality of their function in actual composing" (154). Instead, Knoblauch suggests that we should see rhetorical purpose as "operational": "Operational purposes are specific to real situations" (154). He interviewed 250 writers in a management consulting agency in order to test his hypothesis that

there was a distinction between "generic and operational perceptions of intentionality" (155). His findings confirmed what Moffett and Britton et al. have argued: there is no such thing as a pure example of the traditional rhetorical modes. Knoblauch's writers did not set out to persuade, describe, or narrate; rather, their goals were somewhat more complicated: "These writers set out to achieve several conflicting purposes simultaneously while responding to the needs of several, quite different intended readers, each with different expectations of the writing" (155). However, studies of organizational contexts have thrown new light on the concept of purpose; in this light, rhetorical purpose, like audience, is seen to be more than simply a mental construct of the writer.

For example, evidence from Selzer's often cited case study of Nelson, an engineer, suggests that in some nonacademic contexts rhetorical purpose may initially appear generic, since many reports are standard or formulaic. The writer he studied "nearly always writes in response to a specific request...and since he writes certain kinds of documents again and again, his consideration of purpose has become ingrained, almost second nature" (180). Although rhetorical purpose has usually been characterized as the writer's prerogative, an intention fine-tuned or "operationalized" by consideration of readers, the rhetorical purpose Selzer describes here is related not only to readers but to the routines of work and the normal function of various documents. That purpose, though fairly consistent across

repeated versions of the same type of document, is nonetheless complicated and intricately tied to readers. In fact, the reports and proposals Nelson writes, like many organizational texts, imply a certain type of reader with some specific and identifiable need, but the writer must still make subtle alterations in each document to account for the actual readers of generic documents: "Because Nelson knows that his audience will approve or reject his proposals or judge his reports useful or deficient, he thinks about their needs at the very beginning of the writing process. He considers past associations with clients or telephone conversations with them to stimulate his thinking.... By the end of a project, Nelson often knows his readers so personally that meeting their needs is not difficult" (180). Selzer's study suggests that writers in organizations must mix knowledge of their organization's mandate and function with knowledge of specific readers. In other words, they must understand and work within their particular community, while, at the same time, adapting its near generic rhetorical purposes to changing situations and different readers. Studies of organizations help to uncover the workings of this subtle dynamic.

Another early and influential study of writing in a non-academic setting is Doheny-Farina's research into the collaborative writing processes of a group of computer software company executives. Through the use of participant-observation and discourse-based and open-ended interviews, Doheny-Farina sought to answer a central question: "How do

writing processes shape the organizational structure of an emerging organization?" (162). His description of the organization and its writing processes suggests a reciprocal relationship. The hierarchical structure of authority in the company determined the nature of the collaboration and, thus, the writing produced. The president "was the principal writer and voice of the company" (176). However, as the group became more truly collaborative, the "writing process played a significant role in the reapportionment of authority among the participants by challenging the president's authority and by providing an opportunity to resolve the power struggle between the president and the other members of the executive committee" (177).

Doheny-Farina's study, and others like it, began to challenge the notion that the writer develops goals and plans in cognitive isolation. Studies of nonacademic writing showed writers carrying out the goals of the groups within which they worked. It became possible to reconceive the writer-reader relationship. Instead of an atomistic individual writing to an audience, the writer could be seen as a member of a community enacting the writing goals that arose out of the needs and expectations of the group.

Odell threw further light on this reconception. He looked at legislation analysts in a state bureaucracy and discovered that, "In judging the appropriateness of choices that appear in their writing, writers in this study relied on their awareness of attitudes and prior experiences that are shared by others in their organization" (251). When explain-

ing the choices drawn to their attention by a discourse-based interview, Odell's analysts "frequently referred to elements of the culture in which they worked. Specifically, they referred to:

- Widely shared attitudes or values, in their own offices or in other branches of the agency.
- Prior actions or previously held attitudes.
- Ways in which the agency typically functioned" (252).

Naturally, they also "frequently justified their choice of content by referring to the reader to whom their writing was addressed" (255).

Odell, like Selzer, describes a tension between institutional patterns and individual instances of writing. Odell: "the analysts' sense of audience seems a bit paradoxical. In one sense, there is an immediacy about the writer-reader relationship. Yet, in another sense the analysts seem quite remote from their intended readers" (257-58). The paradox seems to grow from a dual relationship: one between the writer and the readers implied by generic documents, and the other between the writer and real readers. For example, a progress report implies a reader in need of certain information for some particular purpose; the writer-reader relationship is defined in this case by the roles writer and reader play within the corporate culture (or discourse community) and vis a vis the document. The role relationship will be affected by a variety of institutional factors: levels of power and authority, decision processes, nature of the work, and so on. However, when real people fill those

hypothetical roles, there is likely to be a variety of different factors at work, including the idiosyncratic personalities of the writer and reader and the history of their interactions. In other words, institutional goals, the routines of work, and set writer-reader relationships result in genres, but individual writers and readers create variation.

Broadhead and Freed's study of writing in a business setting is an attempt to identify some patterns in that variation. They suggest that certain "norms" are among the variables affecting the writer in context: "As writers create a text, they are guided by at least five norms: cultural, institutional, generic, personal, and situational" (10). They go on to argue that "All of these norms...may be thought of as allegorized readers. That is, a writer has not one reader over his shoulder, but five -- each corresponding to one of the norms" (14). Their definitions of the norms:

...cultural norms govern choices to make the text adhere to a culture's idea of good behavior and good communication in a written document.... In their broader application to the writing process, cultural attributes such as age, sex, power, education, skills, prestige, ethnic background, and available resources (such as time and money) affect each writer's performance. (11)

Institutional norms govern rhetorical decisions designed to make a text adhere to accepted practices within a company, profession, discipline, or the like.... [For example] documentation practices (such as APA or MLA), in-house style or format guides, group or disciplinary injunctions such as 'do not use the first person,' and so forth. (12)

Generic norms are those imposed by a particular genre of writing, such as a proposal, a familiar essay, a request for bids, a personal letter to a friend or relative, and the like.... As applied to texts, these norms establish conventions of arrangement, argumentation, and physical format.

(12)

Personal norms are the linguistic or rhetorical preferences of a given writer. For example, one writer might hoard time to write a letter at one sitting, while another might write a letter in stages over several days. (13)

Situational norms guide writers' decisions about adapting their tone, style, format, selection of content, level of technicality, and so forth, to achieve their own purposes and meet their readers' needs in a specific rhetorical situation. Thus, these norms involve the intended readers' supposed values, the nature of the subject or issues being discussed, and the demands of the rhetorical task. (13-14)

Although Broadhead and Freed's norms each describe aspects of the pressure felt by writers in organizations, it may well be impossible to find a pure example of any one norm. For instance, how can institutional norms be distinguished from situational or generic norms? Genres such as the proposal or the progress report change from one institution to another. Each incarnation of the genre develops in a particular setting as a response to individual writers and readers, group objectives, the nature of the organization's work, and many other situation-specific influences. Indeed, recent discussions of genre (Bazerman, Shaping; Miller; Smart) blur the distinctions between and among the norms described by Broadhead and Freed. However, their study illustrates the enormous complexity of writing in organizations, and suggests the great variety of demands and expectations the writer must meet.

A description of one final study should be sufficient to fill out a picture of the writer in social contexts. Winsor investigated the writing of an engineer in a large manufac-

turing firm; in particular, she examined the preparation of two documents -- a progress report and a conference paper. She collected all the notes and drafts that led to the final versions of the documents and she interviewed the writer. Her belief, based on much of the work cited in this chapter, is that writing in organizations is a highly social process:

Collaborative writing at work doesn't just mean more than one person working on a report. It means that any individual's writing is called forth and shaped by the needs and aims of the organization, and that to be understood it must draw on vocabulary, knowledge, and beliefs other organization members share. Writing at work is firmly embedded in a social web. (271)

In support of this belief, Winsor describes the extensive interaction that accompanies and accomplishes the composition of company documents. And she explains the ways in which that interaction contributes to the company's knowledge constructing process, or "inscribing process," to use the term that she borrows from Latour and Woolgar (they, in turn, borrowed the term from Derrida).

According to the engineer-writer, the progress report, which comes early in the inscribing process, is "important because it causes the people working on the projects to summarize them, to think about what they did in the last month, what they accomplished, what they're going to do next. Putting it into words makes you think about it more than just doing things" (280). The progress report is assembled by the engineer-writer from a variety of other people's documents. It both leads to and reports knowledge, but knowledge which is very much in-the-making. Later in the inscribing process,

the engineer-writer reports on the projects to the annual conference of a technical association. Winsor says this about that conference report:

the most striking feature of the paper's writing is the degree to which it was collaborative. Even though a single engineer apparently 'wrote' it, almost everything from deciding to write the paper, to generating the material, to the actual working of the sentences was done communally. (274).

Conclusion

In their influential discussion of the place of "audience" in the composing process, Ede and Lunsford ("Audience Addressed") describe a continuum of readers -- from those that must be "invoked" by the writer, to those whose existence is immediate or real enough to the writer that they can be "addressed." In a sense, the audience "invoked" is the audience in the mind, the writer's mental image or representation of readers, and the audience "addressed" is the audience in the world, the actual people for whom the writer composes. The studies reviewed in this chapter suggest that the two terms, "invoked" and "addressed," might also stand for opposite poles in the writer's development from egocentrism to membership in discourse communities. The child must learn to imagine readers; the adult in an organization or discipline must learn to address the specific needs and expectations of the other writers and readers in the discourse community.

Although very young children demonstrate sensitivity to

their listeners, they appear to lack that empathy for readers. In other words, once a real and present audience is removed, children initially seem unable to replace that audience when writing. The young writer's developmental progress is marked by a gradual increase in the ability to take readers into consideration. In Bereiter and Scardamalia's terms, the writer learns to invoke a "conversational partner." That ability grows steadily from early in elementary school through to the senior high school and university freshman years, when writers can modify their writing depending on their readers and rhetorical intentions. Thus, for example, proficient university students can make adjustments in all aspects of their writing -- from word choice, to syntax, to rhetorical strategy -- based on their goals and information about the knowledge, needs, and attitudes of their readers .

Studies of the cognitive process of writers, including expert-novice and protocol studies, have indicated that this increased awareness of readers affects virtually all aspects of the writing process. According to Flower and Hayes, the various sub-processes of writing -- planning, organizing, revising, and so on -- are influenced by the knowledge of readers stored in the writer's long-term memory (in a sense, the writer's repertoire of "invoked" readers) and the actual readers identified by the writing task or rhetorical problem. From this cognitive perspective, success in writing is dependent on the match between the writer's mental representation of the readers, the "invoked" audience, and the

actual readers, or "addressed" audience.

Studies of writers in academic and nonacademic settings further complicate our understanding of the writer-reader relationship. When writers are observed in context, they appear most preoccupied with the actual readers with whom and for whom they compose. Within discourse communities, much about writing -- topics, arguments, genres, rhetorical intentions, even the sub-processes of writing itself -- is shaped by the group rather than the individual. This leads to a dramatic reconception of rhetoric, since it locates much of the control of discourse in the community. Invention, arrangement, and style of discourse can be viewed as collaborative rather than individual acts. To quote Petraglia, "constructionists focus on the ways in which the audience (that is, the community) shapes the discourse of its members" (40).

The next chapter describes the methods used in the present study to investigate the social nature of writing in the context of Quebec's Youth Court.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

Introduction

This research takes the form of a descriptive case study. The "case" under study is one unit within a large social service agency. That unit is responsible for dealing with adolescents accused of committing crimes; it is described in detail in the next chapter. This chapter explains the methods used to gather information for that description.

Case studies have been used extensively in the short history of composition research. Many of the seminal studies in the field are case studies (Emig, Perl, Graves, Sommers, Pianko, Mischel, Stallard, and some of Flower and Hayes' work), and along with other naturalistic methods the case approach continues to be popular among composition researchers, for a variety of reasons. In his definition of the method, Robert Yin (1984) points to three of those reasons:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that:
-- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when
-- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which
-- multiple sources of evidence are used. (23)

As discussed in Chapters One and Two, a social constructionist perspective on writing assumes that the phenomenon of writing cannot be understood outside of its context. The research response to that belief has been investigations of

writing in a range of "real-life" contexts, both academic and nonacademic. Furthermore, writing researchers have been encouraged to use a variety of sources for their evidence (see, for example, Doheny-Farina and Odell; Bereiter and Scardamalia, "Levels of Inquiry").

The case study emphasis on singularity is another reason for its use, since there is a recognition that no two writing contexts are identical. Stake and Easley say this about the method: "In the case study, there may or may not be an ultimate interest in the generalizable. For the time being, the search is for an understanding of the particular case, in its idiosyncrasy, its complexity" (C:30).

On the other hand, Stake argues elsewhere that, "As readers recognize essential similarities to cases of interest to them, they establish the basis for naturalistic generalization" (7). In order for this "naturalistic generalization" to occur, however, case study readers must be supplied with "descriptions that are complex, holistic, and involving a myriad of not highly isolated variables" (7). This fits with current interest in such methods as ethnography and the "thick descriptions" (see Geertz, "Interpretations") which go with it. According to Kantor, Kirby, and Goetz, thick description is "the concrete and careful account of particular events" developed from ethnographic data which has been "reduced, organized, and combined to form an authentic verbal picture of the group or culture being studied" (296).

Unlike experimental research, for which there is a purposeful narrowing of interpretive possibilities by the care-

ful control of variables, naturalistic studies and their thick descriptions involve the reader in the interpretive act. Stake explains it this way: "case studies will often be the preferred method of research because they may be epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience and thus to that person a natural basis for generalization" (5). Kantor, Kirby, and Goetz make a similar point, with specific reference to language instruction, when they suggest that ethnography "provides a methodology which follows the contours of English teaching more closely than other approaches. In being flexible, discovery-oriented, and concerned with the particulars of context, the dynamics of social interactions, and the construction of meanings, ethnography is appropriate to the study of the multidimensional aspects of language instruction" (305); the same attributes make naturalistic methods appropriate to the epistemology which currently guides the study of writing in context.

A final reason: a social theory of writing "is less codified and less constituted at present" than other perspectives on writing (Faigley, "Competing," 534), and therefore the exploratory nature of case studies make them ideal. In the early stages of a new area of inquiry, the goal is to generate questions, to identify the variables in a phenomenon rather than to control them, and "the characteristics of the [case study] method are usually more suited to expansionist than reductionist pursuits" (Stake 7; see also Yin; Graves, "An Examination").

Because of the highly confidential nature of the work

done in the setting I chose to investigate, it was not possible to conduct a pure ethnography. However, the methods employed in this research were an attempt to replace ethnography's participant-observer role with multiple sources of information, so that contradictions or inconsistencies in data might be discovered. As Yin argues, "the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence -- documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations" (20). My intention was to find out as much as I could about writing in a particular setting, while interfering as little as possible in the work of the people being studied. My goals matched those described by Stake and Easley for their own case study research:

Our plan was to describe what we found in a way that would be useful to any other person who could not be there to visit for himself. We were not impressed with our ability to see what others could not, but with our opportunity to be where they could not. (A:2)

Finding and Entering the Setting

One of the crucial steps in conducting descriptive research in a natural setting is finding a location which is appropriate to the investigator's research interests and questions. Even when the researcher does not wish or expect to conduct a pure ethnographic study, many of the ethnographer's concerns are relevant at this point (for a description of those concerns, see Doheny-Farina and Odell, pp.503-535). Once a potential site has been selected, a num-

ber of steps remain. First, the researcher must have his research accepted by the authorities. Second, he must gain reasonable access to the setting; although unlimited access is difficult to obtain, given concerns for security and confidentiality in most organizations, the access granted must be sufficient to allow the researcher opportunities to understand fully the workings of the setting. Third, once on-site, the investigator must develop productive relationships with the participants. Indeed, these initial stages in on-site research are so important, they should be considered part of the study's methodology, and will be treated as such here. Even if the investigator is not interested in finding a "typical" or randomly selected sample, some careful attention must be paid to potential research sites. In selecting a site for the present study, a number of concerns were paramount:

-- Would the writing done in the setting offer a range of genres, reasons for writing, and readers?

-- What blend of research procedures -- interviews, observation, protocols, discourse analysis -- might be possible in the setting?

-- Would the management or other authority support the study and tolerate occasional time taken from the employees' work?

-- Would participants be able and willing to conduct their day-to-day activities, especially their writing, given the investigator's presence and research procedures?

-- How might the investigator's presence and procedures alter the participants' usual beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, methods, etc.?

-- How might the participants benefit from involvement with the investigation?

This last question was crucial for two reasons. First, management and workers in most situations are loath to give up valuable work time for no gain; in other words, it is not always possible to count on altruism as a motivation for research participation. Second, and more importantly, participants who stand to gain from the inquiry are likely to feel that they are collaborating in the study rather than serving as its guinea pigs. The investigator is an outsider and must rely on the participants' experience and willingness to share; as a result, their goodwill is essential .

Researchers interested in observing writing as a social act often cannot choose a perfect setting and participants but must, instead, settle for a "sample of convenience": an available setting and interested if not ideal participants. Once I had a set of general research questions, I began the process of selecting a research setting by narrowing down the possible locations. In fact, for a number of reasons, I made a specific choice to conduct this study in a social work setting. First, I assumed that the topics and terminology of social work would be easier to understand than, say, business or technology. Second, I was more interested in social work and its settings and affairs than in other fields or concerns. Third, the most pragmatic of reasons, I had contacts in a number of social agencies, contacts which would allow me to get my foot in the door, but no more. The "foot" I got in was a research proposal, necessarily somewhat vague, since I had only a limited notion of the settings, people, and documents I proposed to investigate. I

sent the proposal to three social service agencies.

The proposal listed a number of questions about writing in organizations, but my initial interest in writer-reader relationships, although mentioned, was not stressed. Research methods which seemed appropriate to the questions posed and to a variety of settings were described. The proposal also acknowledged the need for confidentiality in social work settings, promised complete anonymity for workers and their clients, and stressed the flexibility of the methods described (e.g., observation of and interviews with clients was listed but identified as optional). Finally, the proposal made suggestions for how I might repay the agency and its employees for their time and cooperation. These suggestions included offers to prepare a report on writing in the agency, to give a series of writing workshops to any interested employees, and/or to provide confidential individual reports to participants who wanted feedback on their writing and suggestions for improvement.

The proposal went to the Directors of Professional Services at two agencies and the Executive Director of another. All three expressed interest but indicated that there were others to consult. Researchers may get their first glimpse of an organization's complexity and levels of power as their proposal or research request makes its laborious way through the system. Two agencies politely turned down my request early in the process. In the third agency, the proposal went from the Director of Professional Services to the Executive Committee to a research committee. Once it had received

approval at those points it was passed along to the supervisors of three different units within the agency. One supervisor turned the request down, another was interested but could not generate any enthusiasm among his staff, and the third invited me to present the proposal to her team of social workers.

The unit to whom I presented my proposal was known as "Court Services." The social workers attached to the unit worked with adolescents who had run afoul of the law. Since the workers had to write many different documents about these adolescents, or "clients," the setting was ideal for my study. At my first meeting with the social workers (and throughout my work with them), I emphasized their role as experts and mine as novice. Again, I felt it was extremely important that the participants saw themselves, truly, as participants and not as "subjects." I provided a brief overview of my research interests and questions and described some of the methods I could use. Finally, I suggested how I might repay workers who agreed to participate (i.e., workshops, individual feedback on their writing) and I offered to take each participant to lunch at my first individual meeting with them. Although it may seem trivial, the offer of lunch proved crucial in the delicate task of building relationships with participants. For one thing, the offer seemed to convince a number of people to participate. More importantly, the offer and the event established a person-to-person rather than researcher-to-subject link between me and the social workers (Paradis et al. included lunchtime

interviews in their data collection procedures).

Seven social workers agreed to participate, as did their supervisor. A sequence of methods was determined, including interviews and "think-aloud" protocol collection, and a rough schedule plotted (an exact schedule was impossible since workers could not predict with any accuracy the times at which they would be called upon to write).

Procedures

Although deliberate observation and notetaking were not part of this study's methodology, much of my sense of the people and their work came from informal conversations with the workers -- in restaurants, offices, and over the telephone. It took over a year to collect all the data, and during that time it was necessary for me to visit the unit's office on many occasions. For the first three months of the study, while I was conducting initial interviews and setting the workers up with tape recorders and so on, I dropped by the office approximately once a week. If one or another of the participants happened to be free, we would have a cup of coffee and I would ask about the unit and its work. As mentioned above, taking participants to lunch proved a most effective method of establishing links that transcended the traditional researcher-subject relationship. In fact, I had lunch with each of the case study participants twice and, although I did not consider the coffee breaks or lunches a formal part of the study's methodology, their influence on

me was crucial. When I did turn to the disembodied voices on tape or the often broken and semi-coherent language of transcriptions, my informal contacts with the workers gave me a strong sense of the faces and personalities behind the data. There were, however, more formal procedures conducted, and a description of those follows.

Initial Interview

All seven social workers were given an extensive interview as the study's first data collecting procedure. The interview was a scheduled, standardized interview; that is, it did not happen spontaneously but, rather, was scheduled in advance and had standard questions for all seven workers. Although some responses inspired questions that were not asked of every worker, all the 27 questions on the interview (Appendix 1) were asked of everyone. The interview was written in cooperation with the unit's supervisor. She placed the unit in the context of the larger social service network, filled me in on the work of the unit, and suggested topics and questions for the interview.

Advice from a variety of sources (e.g., Odell and Goswami) led to a standard introduction to the interview: each worker was given a brief description of my research goals, a reassurance of anonymity, a restatement of my belief in their expertise, and an overview of the interview.

My intention during the interviews, all of which were tape-recorded, was to elicit as much information as possible by being a curious and good listener. I encouraged the par-

participants to say everything they could think of on every topic or issue the questions raised. Luckily, it was not necessary for me to feign interest. The shortest interview was 45 minutes and the longest was over an hour. At the end of the initial interview, arrangements were made for the second procedure: protocol collection.

"Think-Aloud" Protocols

A protocol is simply a record of the way a process or procedure happens. In writing research, a protocol refers to the report given by a writer in the act of composing; the writer "thinks" aloud and the resulting tape-recorded monologue is the protocol: the record of how the writer's process occurred. Since Janet Emig first used protocols in her 1971 study, the methodology has made enormous contributions to our understanding of writing, especially through the work of Linda Flower and John Hayes. In addition, a similar procedure has provided important insights into a range of other topics, including response to poetry (e.g., Dias) and the relationship between writing and learning (Newell).

However, in recent years, the method has become controversial. It has been criticized for what it implies about the act of writing and how it affects the very writing process it seeks to explain. For the purposes of the present study, and to counter criticism of protocol methods, a number of alterations were made in usual protocol procedures. An overview of the arguments for and against the method will help explain those alterations.

Protocol analysis is one of the methods Atlas ("A Brief Overview") calls "reactive" and Flower and Hayes ("Uncovering Cognitive Processes") call "process-tracing" (211). It is one of a variety of methodologies that uses verbal reports as data. Although the variations are virtually limitless, there are basically two types of verbal report. One, in which people are asked to report on their performance of a task while they are engaged in the task, is called concurrent verbalization. The other, in which people report on the performance of a task after completing the task, is called retrospective verbalization. According to David Dobrin, Herbert Simon and Allen Newall developed the method of concurrent verbalization known as protocol analysis in order to study human problem-solving. Simon, along with Anders Ericsson, is perhaps the most frequently cited proponent of verbal reports, including protocols (see Protocol Analysis).

In defense of protocol methods, Ericsson and Simon ("Verbal Reports") argue that, "With the instruction to verbalize, a direct trace is obtained of the heeded information, and hence, an indirect one of the internal stages of the cognitive process" (220). "Heeded information" refers to the information people attend to when making a verbal report (this distinction between the direct and indirect traces is crucial in critiques of the method). Ericsson and Simon, and Hayes and Flower ("Uncovering Cognitive Processes"), believe that protocols are preferable to other types of concurrent verbalization, including directed verbal reports, in which

people report aspects of the task specified by the experimenter: "thinking aloud, as distinguished from explanation, will not change the structure and course of the task processes" (Ericsson and Simon, "Verbal Reports," 226). Ericsson and Simon, and others (e.g., Steinberg), are careful to distance their method from the "discredited process of introspection" (216), a procedure developed by late nineteenth-century psychologist Wilhelm Wundt that required special circumstances and extensive training of subjects (see Steinberg, 700). So, although Ericsson and Simon are careful to distinguish among the different types, they believe "that verbal reports, elicited with care and interpreted with full understanding of the circumstances under which they were obtained, are a valuable and thoroughly reliable source of information about cognitive processes" ("Verbal Reports," 247).

Flower and Hayes, the chief proponents of protocol methods in writing research, are less cautious in their enthusiasm: "Unlike introspective reports, thinking aloud protocols capture a detailed record of what is going on in the writer's mind during the act of composing itself" ("A Cognitive Process Theory," 368). Elsewhere they make this claim:

If accurately handled, thinking aloud protocols yield enormous amounts of information without significantly changing the focus or content of thought. Giving a protocol is much like talking to oneself while writing. Naturally, a verbalization will not capture all the associations, resonance, and richness of a given thought, but it will tell us that such a thought was occurring. More importantly, protocols give us an extraordinarily detailed, blow-by-blow record of a writer's constantly shifting conscious attention, and by cap-

turing the flow of concurrent thought processes, protocols avoid the unreliability of retrospective generalization. ("The Pregnant Pause" 233)

Others have argued that, despite their limitations, protocols give us "a rich source for information about some of what the writer is thinking as she is writing" (Berkenkotter, "Understanding," 389; see also Berkenkotter, "Decisions and Revisions," and Murray, "Response"). If protocols do describe a "layer of conscious thought," as Bereiter and Scardamalia suggest ("Levels of Inquiry," 13), they are invaluable in the investigation of writing, since so much of writing is invisible. From the time of their introduction to writing research by Janet Emig, through their extensive use by Flower and Hayes and others (e.g., Mischel; Monahan; Newell; Perl), protocols have given us a picture of the writing process unavailable by other means. Most importantly, perhaps, protocols were the first empirical method of examining the writing process; their use created a discipline of research in composition studies, and helped revitalize the field.

Despite its obvious contributions, protocol research has come under attack. Some of the criticism grows out of a dissatisfaction with what is seen as a falsely "scientific" approach to writing (e.g., Connors; Bizzell, "Cognition, Conventions, and Certainty"), while other critiques are associated with the social constructionist perspective on writing described in Chapter One. Perhaps the major criticism of protocol analysis is that it misrepresents both the

mind and the cognitive process (Cooper and Holzman, "Talking" and "More Talk"; Dobrin). David Dobrin:

Any form of empirical investigation presupposes a model of the phenomena being investigated. The utility of the empirical method depends entirely on the cogency, accuracy, and validity of the model.
(713)

Dobrin goes on to argue that protocol analysis is questionable because it is based on a model of the mind which is "simply implausible" and because of the assumptions about the nature of writing that the model requires: "that writing is a problem-solving process, that it consists of slow, focally-attended steps, and that other mental processes don't affect it" (723). Cooper and Holzman, Carter, and Bizzell make similar criticisms of the problem-solving model of writing. Furthermore, Dobrin suggests that protocols can only support the model they are designed to test, never challenge it, since they are an artifact of the procedure, and not truly a record of someone thinking-aloud. In other words, when a person is asked to report his or her thought processes while completing a task, the resulting monologue may be a function of the reporting and not a reflection of cognition.

The central question here is whether protocols are direct evidence of cognition or reports on cognition. The difference is crucial. Swarts, Flower, and Hayes argue that, "protocols give us a new window on the process and capture in rich detail the moment-to-moment thinking of a writer in action" (52), but Cooper and Holzman counter: "While actions

resulting from cognitive processes can be observed (although such observation is itself not free of problems), the processes themselves simply cannot be" ("Talking," 77).

Bereiter and Scardamalia take both sides of the argument to task: "Critics of thinking-aloud procedures miss the point, but so do some enthusiasts, who seem to believe that thinking-aloud protocols offer direct insight into mental processes" ("Levels of Inquiry," 13).

Protocols collected for research purposes, including my own, do make writing look like a remarkably goal-directed, problem-solving activity. Writers stick to the task, attend to one aspect of it at a time, rarely mention anything unrelated to the writing, and move forward in a deliberate, focused manner. Cooper and Holzman ask: "Do these people never fantasize about, say, lunch?" ("Talking" 83). But the procedure rules against what might be construed (both by researcher and subject) as irrelevant and the writer stays "on topic"; thus, the problem-solving model is confirmed. Dobrin: "A different model might make perfect sense of those irrelevant traces, and the plans about lunch would turn out to be an integral part of the writing process" (719).

A self-test is worthwhile here, as Dobrin suggests (722). When you write, do you attend consistently and directly to the task? Do other thoughts intrude? Do you always know what you are doing and why you are doing it? If, like me, you daydream, go blank, have private thoughts, or wrestle mentally with ideas in visual but pre-verbal form, then you may suspect that protocols are not complete pictures of mental

activity. As Faigley and Witte argue about protocol methods, "Many activities in writing occur simultaneously - from unconscious processes ranging from spelling to planning and monitoring. A lot is going on and not all of it gets verbalized" (412).

If we accept the lesser claim that protocols represent reports on cognition and not cognition itself (Ericsson and Simon's distinction between direct and indirect traces), we are still left with some problems. Is the protocol subject reporting what she is thinking, what she thinks she is thinking, what she thinks she should be thinking, or what she thinks the researcher thinks she should be thinking? And, in any case, "it is surely inevitable that a written text will entail significant decisions that cannot be remarked upon when one composes aloud" (Odell, Goswami, and Herrington, 234; Atlas, "A Brief Overview," makes a similar point). It may well be, as Cooper and Holzman have argued, that protocols produce "data for a theory about what certain writers will say about the writing process, but not data about the writing process" ("More Talk" 89). Those on both sides of the protocol argument acknowledge that many cognitive processes become automated with experience; in other words, the more one does something, the less one is focally or consciously aware of doing it (see, for example, Flower and Hayes, "Uncovering Cognitive Processes"; Cooper and Holzman, "More Talk").

Further complaints about the method concern its affect on the writer/subject. Jack Selzer: "composing aloud can be

extremely unnatural, artificial, and obtrusive" (179). Cooper and Odell say that "composing aloud requires practice and effort and can therefore be used only in case studies where several meetings are planned with a participant" (114). Others, even users of the method, have made the same criticism (e.g., Berkenkotter, "Understanding," 389; Odell, Goswami, and Herrington 233; Hillocks 58). Donald Murray served as a subject for a protocol study and found a great difference between composing aloud at his own pace, in his own workroom, while writing on a topic he himself had chosen and composing aloud in a one-hour time limit while writing on a topic the investigator had chosen: "The one-hour protocol was far worse than I had expected.... I have rarely felt so completely trapped and so inadequate.... I had a desperate desire to please" ("Response" 169); clearly, the time and topic constraints created for Murray an unnatural writing environment.

This criticism of protocol methodology grows out of a concern for ecological validity in writing research and from a conviction that "writing and what writers do during writing cannot be artificially separated from the social-rhetorical situations in which writing gets done, from the conditions that enable writers to do what they do, and from the motives writers have for doing what they do" (Reither 621). That protocols are usually taken from writers writing on topics provided by the researcher, in settings arranged for the research, and for the sole purpose of generating data, makes many people suspicious of the data and their

generalizability. Cooper and Holzman once more: "any research methodology that simply ignores the context in which writing takes place cannot produce valid data" ("More Talk" 91).

Swarts, Flower, and Hayes have said that "protocols give us a new window on the process and capture in rich detail the moment-to-moment thinking of a writer in action" (53). However, Bereiter and Scardamalia counter with this: "We prefer a different metaphor. When you read the protocol of an expert composing aloud, you are watching a conductor under the spotlight in a darkened opera house. You do not see the orchestra performing in the shadows, and so, if you were very naive about such things, you might imagine that the music was issuing from the conductor's baton" ("From Conversation" 44n). This is a warning not to misinterpret protocol data.

The fundamental difference between previous uses of protocol analysis and its use in the present study concerns interpretation. My intention is not to interpret the protocols as if they were windows into the cognitive processes of my participants; rather, my interpretation will seek to explain how social forces affect the social workers as they write. I am not interested primarily in the inner activity of the writers, but in the relationships, conventions, constraints, and dynamics of their setting. The emphasis of the protocol component of the study is on what the writers attend to during composing, not on what that attention reveals about their intellectual processes. I believe this

change of focus nullifies much of the criticism of protocols; I am not using protocol data to build a model of cognition. However, in order to take advantage of the power of the methodology while avoiding some of its obvious drawbacks, two steps were taken.

First, following advice given by many researchers (Bereiter and Scardamalia, "Levels of Inquiry"; Doheny-Farina and Odell; Faigley and Witte; Odell, Goswami, and Herrington; Yin), this study relies on more than one method. In effect, this multiplicity provides what Doheny-Farina and Odell refer to as "Methodological triangulation: using a variety of research methods to elicit data from a variety of sources" (509). As Doheny-Farina and Odell point out, such triangulation "tests emerging patterns by increasing the possibility of finding negative cases and countering the bias of any one approach" (510). Combining protocols with other information-gathering methods, including interviews and retrospective accounts, reduced the reliance on "think-aloud" data and subjected it to possible contradiction or confirmation by other sources.

A second step was taken to avoid possible problems associated with protocol analysis. Unlike the participants in much of the protocol research done to date, the participants in this study tape-recorded themselves while they sat alone in their offices (or, in a couple of cases, at home) writing the actual documents they were assigned. This adaptation added to one of the problems associated with protocols: the volume of raw data. In fact, protocols collected in natural-

istic settings are likely to be considerably longer than those collected in lab-like settings (one of the protocols collected for this study runs to over seven and a half hours of tape). But it did increase the ecological validity of the research: phones rang, people knocked on doors, lunch and coffee breaks intervened, the end of the day came, a new day began -- all the interruptions of daily writing occurred. There was great variation between individuals in terms of writing process: some workers set aside blocks of time and tried to finish a report in 1-3 days, others wrote paragraphs or pages whenever they could and sometimes took weeks to finish. But all the participants were frequently interrupted, as many people are when they write at work.

In addition, while documents were being written and writers were composing aloud for the tape recorder, new information and ideas were constantly introduced. During drafting, a worker might interview someone, read a report, talk to a colleague, or telephone a parent (or teacher, or employer) and everything would change: relationships, perceptions, attitudes, approaches, beliefs, and so on. Suddenly the apparently decent adolescent would take on a sinister air, a gap in events or logic would explode an argument, an off-hand comment or a tone of voice would challenge credibility. Many texts are not completed at a single sitting, and much can intercede and affect the writer during the act of composing. In other words, the writer is rarely static either cognitively or socially -- events and thoughts occur. The protocol method used here captured that ever-changing pro-

cess.

My intention was to collect three protocols from each worker. I assumed not all would finish three, but hoped four or five might complete at least two protocols. Following the initial interview, I asked each worker to let me know when he or she was ready to begin a new document. (The documents the workers wrote are described in the next chapter.) As Karen Burke LeFevre has pointed out, "The beginnings and ending of rhetorical acts are...not clearly obvious or absolute" (41), and that was certainly true of the reports these workers wrote. I wanted to capture the writer's process from as close to the beginning of the case as possible. As each worker phoned to say he or she was about to begin a new report, I went to the unit's office to introduce him or her to protocols. I explained the procedure and its purpose to each worker individually (see Appendix 2 for protocol instructions). I answered questions about the procedure and then asked the worker to write a memo to her supervisor asking for a reduction in workload. I asked each participant to "think-aloud" while writing the memo and I sat in the room encouraging the worker to say everything she was thinking. This training session lasted until the worker seemed comfortable with the procedure. In one case that meant a few minutes, but in another case the session lasted over an hour. Over the full protocol collection period, just over a year, I regularly phoned workers to discuss the procedure. My intention was twofold: first, to discover if the workers were becoming less or more comfortable with thinking aloud

and, second, to repeat a shortened version of the instructions. In addition, approximately half way through the collection period, I sent all the participants a letter (Appendix 3) which urged them on and, once again, reminded them of the protocol procedure and purpose. Tape recorders and blank tapes were available to the workers at all times.

Of the seven workers, four felt that the procedure did not disrupt their usual writing process or add time to their drafting. Three found it slowed them down and made them overly self-conscious. Of the three, two produced one protocol each, and the third never completed one. The initial interviews of these three participants have been examined, but their protocols were not analyzed.

When I collected the taped protocols, I also collected photocopies of all the interview notes, rough drafts, and final copies of the reports. In most cases, I was also able to get copies of other documentation the writers relied on, including school reports, letters or reports from other agencies, and so on. This data proved invaluable when transcribing the taped protocols: I could follow the writer from notes to draft to final copy. In addition, rather than relying on the writers' interpretation of secondary sources, I was able to read them for myself. Finally, the drafts and notes helped in the preparation of the "discourse-based interview."

Discourse-Based Interviews

The "discourse-based interview" was developed in response

to this question: "How can researchers get at the tacit knowledge of people who write in nonacademic settings?" (Odell, Goswami, and Herrington 223). The question, like many others in contemporary writing research, points in two directions: into the writer and out to her context. Although protocol methodology is a partial answer to the first part of the question, the second part has forced researchers to look at the procedures used in the social sciences, especially such field methods as direct and participant-observation, questionnaires, collection of artifacts, and interviews.

In describing and justifying the discourse-based interview, Odell, Goswami, and Herrington argue that it "can be used with writers in diverse settings," and that "interviews with these writers enable them to tell us about the tacit knowledge they bring to writing tasks they encounter everyday" (226). This tacit knowledge is not obtainable through the writing tasks used with other research methods, including protocols, because those tasks are often artificial and do not "elicit information about the contextual knowledge that shapes the [writer's] writing on the job or about how global strategies are combined with task and context-specific knowledge to compose a particular piece" (227). In other words, the discourse-based interview goes after information that protocols cannot easily get.

The interview does this by helping researchers obtain accurate retrospective accounts of writing by guiding writers through their completed documents. According to Hayes

and Flower, the method "seems extremely promising" ("Uncovering Cognitive Processes" 207). As it has been used to date, the discourse-based interview has followed approximately this procedure:

1. After familiarizing himself with the kind and range of writing done by participants, the researcher selects one or more finished texts per participant.
2. The researcher identifies points in a text "at which the writer appeared to have made a stylistic or substantive choice" (Odell and Goswami, 1982, 204). In their study, Odell and Goswami identified eleven types of choices. These included forms of address (Dear John, Dear Sir, etc.), forms of reference to self (I, we, this worker, etc.), form for commands or requests, presence or absence of introductory, context-setting statements, form of conclusion, and so on.
3. A discourse-based interview sheet is prepared by selecting apparent points of choice in a writer's document and rewriting the document. At each point of choice, the researcher has three options: to create alternatives to a word or phrase in the text (e.g., Dear Sir and/or Dear Mr. Smith instead of Dear John), to identify a section of text for deletion by placing it in brackets, or to identify a section for elaboration by the writer, also by placing it in brackets. In the case of alternatives, the words and phrasing come from another of the writer's documents so that the alternate choices remain within the writer's stylistic repertoire.
4. Odell and Goswami explain the actual interview: "We would begin the discussion of choices by saying: 'Here you chose to do X. It would also be possible to do Y or Z (the options listed on the interview sheet). Would you be willing to substitute Y or Z for your original choice?' When the choice entailed a decision to include or exclude a particular statement, we would proceed as follows. If the statement were present, we would simply bracket it and ask if the writer would be willing to omit it. If there was no statement, we would ask the writer to provide additional information and then ask the writer if he or she would be willing to include that information in the letter or memo" (206).

In adapting the discourse-based interview to this study, some aspects of the procedure remained the same and others were changed. I elected to conduct one lengthy interview rather than a number of shorter interviews. The document on which the interview was based was the final report the participants wrote for the study. The interview was divided into three sections:

Standard interview: All participants were asked the same questions about the report. Some of these questions were asked before the interviews described below and some were asked afterwards. (A copy of these questions is attached as Appendix 4.) The questions posed before were general questions (e.g., "Was this report successful?") and those asked afterwards were specific to my interest in the effect of context on the writer (e.g., "How did the various readers of the report affect you while you were writing?"). Questions about readers and other specific aspects of setting came at the end in order not to alert the participants to my particular interests.

Protocol interview: Excerpts from the protocol produced while writing the final report were shown to each participant. In order to avoid leading the participant, no specific questions were asked initially. Instead, I gave the participant some context for the excerpt by showing him or her the place in the draft to which the excerpt seemed to refer; I then asked for an elaboration. For example, mid-way through her draft one participant said, "Oh, I'm bored. A boring case. Challenging in terms of decision, but boring in terms

of material to organize." This excerpt was shown to the participant along with the section of text she had been drafting when she spoke it; she was simply asked to elaborate.

Curiosity was the major criterion for selection of these excerpts; when something in a participant's protocol made me stop and wonder, I would include it in the interview. More specific criteria were as follows:

1. Any excerpt that confused or mystified me was fair game. The example above is typical. Another example (single underlines indicate text being written): It is interesting to note that Howie and Salina were both students at Grantland [High School] as that is where they met. "That tells you something, doesn't it. Now, now, don't jump to conclusions."

2. Any excerpt that appeared to contain a choice with little or no accompanying explanation. Example: "Boy, I'm going to get into trouble for putting that in, but I've got to." Most such choices were self-explanatory (judgments of style or correctness), and some I could partly explain myself, but I included in the interview any writing decisions that seemed related to institutional constraints or considerations.

3. Any excerpt that mentioned possible but unidentified readers. For example: "Legal File number, which is the most important data. Legal File No. Let's not goof this one or else they're going to put it in someone else's file." This excerpt was chosen, first, because I did not know why this particular information was "the most important data" and, second, because I was not sure who "they" referred to. Another example: "They don't want to know that, they'll say it in Court."

This variation on usual discourse interview methods provided an opportunity for participants to validate or correct my interpretations of protocol data. Occasionally, when asked to elaborate, a participant would not address the aspect of the excerpt that confused or interested me; in

that case I would ask a direct question.

Discourse-based interview: This portion of the final interview resembled the discourse-based interview developed by Odell and his colleagues, but differed somewhat from that procedure both in the method of its preparation and in the options offered to the writers. Participants were shown two copies of the final report they had written for the study. One copy was an original and the other was a revised copy. The revised copy varied from the original in three ways:

1. Substitutions: Like Odell and Goswami, I offered participants alternate versions of some of the words and phrases in their reports. For example, when a participant referred to herself as "this worker," she was offered "I" as an alternative. Unlike Odell, I also offered participants whole paragraphs from drafts of their reports as possible replacements for what they had eventually written.

2. Deletions: Again like Odell and Goswami, I asked writers if they would be willing to delete specific words and phrases (and, in one case, quotation marks). For example, a worker who had written "At some point three black boys..." was asked if she would be willing to delete the word "black." Participants were also asked if they would tolerate deletion of up to a whole paragraph worth of text.

3. Additions: As a third option in their study, Odell and Goswami would focus a writer's attention on a portion of text where they believed the writer had chosen to exclude information: "we would ask the writer to provide additional information and then ask the writer if he or she would be willing to include that information in the letter or memo" (206). In the present study, rejected sections of text were culled from protocols or drafts and inserted into the final version of the report. Writers were asked if they would be willing to accept the insertions. For example, the following sentence was included in a draft but dropped in the final version of the report: "There are somehow many sides in Louis' personality and external influences might play a dominant role in bringing out the best or the worst side of him." The writer was asked if she would add it to her report.

The procedure Odell and others have used in preparing the discourse-based interview was also altered slightly for this study. Doheny-Farina and Odell describe the usual procedure: "the researcher focuses on places in a text where the writer has made choices of style or content. Drawing on his or her knowledge of other pieces the writer has done, the researcher identifies alternatives the writer has used in other contexts" (523). Although some of the alternatives (substitutions, deletions, additions) I offered writers were based on their previous documents, I also relied on a variety of other sources:

1. Protocols: When a writer considered a word or phrase while composing aloud, but did not use it and gave no reason for rejecting it, I might offer it as an alternative. In some cases, writers would try two or three words out loud before choosing one and writing it down; I would offer the words not chosen. In addition, the protocols often alerted me to apparent decision points. If a writer said "I'd better put that in," or, alternately, "I'd better not put that in," but provided no accompanying explanation, the included or excluded information was used in the interview.

2. Drafts and notes: By comparing writers' rough drafts to their completed reports, I was able to identify choices affecting content and style. Words, phrases, even whole paragraphs which had been crossed out while drafting were offered as substitutions or additions. Furthermore, information recorded in the writers' interview notes but not used in their reports was occasionally inserted, since not using the information represented a choice to exclude possible content.

3. Colleagues' writing: In order to get at the reasons for differences among the workers, I occasionally substituted or added words or phrases that a writer's colleague(s) might use. For example, one writer consistently referred to judges as "Honourable," while the others used "Judge"; the writers were offered the form of address they did not use as a possible alternative. In addition, variations from one writer to another in the form or sequence

of reports were offered as alternatives.

4. Finally, all of the participants were offered the first person pronoun in place of third person references to themselves. For example, a worker who referred to herself as "this worker," or "the undersigned," would be offered "I" as an alternative. All of the workers used third person references and I was interested in discovering why.

Although the discourse interview was focused on certain specific sections of text, that did not stop participants from occasionally offering broad, even digressive, explanations for their choices. No attempt was made to keep them "on topic"; on the contrary, some of the most intriguing comments came long after the choice had apparently been explained.

Method of Analysis

The challenge of descriptive research is to reduce enormous amounts of data into coherent and cogent summaries. To begin that process, I listened to the eight initial interviews: one with the unit's supervisor and seven with the social workers. Next, I transcribed the interviews with the four workers who had gone on to produce two or more protocols and with whom I had conducted discourse-based interviews. I then transcribed sections of various protocols verbatim; this was done unsystematically. I wanted large segments of transcribed protocols with which to begin refining a method of analysis. Finally, I transcribed all four discourse-based interviews.

My intention from the beginning of this research was to

identify any information that shed light on the relationship between the writers and their readers, and to use that information as the focus or unit of analysis. I expected to be able to excerpt sections of the interviews and protocols following a classification scheme that would distinguish between different types of readers and different types of statements about readers. However, as I transcribed interview and protocol tapes I began to realize that it was not possible to classify comments as unambiguously about or not about the writer-reader relationship.

For example, one of the documents the social workers produced was introduced as court evidence; is a worker's diatribe against the legal system a statement about readers? Some of the readers, judges and lawyers for instance, were representatives of that system. And what about comments referring to the unit's report-writing guidelines? The guidelines acted as community standards for reporting, and therefore affected all writers and readers. Finally, even when a writer made direct reference to a particular reader, it was often clear that she was not concerned about how a text might affect her relationship to the reader; rather, she was far more worried about how the text would influence relations between or among readers.

It became clear, then, that the writer-reader relationship could not be separated from other aspects of the context, such as the unit's day-to-day work, the regulations governing the production of discourse, the unit's various genres, and the particular role or job description individ-

ual writers and readers were required to fulfill. As a result, I began to look for more complex links and patterns. In particular, I looked for examples of interaction or reciprocity between and among elements in the context. To narrow my focus, I chose three main elements in the writing context -- texts, writers, and readers:

Texts: I selected two of the unit's documents for close analysis; they are described in detail in the next chapter. In the interview transcriptions, I noted any comments about the documents, and I excerpted protocol statements about them. I was interested to see how the documents fit into the unit's work, how they helped or hindered the writers, how they were affected by events and other documents, and how they influenced the various people who read them.

As research into academic and nonacademic writing indicates, it is not easy to see how and where a text begins or ends. Although the finished product may be examined, its exact origins are lost in a complicated maze of procedures, meetings, events, and decisions. Furthermore, its consequences may extend well beyond the date and place of its publication. I was able to follow the writing process from the moment the social workers began to draft their reports to slightly after they were submitted. In addition, by consulting their notes and interviewing the workers, I gained some sense of events before drafting and after publication.

Writers: During the interviews, I asked each worker a number of questions about individual writing processes and

approaches; in addition, I noted in the protocols any writing habits, comments, or concerns that seemed idiosyncratic. The results of this aspect of the analysis can be found in the profiles of each writer presented in Chapter Five. My concern here was twofold. First, to discover similarities and differences among the writers and, second, to find out how much freedom the individual writer had within the intricate dynamics of the setting.

I paid particular attention to comments that indicated that the individual writer was in conflict or compliance with the community. The current social theory in composition locates much of the control over writing in the group, rather than in the individual, as cognitive theory did. To test the social theory, I looked for evidence of the relationship between the writer and the community.

Readers: The writers' comments about readers, although not the sole focus of the study, remained central in the analysis of the data. On close examination, three things about readers and reading were obvious. First, the documents involved writers and readers in a complex web of relationships; one strand of this web linked writers to readers, but another and completely unexpected strand linked readers to each other. Second, the documents were read by different people for dramatically different reasons. Indeed, though the words remained the same, it might be said that each reader read a different text. Third, most readers had, in a sense, more than one reading persona: they read both as professionals and as individuals. For example, a judge would

read a report within the role prescribed by the position; consequently, all judges would object if certain legal regulations were ignored in the document. However, the individual human who filled the judge's role brought another, idiosyncratic dimension to the reading of the report.

Using these broad categories as a basis, I re-read the interviews and transcribed the remainder of the protocols. I cannot claim an exhaustive analysis. Although every taped protocol was listened to at least twice, only a small percentage of each protocol was excerpted and transcribed. And although all of the initial and discourse-based interviews were transcribed, they are rich in commentary I have not used. However, I have included or described all of the information that is pertinent to the questions posed by this study.

In the chapters that follow, a detailed picture is offered of the complex social dynamics which supported, indeed created, the unit's writing. The next chapter describes the larger context within which the unit fit, the work of the unit, and the specific reports which were the focus of this study. Chapter Five provides profiles of four of the social workers and a description of the reports' readers. And Chapter Six puts the texts, writers, and readers together in order to show the interactions among them.

A Note on the Presentation of Data

In the pages that follow, I have attempted to allow the workers to speak for themselves as often as possible. As a

result, there are many excerpts from interviews and protocols. I have used the following conventions for notation:

- Two dots (..) indicate a short pause or the end of an unfinished phrase.
- Three dots (...) indicate an ellipsis within a sentence.
- Four dots (....) indicate an ellipsis that coincides with the end of a sentence.
- Words in square brackets [] have been inserted to add necessary information, to clarify the meaning of a word or sentence, or to explain a portion of protocol that has not been transcribed.
- Underlines in protocol excerpts indicate text being written or read aloud.
- All excerpts are followed by letters indicating, in this order, the worker, the source of the excerpt (i.e., interview or protocol) and, for protocol excerpts, the type of report the worker was writing and the name of the client about whom the report was written. For example:

(M;In) = Michel; Initial interview.
(G;DI) = George; Discourse-based Interview.
(S;PR/LC) = Sophie; Protocol of Predisposition Report/Louis Crane.
(A;PA/DH) = Alice; Protocol of Psychosocial Assessment Report/Danny Harrod.

Naturally, the names of the workers, the clients, the report readers, and other people identified in the excerpts have all been changed.

Of the four social workers, two had French as a first language and two had English. All were bilingual and worked primarily in English. However, occasional infelicities in the grammar or syntax of excerpts are the result of speaking or writing in a second language.

Finally, I have written the description of the unit and its activities in the past tense. All studies of this nature

are histories, stories about the past, since discourse communities are in a constant state of change. Although much of what I describe remains somewhat the same to this day, there are differences. Even as this study came to an end, a committee was working on revisions to one of the report's guidelines. The description which follows attempts to capture a community at a given moment in time.

CHAPTER FOUR: Text and Context

Description of the Setting

The writing activity described in this study took place in the Court Services unit of Ville Marie Social Service Centre, which is the agency responsible for English social services in the Montreal area. The Centre is one of three responsible for such services, and all three are administered under Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services. The Ministry is responsible for hospitals, clinics, reception centres for children and adolescents, and other organizations under the health and social service umbrella.

There are a variety of departments within Ville Marie, and the Court Services unit operates within the Department of Youth Protection, specifically the Young Offenders division of that department. Ville Marie Court Services is located in two offices, one in downtown Montreal and the other on the suburban West Island. At the time of this research there were 21 workers attached to the service; one supervisor was responsible for both offices.

The purpose of the Court Services unit is to deal with adolescents who have been accused of committing offences under the provincial criminal code or a Canadian federal law. Although the Young Offenders Act under which they are charged is federal legislation, there is variation in its provincial applications. The following sequence of events,

although simplified, provides an accurate description of the Quebec application of the law at the time of this study, and points out where the study's participants and their activities fit into a larger picture:

1. An adolescent was accused of committing an offence.
2. The police intervened (sometimes simultaneous with the first event).
3. If they believed circumstances warranted it, the police requested proceedings against the adolescent.
4. The evidence against the youth was examined by the Crown Prosecutor (Attorney General). If there was insufficient evidence, the file (i.e., the case) was either closed or there was further investigation.
5. If there was sufficient evidence, the Prosecutor had three options: to close the file if the offence was not deemed serious enough, to refer the adolescent's case to the province's social service agencies, or to refer the case to Youth Court (see #8 below).
6. If the adolescent was referred to a social service agency, he or she became the client of a social worker attached to that agency's court services unit. (This was one of the ways in which the study's participants could enter the picture.)
7. The social worker did a complete assessment of each client referred in this way. The assessment was written up as a report called a Psychosocial Assessment (see outline/guidelines attached as Appendix 5; the report is described in detail below). The Psychosocial Assessment (PA) included the social worker's recommendations for consequences (i.e., responses to the youth's offence). The workers had three options: they could close the file if they believed the offence was an aberration in the adolescent's usual behaviour or was not serious; they could suggest a range of punitive measures -- including fines, financial compensation of victims, community work, and probation (these were known as "alternative measures" since they served as an alternative to trial); or they could recommend that the adolescent be tried in Youth Court (in the rare case, they recommended

psychiatric treatment).

8. Adolescents who were sent to Youth Court through the procedures described in #5 and #7 were tried before a judge (and entitled to legal counsel from the beginning of the process).

9. For the majority of cases in which the adolescent pleaded guilty or was found guilty in Youth Court, the judge requested an assessment of the youth. The assessment was made by a court services worker (another way in which the study's participants could enter the picture) and was written up in a document called a Predisposition Report (see outline/guidelines attached as Appendix 6; the report is described in detail below). The Predisposition Report (PDR) advised the judge on the sentencing ("disposition") of the youth and was entered as evidence at the adolescent's sentencing hearing. Sentences were similar to the consequences recommended in the PA, with the additional measure of potential placement or custody for up to three years. In form and substance, the PDR was very like the PA, but its purpose, readers, and implications were quite different.

The study's participants had approximately 35 clients each at any one time. The great majority of their clients came to them by the process described in #6 and #7 above; that is, they were referred for assessment, but their offences were not thought serious enough for court. For these clients, the workers wrote Psychosocial Assessments (PAs). It is more difficult to estimate the number of Predisposition Report (PDR) clients, since referrals were erratic, but workers rarely had more than five PDR clients each at one time. However, for the reasons explained below (under The Texts), the PDR client represented a more difficult case than the PA client. Finally, when an adolescent was charged and sentenced by the court without prior agency involvement, he or she became a client. A worker had to write a PA on that client and monitor the sentence handed

down by the judge.

At any given time, the workers were at one of three phases in their involvement with each client: 1) gathering information about a client and his or her family; 2) formulating their assessment of the client and family and writing the PA or PDR; 3) monitoring the client to see that the adolescent's alternative measures or disposition was being fulfilled. For example, if an adolescent was required to repay his robbery victim, the worker was responsible to see that the restitution was carried out. In addition, many clients were given some period of probation and the workers served as probation officers for their own clients.

A typical day might include a great variety of activities: face-to-face interviews with clients and/or their families (either in the family home or the worker's office); telephone interviews with clients, parents, school principals, guidance counsellors, clients' employers, teachers, and/or victims; and consultation with social workers at other points of service within the agency. Moreover, there were often documents to read, in the form of letters from parents, reports from other agencies, school reports, and so on. Finally, the workers spent much of their time writing.

The workers' supervisor estimated that they spent between 30% and 35% of their time writing, but admitted this estimate might be low (in fact, Alice said she spent 50% or more of her time writing and George said 65%). They wrote a variety of documents, from fill-in-the-blank report forms to memos and the occasional letter; but the great majority of

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their writing time was taken up with the PA and PDR. However, although much of the writing a worker did on a typical day was certain to be related to those reports, it was not necessarily actual drafting; each case generated many notes before and during drafting (see below under The Texts for a description of notetaking). Occasionally, workers went to court, either to observe the trial or sentencing of a client or to take the stand in order to be cross-examined about one of their reports.

Only one of the four case study participants had an office alone; the others shared office space with one other worker. Each worker served as a "buddy" for a colleague and covered that colleague's cases during vacation or illness. All the workers (including those who did not participate in this study) wrote their reports longhand and gave them to a secretary for typing; no computers were used for report writing. In both the downtown and suburban offices, secretaries handled incoming phone calls, typing, filing and other duties. The central office in each location was usually a busy place, with people waiting for interviews, telephones ringing, and at least one secretary typing.

Although the unit met on a regular basis, most of the day-to-day work was done independently, and case-related interaction among group members tended to be informal:

...we are a small team, so we share a lot of information. A worker is about to testify in court, for instance, and is worried about what's in the Pre-dispo [PDR], they would show it to another worker, not necessarily her buddy, and say, "well, what do you think about the report? What do you think I'll be questioned on?" So, you know, the people on the

team read each other's reports.... it's not a formal practice, it's just, like, "hey, Alice, do you have a minute to sit down with me and go over this report?" (A;In)

Workers did, on occasion, confer with colleagues for other reasons, usually to check spelling, phrasing, or legal questions about which they were uncertain. One worker explained that, if a PDR case was particularly difficult, she might ask a colleague to "role play" the Youth Court judge while reading a draft of the PDR. In addition, the supervisor occasionally gave advice on points of law, severity of recommended disposition, and so on. As in other contexts, office mates frequently talked over coffee or at lunch about their work, but all such collaboration was informal. The actual writing was done individually. Some collaborative co-authoring occurred during the development of the unit's policies and guidelines.

The Court Services unit operated on the occasionally uncomfortable overlap between social services and the law. The study's participants functioned primarily as social workers: they worked in the community with adolescents and their families. However, they also worked with judges, lawyers, and the police. The fields of social work and law are not always compatible. For example, as social workers, the participants often felt that full disclosure of an adolescent's life story helped explain his or her behaviour. But, in their responsibility to the court, they were restrained from reporting certain types of information. Much of the difficulty and complexity of the work and the writing done

in the unit could be traced to this overlap.

Further conflict arose because of the workers' relationships with their adolescent clients and their families. Almost inevitably, the adolescents were at odds with their parents. Frequently, there was also other conflicts in the family, so that workers were involved in the complex interactions between parents and children, husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters. Clearly, Court Services was a difficult setting within which to work. The social workers were almost always attempting to reconcile conflicting demands -- demands that were reflected in the texts they wrote.

The Texts

Only rarely did the workers write completely original pieces; most of their writing was constrained by form or formula. Infrequently, they wrote letters to people outside the organization, usually social workers or agencies in other cities, or to clients or families. There was also very little writing between members of the unit, although the supervisor encouraged workers to put certain spoken ideas, questions, and requests into memos to her since, as she said, writing "attaches status to topics" and receives more serious consideration. The writing that the workers did on a regular basis fell into three categories: forms, notes, and reports.

Forms

As mentioned above, the workers filled in a wide variety of different forms -- the typical paper work of bureaucracies. Some of these documents required the workers to fill in the blanks with such factual information as names, dates, addresses, and the like; others provided a few lines for one or two sentence explanations. The forms were usually destined for the clients' families, the government, or other points of service within the agency (and sometimes to all three). The titles of the forms give some indication of their range of purpose: Change of Status Form; Child Placement (i.e., custody) Form; Placement Conference Information Sheet; Parental Permission Slip; Authorization for Receiving Information; Intake Data Sheet. There were many more (I saw 25 different forms). Despite their number, however, forms did not occupy much of the workers' writing time. Much more time-consuming was the collection of information for the PA and the PDR.

Notes

The workers who participated in this study tried not to take notes during face-to-face interviews. The supervisor and the workers believed that notetaking often intimidated people; as one worker explained, it created an "'I'm the boss, you are the client' type of situation" (S;In). Instead, workers jotted down all the information they remembered and believed was pertinent after the interview was over.

They just told you that they have been beaten up by their father, and they see you writing it down so they panic...and you see that the rest of the interview would be kind of hesitant because of that. (S;In)

I'm not one that takes notes during the interview; I don't believe in that. I did when I was a new worker, but I found that I would lose a lot of interaction with the people. (G;In)

I don't actually write in front of the client, I'm not comfortable doing that. I rely on my memory, except for names, birth dates, and all that. (A;In)

The variation in the taking and use of these notes will be described in the profiles of the individual workers in Chapter Five. The notes were put into a client's file for reference during report drafting (an example is attached as Appendix 7).

Another aid to memory, and a constant writing task, consisted of keeping Progress Notes up to date. Progress Notes (PN) were the day-to-day record of ongoing contact with each of a worker's clients. The form used for the Notes had columns for the date, type of contact, place of contact, persons involved, service rendered, worker's name, and remarks (see Appendix 8). Typical PN entries listed the phone calls, interviews, and other activities associated with clients. Depending on the worker and the case, PN entries might include brief notes ("Set interview time with Mother"), word-for-word quotes taken from telephone conversations, or extended speculations on the causes for a client's failure to attend an interview. Because the Notes were for in-house use only, workers felt free to write whatever they pleased.

According to the unit supervisor, the Progress Notes

served two major purposes. First, they recorded the worker's ongoing contact with a case; this was important if another worker had to take over the case, if the supervisor received complaints about a worker, or if a worker was cross-examined in court about a case.

...especially in serious cases, the defence will try and discredit you in certain ways, and if you have your Progress Notes there in court, you say, "your Honour, on this date, this date, and this date I met with the client," or, "I've made such contacts." (A;In)

It [PN] helps also, let's say, if [colleague] is on holiday and I'm covering for her, a situation of emergency arises and I'm covering and I don't know the slightest thing about who's this kid. (S;In)

Second, because they contained a list of contacts, commentary on those contacts, and an indication of the client's cooperation or lack of same, the Notes helped the workers in their ongoing intervention with clients and, eventually, with their writing of reports.

...it [PN] really is a general brainstorm, in terms of facts, impressions, uh, dates, what should be done next time I meet the kid. Uh, really, like it's an open book; you can write anything you want, you are writing for yourself and as much as you can that will help you continue with the case. (S;In)

[A case is] a dynamic process, it changes from day to day, from week to week. And so you need to know, where is it? Are you reaching your goals, therapeutic goals, with the youngster? And, if so, what goals are you reaching? Where is the youngster at? So, it serves a clinical purpose in knowing what will we do in the next session. (M;In)

It's [PN] a way of helping me sometimes re-assess where that kid's at, where that family is at.... They are written also to help me, when it's time to write a closing or a Predisposition Report or a Psychosocial Assessment. (G;In)

Reports

Workers were responsible for a variety of reports, including a brief Closing Summary when a client left the agency, a Transfer Summary when a client moved from one point of service to another, and other synopses. However, as mentioned, the Psychosocial Assessment and the Predisposition Report demanded the most frequent and substantial writing. Although the PA and PDR were similar in structure and, to a lesser extent, content, they were vastly different in two central aspects of writing: purpose and readers. The reason for this difference was that the PA was an agency report, an in-house document used by social workers for guidance in their work with clients and families, while the PDR was a court document, used by judges in determining sentence and entered as evidence at the adolescent's sentencing hearing. The two reports are described separately below.

Psychosocial Assessment

Workers followed quite extensive outline/guidelines when writing the two reports, and they referred to them frequently. The outline of the Psychosocial Assessment (with brief annotation) was as follows:

-- Face Sheet: Factual information about client, family, and case; names, addresses, phone numbers, legal file numbers, etc.

-- Basis of Assessment: List of the sources on which the report was based: interviews, telephone calls, other reports, etc.

-- Summary of Offences: Four versions of the incident which led to the report: the "official" version (from information in police report and Crown prosecutor's file), the adolescent's version, the

parents' version and, if there was one, a victim's version.

-- Previous Offences, Legal Disposition, Worker's Involvement: Information about past offences, both those that led to alternative measures and those that led to court; previous services adolescent and family had received through the Court Services unit; description of the youth's self-reported delinquencies.

-- Background Information: History of mother, father, and youth: country of origin, education, employment, substance abuse, etc.; description of adolescent's early years.

-- Prior Social Service Involvement (other than Court Services): Information on all previous social service interventions.

-- Present Social Situation of Youth: Description of youth; health; description of family by youth; financial situation; employment; school; community; friends; interests.

-- Present Social Situation of Family: Description of parents; health; family relations between parents, siblings, and client; parent supervision of client; socioeconomic status; community relations; interests.

-- Assessed Strengths: Of mother, father, and youth; factors that would help worker deal with adolescent and family.

-- Assessed Liabilities: Of mother, father, and youth; factors that would impede the worker's attempts to work with adolescent and family.

-- Summary: Worker's overall impression of adolescent.

-- Recommendation: Justification of recommended measures.

-- Prognosis: Likelihood of success with adolescent; risk of recidivism.

Although no report I saw contained every heading listed above or all the information requested, the PA was clearly an exhaustive report. In fact, some of the workers complained that the guidelines were redundant and demanded too

much information. As a result, they occasionally skipped sections or collapsed extensive sub-sections into a few paragraphs. The alternative, they said, was to be overly intrusive when interviewing the family. As one worker put it: "if you are assessing a shoplifting, you ask the parents where they were born and if they went through...had to go through a separation. I find it very uncomfortable to work with" (S;IN). Other comments:

...this [PA guidelines] is too extensive, in some cases. As a social worker, I would not go into all this stuff, depending on the case, depending on how serious the charge is, and the dynamics in the family. (A;In)

I find that a lot of the information that they request in the Psychosocial report is redundant, it's repetitive.... It becomes just, like fill-in-the-blank. like you are doing it just because the agency is demanding you do it. It's a lot of..for me it's a waste of time. I find it's demoralizing for me to have to go through and write all this stuff. It's not what I went to social work school to do. (G;In)

...a lot of them [PA sections] are very redundant to one another. (S;In)

...you know, I get a little annoyed personally with going and finding the background history of the parents and I don't always do it. I let them volunteer the information. If I see something important, then I'll follow up on it. (M;In)

The guidelines for the report (Appendix 5) ran to seven pages and included some detailed requests for information. The paragraph below is one of two from the section titled "Present Social Situation of Family":

Provide brief description of interaction between family members in the interview. Also indicate if any other persons are living in the home and outline their role. Describe activities undertaken by the family together. Comment on whether any other

family members are in conflict with the law. Indicate if any problem exists with regard to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Give a brief description of siblings (including school and work).

The PA performed a variety of functions:

-- Record-keeping: The PA was kept on file until the adolescent reached the age of majority (18). Repeat offenders had updates added to their original PAs. In this archival function, the PA served as memory for the worker when a previous client returned or, for example, when a client's sibling became a client.

-- Information: If a worker left the unit, whether for a few days or permanently, the PA informed whoever took over the case. In addition, the PA could be sent to other points of service in the agency or to other professionals outside the agency. For instance, if a PA client went on to commit other offences and ended up in custody, his PA would follow him. Similarly, the PA might be sent to a psychologist or psychiatrist if the client went for testing. Within the unit, the PA might be used by secretaries to track down dates of birth, addresses, etc.

-- Intervention Planning: In the agency's ongoing relationship with clients and families, the PA served as a guide for planning future interventions. For example, information gathered for the PA might indicate physical abuse within the family. That might lead to further agency, or even police, intervention. Also, if the measures that were recommended in consequence of the client's offence failed, the report aided in formulating new measures.

-- Heuristic: The unit supervisor said this about the PA: "It is not written only to be read, it's written to help in the assessment." Most of the participants echoed this belief. The act of writing the PA helped the workers think about their clients and reach appropriate recommendations. One participant said that the PA allowed the workers "to structure [their] thoughts in order to come to a logical conclusion as to which decision is the most appropriate" (S;In). Another put it this way: "It's hard to differentiate between writing the report and dealing with the case" (M;DI).

In fact, this last function of the PA may well have been its most important, since many PAs were never read by anyone but their authors. George and Michel provided these explanations:

it [PA]...helps me, after I've done an interview or two interviews or three interviews with that client, it also helps me to put down on paper what my thoughts are, what my assumptions are about what's going on in the family and with the kid. It helps me to crystalize in some ways my assessment of the kid in the family. (G;In)

So, basically, for me the Psychosocial Assessment is a tool to get my thoughts together in terms of what is, uh, necessary in terms of my intervention, my role, for the youngster, who has been charged with an offence or several offences. (M;In)

All the participants claimed that the potential readers of the PA, of which there are quite a few, did not concern them much while they were composing. As one worker put it: "I don't think I am writing for anybody else but me, and if it should be seen by anybody else, usually I am pretty confident about what I am putting in the report" (S;In). Even the (remote) possibility that a client or family might see the PA did not seem to bother the workers: "I don't write anything in there that the clients have not told me. And ...if I've made an assumption or if I've made an assessment, or I have feelings about the family and the kid, I usually verbally tell them that. So it comes as no surprise to them when they, you know, if they would read this report" (G;In). Alice expressed a similar belief:

No, it doesn't concern me because usually what I put in the Psychosocial Assessment I've either talked to the client about as being a concern. Basically, what I put in my Psychosocial Assessment is things that I've picked up in the family, either

problematic or positive areas, and these are things I'll usually bring up with the family, anyway.
(A;In)

The PA, then, functioned first as heuristic and second as information. Others might read it, but the writer was usually the only reader (except, of course, for the secretary who typed it). In a sense, the PA served a persuasive function, in that the text had to support the report's recommendations. However, except in rare cases, the only reader to be persuaded was the writer herself .

Predisposition Report

The PDR served some of the same functions as the PA. It could not help but be heuristic, since the investigation and composition it required led the workers to a recommendation; in addition, it stayed in a client's file for future use. However, according to a Sophie, the PDR

is a totally, totally different ball game than, uh, an Assessment. You are not writing for yourself anymore, you cannot put anything you want in it. You cannot say things as you would in a normal [i.e., PA] report. This is a legal document that will be totally dissected, usually by two lawyers, a judge, the parents, and the kid, so you have to, uh, write this report with shields all around you that.... You cannot state one thing that you cannot prove. (S;In)

As with the PA, there was not strict adherence to the printed PDR guidelines, but the following annotated outline represents a typical report:

-- Face Sheet: Same as PA above.

-- Basis of Assessment: Same as PA above. This section was not listed in copies of the PDR guidelines that I saw; however, it was included in all PDRs that I saw, sometimes referred to as "Basis of Report."

-- Summary of Offences: Same as PA above; the "Official Version," also called "Description of Charge," described the charge for which the adolescent had been found or had pleaded guilty; other versions were provided by the adolescent, the parents, and the victim, if there was one.

-- Official Antecedents: Description of previous charges for which the adolescent pleaded or was found guilty; prior alternative measures and their outcome.

-- Assessment of Adolescent: Description of adolescent and evaluation of his or her ability and willingness to change delinquent behaviour.

-- Assessment of Adolescent's Social Situation: Description of adolescent's school work, employment, and lifestyle.

-- Family Assessment: Assessment of family dynamics; evaluation of family's ability to control and assist adolescent.

-- Summary and Recommendations: Overall picture of adolescent's evolution and present situation; recommendation for disposition.

As can be seen, the PDR outline was somewhat leaner than the PA outline, and the guidelines were three pages long, compared to the PA's seven page guidelines. There seemed to be two reasons for this: first, there was no need to repeat in the PDR guidelines all of the explanations provided in the PA guidelines and, second, there were some restrictions on reporting in the PDR. However, much of the same information that went into the PA had to be considered for the PDR and, because of the severity of PDR cases, considered more carefully. The nine PDRs examined for this study ranged from 6 to 13 pages in length, and the five PAs examined ranged from 7 to 13 pages. More significantly, even when they were similar to the PAs in length, the PDRs took longer to write. (From 2.3 to 7.6 hours for the PDRs compared to 1.5 to 5.5

hours for the PAs. These are estimates based on the times of taped protocols; as a result, they reflect the time spent composing.) The PDR also generated far more anxiety among the workers. The reasons for the increased pressure included the PDR's purpose, its consequences, and its readers. As with all writing, these three factors were inextricably linked in the writing of the PDR, and it was the interaction among them that gave the PDR its rhetorical complexity and difficulty. The critical nature of the PDR was captured nicely by one worker, who described it as "the rope that may hang a kid" (S;In).

The PDR was primarily an advisory report to a judge, but it was also entered as evidence at the adolescent's sentencing hearing and became a court document. As a result, two lawyers -- the defence and the Crown prosecutor -- read the report. Naturally, one was more approving of the report than the other. A worker explained that lawyers

have their own duty, you know, whether Crown or whatever, defence, their role is either to tear it [i.e., the PDR] apart or back me up. Depending on my Recommendation, one of the two lawyers will back me up, and the other one's role will be trying to, you know, put down and destroy my credibility.
(S;In)

The workers were not concerned about the lawyers as individuals so much as they were about the lawyers' roles in the process: they were worried about the possible legal responses to their reports. Various restrictions prevented them from reporting certain information, even when they felt the information was crucial. For example, they were prohibited from mentioning charges pending against their client

(for a full discussion of discourse regulations, see Chapter Six). Failure to obey the rules was punished. Workers could be asked to take the stand and justify their PDRs; as a result, they were open to public criticism and, in the extreme case, contempt of court. As Alice explained it:

...if I go too far in my report, I can be held in contempt of court, which has been done before, but those are the chances you take. You know, the two times it happened to me I knew it was going to happen and I felt it was in the best interest of the kid.... the ultimate is to be held in contempt of court...[which] means that you can be fined or you can get time in jail. (A;DI)

This aspect of the PDR made it, in the words of one worker, "a very interesting document; it's a weapon that is being used against you in court if you did not fill the requirement of the court" (S;In).

To complicate matters even further, the PDR was also read by the adolescent and the family. Juggling the report's legal demands and constraints along with concerns about the family's response put additional stress on the workers. The description/assessment of the family was built up from interviews and observation. As a result, it contained the individual family member's perceptions of each other and the writer's descriptions and evaluations. In addition, the worker had to recommend punitive consequences for the adolescent's actions. Those recommendations could be one or a combination of the following: absolute discharge (case closed); fine of up to \$1,000.00; compensation of victim through financial restitution, repair of damage, or personal services; community work of up to 240 hours; probation;

detention in hospital for treatment (if adolescent, parents, and hospital agree); either continuous or intermittent (i.e., weekend) custody for up to three years. Finally, the guidelines offered the worker this: "Any other reasonable conditions as it deems advisable with regards to the best interests of society and the adolescent." The adolescent, family, and social worker would often disagree on what constituted "reasonable conditions" and, since probation was almost always one condition, the worker continued dealing with the youth and his or her family after sentencing.

The PDR, then, posed potentially serious disruptions to the relationships among client, family, and social worker. Michel captured this difficulty succinctly:

If I'm going to engage a youngster to share with me his feelings, his innermost feelings, he knows I'm writing a report and he's taking a risk of this information being shared in the report. I don't want to destroy that relationship I'm building with the youngster.... I think there's a therapeutic relationship that I have to continue having and, certainly, I don't want to break that trust. (M;DI)

Like the PA, the PDR could be read by a variety of professionals: other workers within the unit, at other points of service within the agency, and at other agencies; psychiatrists or psychologists could read it. Inevitably, a youth sent to hospital for treatment or to custody would be followed by a PDR. There were, too, secretaries and court clerks who typed and filed these reports and consulted them for dates, addresses, and so on. Each reader brought to the report different reasons for reading, attitudes to the report, and relations with the writer. This interaction of

readers and reasons made the PDR an extremely difficult rhetorical act.

When a Predisposition Report is written, the workers know that there will be any number of people reading that report. They're writing that with the knowledge that..many people will probably be reading that. (Supervisor)

I am very careful when I write this report [PDR], knowing that it could have wide distribution. So I am very guarded insofar as the information I include. (M;In)

As mentioned, the PDR's major purpose was to advise a Youth Court judge on the sentencing or disposition of adolescents. Ostensibly, that purpose was fulfilled by an "objective" description of the offence, the youth, and the youth's family and social situation, all leading to a logical recommendation. To be "logical," a recommendation had to fit the offence, the youth's level of remorse, and the likelihood of recidivism. The worker's description of the family was crucial here, since it was the strength and stability of the family that was likely to prevent further delinquent acts. Naturally, the reality of the PDR's rhetorical purpose was far more complex than it would at first seem. The acts of selecting and presenting information are never value-free, and so no "objective" description of the youth and his or her family was possible. In addition, although there was an apparent distinction between the supposedly neutral descriptions of the report and the admittedly persuasive language of the Recommendation, it was clear that the participants were working to convince the judge from the very beginning of the report.

Furthermore, there was a central contradiction in the report's purpose, reflecting the overlap between the social service and legal fields. On one hand, the PDR was meant to supply a complete assessment of an adolescent and his or her family so a judge could understand the youth's actions within a larger context. On the other hand, the PDR was a court document and, as such, was subject to a variety of constraints. For example, under the title of "inadmissible evidence," three types of information were restricted: hearsay evidence (third party information), self-reported delinquencies, and charges dropped or pending. In other words, under "Official Antecedents" (see above), workers could not mention any delinquencies reported by the youth, since this would constitute self-incrimination, or any charges against the youth which were pending or which were dropped. And nowhere in the report could the worker mention information from a third party; for example, the worker could report what was said to her directly but not what was said to another and then reported to her. The social workers were frequently caught between the demand for full, evaluative descriptions of the youth and his family and the legal limit on types of information allowed. In addition, information not considered relevant to the charge was unacceptable. The workers' frustrations with these restrictions are evident in Alice's complaint:

the problem is that it's a very legal, legalistic type of report. I mean, there's lots of things that should go in there, in the Predispo report, that aren't included. Like there's a lot of family dynamics that can't be included if they're not

directly related to the offence, when the offence occurred. Which, in my opinion, doesn't explain to the judge why is this kid delinquent, unless you go back several years and explain to the judge that this kid was slapped around, was getting double messages from his family.... my recommendation has to be based on the facts in the report, otherwise the defence lawyer will say, "how can you recommend, you know, two year placement on what you said in this report?" Now, if I were allowed to say, "well, you know, this kid's parents in the past, you know," if I can go back and explain the social reasons. (A;In).

And the paradox went further: workers were concerned that every statement they made be supported by "facts," as Alice says above, and yet much of what they believed about a youth was not supportable by empirical data. Remorse may be sensed, even described, but it is difficult to prove. The full detail of a person's life may not be reportable in the detached language expected of legal documents. These were not trivial concerns; a worker could be severely reprimanded for including inadmissible evidence.

It should be clear from this description that Court Services contained the potential for complex and interactive dynamics. The setting guaranteed conflict and a variety of relationships because of the advocacy/adversary structure of the legal system and the unit's involvement with families. Even the titles of the setting's various roles suggested contention: judge, prosecutor, defence lawyer, client, victim. In a sense, the stage was set for a drama even before the actors -- the writers and readers -- entered the scene.

CHAPTER FIVE: Writers and Readers

Writers

The social workers who participated in this study were in a difficult, almost contradictory position. On the one hand, they played a role similar to social workers in many other circumstances: they worked with families who found themselves in some difficulty. On the other hand, especially when writing the PDR, they fulfilled a quasi-legal role in their relationships with the clients, the judges, and the lawyers. In the first role they were expected to grasp a family's dynamics, win its trust and respect, and intervene to solve whatever problem the family, and especially the client, was experiencing with society. In the second role they were expected to do exactly the same but with an additional responsibility: assess the client and family, recommend intervention and punishment, and make their deliberations known in a public and legal document. In one role they acted for the agency, in the other they acted for the court. In both roles they were embroiled in numerous, complex relationships. As Sophie put it, "I write with one pen and twenty hats" (S;In). Needless to say, the job was demanding.

All of the participants were dedicated, conscientious, and hardworking. (It should be noted that people who volunteer for this type of study are likely to be among the most

enthusiastic members of a group.) A desire to effect social change and to help the disadvantaged is a common motivation among social workers, at least when they first start in the profession. Although it is possible to become quickly disillusioned in the field, those social workers who survive with their commitment intact are a curious balance of tough and tender. The participants in this study were no different. They occasionally expressed some cynicism, usually in the context of a general social critique, a concern for the vicious circles within which their clients seemed trapped, or skepticism about the efficacy of social programs and interventions (including their own). In addition, there were frequent, minor complaints about such things as the intelligence of the police, the credibility of clients, the bureaucracy within which they worked, the amount of work, and approaching deadlines. However, the participants all took their work to heart, and all were sincerely concerned with each case they handled. Even when they were offended by a client's behaviour and questioned his honesty, they strove to produce unbiased assessments and fretted over the fairness and accuracy of their reports. Although they all worked in the same setting and played much the same role, there were some differences among the writers.

Two of the case study participants were women and two were men. All were fluently bilingual (English and French), although each was somewhat stronger in one of the languages. One of the workers was relatively new to the profession (fewer than three years), while the other three were veter-

ans, having been in the social work field for approximately ten years each. Three had received training as social workers; one had a degree in criminology.

The participants also varied in their writing processes and products. Some workers referred to the PA and PDR guidelines frequently while drafting reports, even some who found the guidelines objectionable; others had sheets of blank writing paper with just the main guideline headings on the top of the sheet, to help them as they composed. And, despite the detail of the guidelines, differences in interpretation were also apparent. Some workers listed all their sources of information and frequency of contact under "Basis of Assessment," while others simply explained the circumstances leading to the assessment. The process of drafting varied from report to report and from writer to writer. Occasionally the process was smooth and linear, with the writer moving from the Face Sheet through to the Recommendation with little or no revision; at other times the writer struggled, abandoned sections, went back to the beginning, and so on.

The following individual profiles are meant to be suggestive, rather than exhaustive. Because Sophie was the most voluble and eager participant, her profile is more detailed; however, it is not offered as typical, either of Court Service social workers or of Sophie herself. Indeed, one thing that attention to the writing context makes clear is that changing circumstances alter the writer, the process, and the product. These profiles are based on a brief and, there-

fore, somewhat superficial familiarity with the writers.

Sophie

Ironically, though Sophie's English was less correct than that spoken by the other workers, she was the most articulate and descriptive. In addition, her PDR protocols were considerably longer and richer in commentary than those of her colleagues. One reason for this might have been her relative unfamiliarity with the work: she had been with Court Services less than three years. As mentioned in Chapter Two, writing research suggests that familiarity with writing tasks can make much of the writing process automatic, so that expert writers seem less conscious of their deliberations and decisions as they write than do novice writers.

The newness of the job, combined with her training as a criminologist, may also have contributed to the zeal with which Sophie collected information for reports, particularly the PDR. For one report, Sophie conducted 4 face-to-face interviews and 10 telephone interviews; she consulted 3 previous Ville Marie reports on the family and client and 4 school reports on the client; she read the Progress Notes of the 4 different social workers who had been involved with the family; she gave the client 4 commercially available criminometric tests; she consulted and cited an article from a psychology journal; and she listened to a tape recording of the trial. From this material she took 31 pages of notes and wrote a 22 page handwritten draft. Although the sources of information for her other PDRs were less extensive, she

exceeded by far the investigative efforts of her colleagues.

Aside from her unfamiliarity with the work, two other factors appeared to contribute to the differences between Sophie and her co-workers. First, again due perhaps to her relative inexperience, Sophie was intensely, even passionately, involved in each case. She railed against what she perceived as ignorance or injustice, and agonized over every case. Her colleagues, though by no means jaded, seemed less caught up in the drama and dynamics of the client's life. Sophie's protocols are filled with groans and cries, frequent expletives, and occasional admissions of defeat or despair. This commitment is clear in Sophie's answer to a question about how long it took her to write a Predisposition Report:

Oh my God, if it's not ten hours, it's more than that. I'm a maniac for that. Also, I'm very legalistically oriented, so I'm very touchy about..I'm trying to put myself in the Crown prosecutor's mind, the defence lawyer, the judge; I know the parents will read it; I'm trying so much to accommodate all these people so that my report will be accessible. You know, they will be able to relate to it. And yet, you must be able also to give information to the judges and lawyers in a clinical, professional way, so it has to be understood by a parent who is very emotionally caught up into the situation about their child. You are describing them, you have to be careful not to hurt them also. But yet the judge will understand that you are trying to describe a very touchy situation without hurting somebody else's feelings. So you are writing, like, for two extremes...[the] family which is very vulnerable and emotionally troubled and a judge who's cold and wants to know certain legal facts. So I am extremely picky about what I am writing and how well I'm going to do it, and how satisfied I am with the product. (S;In)

Second, Sophie had an admitted love of language and a flair for a phrase. She kept a sporadic but (to her) impor-

tant diary and wrote poetry for its "cathartic and therapeutic effect" (S;In). Her personal writing, however, was in French, while most of her professional writing was done in English. Typically, she threw herself into the task of improving her English writing:

I was very insecure at first with all these reports in English; that is not my mother tongue, for one thing, and writing is something I haven't done before so much in English; so I just kind of went into it and I've got such positive feedback that I..I must say that all the reports I've written have received nothing but praise. Not necessarily because of what I thought they would be praised about. (S;In)

To achieve this level of success, Sophie often went to court when her reports were being entered as evidence and even listened to tape recordings of trials in order to learn what did and did not work in reports:

I make it a point, a personal point of honour, to be there [in court]; so if there is criticism, if there is praise, I'm collecting whatever; both helps my future practice. (S;DI)

I have a tape about a judge who [was] tearing down a Predisposition Report that was made by a practitioner in another CSS [Centre de Services Sociaux] and I listen to that very carefully, and I've looked and I was trying to see, well, do I make the same mistake when I do one, because when I'm going back to this judge I know she will not accept certain things being said, or in such ways. Anyways, so I know for this specific judge what she really will not tolerate and what will, uh, make her go against your recommendation. (S;In)

The result of this attention was that Sophie had developed confidence in her ability to write a successful report. Like the other workers, she had a wealth of lore about what judges and lawyers would tolerate in reports and how readers generally would respond. Unlike her colleagues, whose knowl-

edge was expressed in interviews but seemed mostly tacit during writing, Sophie often commented on what she knew during the writing process, as in this excerpt taken from the end of a protocol as Sophie wrote her final sentence:

Pleases the Court..the usual..to receive these recommendations and dispose of them in whatever way it will consider be the best interest of the youth and of society. That's my usual little [sentence] there. [Reads sentence back.] Respectfully submitted. This needs no thinking. This is my usual way of showing the Court that I'm trying to convince them but if they disagree it's okay, they've got last word and they have the right to do..that's why I'm using a lot of "could" and "would" and, you know, "should they," "would they." (S;PR/DS)

Sophie's protocols are sprinkled with such comments. While writing one PDR she referred to the judge by name or title 23 times; during another, she mentioned the client's mother 10 times.

Sophie did not make extensive use of her Progress Notes, recording in there only the bare details: type and time of contact, people contacted, date of next interview, and so on. Instead, she filled sheet after sheet of looseleaf with notes, test results, quotes, and speculation (e.g., "Does not seem to realize impact on victim"). Her notes displayed some organization; often they were clustered under headings which reflected the actual PDR sections.

Although her colleagues tended to wait until they had collected all the necessary information before beginning to draft a report, Sophie began as soon as she felt she had sufficient information for any given section. So, for example, following a telephone conversation with a client's employer, she would fill in the "Work" subsection under the

"Assessment of Adolescent's Social Situation" heading in the PDR. The possibility that subsequent interviews with the client or parents might (and did) lead her to add to or revise this section did not appear to bother her. Indeed, Sophie was far more likely to revise than her colleagues: she wrote seven versions of one PDR section before she was satisfied.

This willingness to go back and rework sections was evident in Sophie's habit of "jamming," her word for freewriting:

Ah, I'm putting parts and pieces together. What the heck, I'm going to put it, really, in a dumb way, you know, modify the whole thing, put it back, but I need to spit it out as it is and put all these tricky bits together before we find out what we've got. (S;PR/LC)

The adolescent has a few close friends who present various..How about redoing it? When I'm jamming like this, it's because it's just no good to start with; I'll come up with something better. (S;PR/RP)

Because of Sophie's habit of reworking and adding, she occasionally used a cut and paste procedure, which seemed to suit her writing process very well, even if she did make fun of it: "Oh, that's great..scotch tape. That's how professional we are: a bit of bricollage. Kindergarten stuff" (S;PR/DS).

Although Sophie displayed similar patterns in the three PDR protocols collected for this study, her writing process was quite different during the composing of a PA. The one PA protocol collected for this study was 2 hours and 15 minutes long; the actual report was 8 pages. The three PDR protocols were 4.5 hours long (8 pages), 7.5 hours long (13 pages),

and 7.6 hours long (8 pages). She herself estimated that it took her between 4 and 6 hours to write a PA and 10 hours to write a PDR. However, report length was clearly not the cause of the time difference. During PDR drafting, Sophie read and reread sections, revised, searched through her notes, and fretted. During PA drafting, Sophie rarely reread or revised and seemed to write with little effort.

In addition, though her composing patterns were similar during each of the PDRs, her focus and her concerns were not. During the writing of one PDR, she seemed most preoccupied with the client, who, she claimed, was "lying like he's breathing" (S;PR/DS): for another, she was concerned with the client's mother, a woman she felt was "totally insane" (S;PR/RP); for the third, her central focus appeared to be the judge, whom she referred to as the "Iron Lady of the court" (S;PR/LC). So, although the basic cast remained the same for each report --judge, lawyers, family, client -- the drama was quite different for each, and Sophie's attentions and anxieties reflected the changing dynamics.

George

Of the four participants, George seemed to have the most empathy with adolescents; he was, in the current phrase, "street-smart." This may have been due partly to George's background: he had been a client of social services as an adolescent and knew the system from both sides. This dual experience expressed itself, on one hand, in his somewhat tough manner, his frequent use of slang, and his iconoclas-

tic suspicion of the police, school principals, and the agency itself; on the other hand, he was occasionally skeptical of a client's explanations or expressions of remorse, perhaps because he had been in an analogous position himself. A similar division marked George's attitude toward report writing, specifically the agency's expectations about the PA and PDR as described in the report guidelines. Of the four workers, George was the most attentive to the guidelines, referring to them frequently and following them closely. Ironically, he was also the most critical of the guidelines:

they [PA guidelines] are suggesting that we ask the family what their financial situation is, whether there were any prior psychological or psychiatric problems in the family, whether any of the parents or grandparents have committed offences or been involved with the law before. I find that difficult.... It's difficult asking for that information, because I feel it's a real imposition on them. (G;In)

I think I could give just about as good or even better a picture of the social..the present social situation in the family, if I didn't have all those little headings. I could write it in a narrative form. (G;In)

Unlike Sophie, George used his Progress Notes to record information from sources as well as speculation or commentary following interviews. He explained:

So, basically, I do my interview..prior to the interview I collect things like family composition, etc., date of birth, where you go to school. I have the client fill that information out themselves, and then if time allows after the interview I will sit down and write Progress Notes. Often times I don't have the time to write the Progress Notes right away; I may do it the next day or two hours later.... I make little notes to myself [in PN] about my assumptions around the family situation, around the kid, whether or not I think there's a

likelihood that they would repeat or not. (G;In)

For one PDR, George consulted 21 pages of closely written Progress Notes dating back over the two years of his involvement with a client. For another, he wrote 10 pages of notes in a period of less than a month, and for a PA he collected 11 pages of Progress Notes in just over 4 months. The following are samples of George's PN entries:

Note: Steve still seems a little depressed. He still feels he gets victimized and is powerless. Somewhat immature. Sleeping better; feels things better at home betw. parents/self/and sister. Still eager and cooperative in coming to see me.

Worker [i.e., George] arrived at apartment. Allan was watching television which was blaring. He didn't get up to greet worker. Both him and mother left T.V. blaring. Worker asked it be turned off so we could talk. Mo[ther] turned it down halfway but it was still difficult to understand Allan. Allan kept watching television between worker's questions. Difficult to comprehend. Very rude. He was still very vague about his role in offences. "Maybe I hit someone."

His composing was almost like self-dictation. He said a phrase aloud and then wrote it down, rarely pausing to read back, revise, or comment. He began with the Face Sheet and finished with the Recommendations. Generally, he filled longer pauses with one of two activities. At the beginning of a section he would check the report guidelines, often wondering aloud what "they" wanted in the section. When he stalled in mid-section, he would read through his Progress Notes.

Unlike Sophie, George rarely commented on the mental deliberations that guided his composing. In his initial interview and in his discourse-based interview, George spoke

about the complex interactions involving the judge, lawyers, client, family, and himself, and about the critical decisions that guided report writing, but while he composed he did not seem overly concerned with those relationships or decisions. However, it would be a mistake to assume that he was unaware of the social implications of his writing, as this long excerpt from a PDR protocol makes clear:

In conclusion, this worker suggests to the Youth Court the following: Now I'll tell you what I'm thinking. Originally I was thinking that Steven [client] should maybe spend weekends in detention, just maybe even one weekend just to show him the reality. Boy, he's going to get himself into it if he keeps on this road of minor stealing. He's been stealing for a long time, in reality. He used to steal from home, he used to steal from his parents. He's been taking things since, according to the mother, he was three years old.... He started early and it sort of worries me a bit. The research shows the earlier they start the harder it is for them to curb it later on in life.... Then I have to take a look and since May he has been doing really well, so I don't know if throwing him in the clink for the weekend will be all that helpful. It certainly wouldn't be helpful for the family or his relationship to his grandparents. He's done community work before, he's been on probation before. I feel like the Court is going to..should be a little heavy with him.... He's not really worried about the whole thing. Sixteen now, he'll be 17 in March; I don't want to recommend probation until he's 18. I find that after the outside of a year it starts to lose its effect. In conclusion, then, this worker suggests to the Youth Court the following: Considering Steven has previously been on probation and has had to perform community work? community restitution twice, this worker does not feel additional community work would be appropriate. Hence, it is recommended Steven..I'm using Steven's name too much..this adolescent be place on probation for a period of one year "avec suivi" [with follow-up by the worker], that he be ordered to make a donation to charity, (the amount to be decided by the Youth Court). What else can I recommend? Recommendations are so limited. [Reads paragraph back] In conclusion...be placed on probation.. Just thinking about giving Steven a message in this report. I'm not sure how the judge or the defence lawyer is going

to take it, but.. They could ask it to be stricken from the record, but I'm thinking my last sentence would be..[tries out sentence:] Should Steven involve himself in any further illegal conduct, I would not hesitate to recommend to the Crown or to the Court a period of placement in detention. I really want this kid to get his act together because I know he could really do well. I don't know how the Court would take that. I'll add it anyway, what the fuck! Should Steven become involved in any further..ooo, here comes the big, black whip..illegal behavior while on probation this worker would not hesitate recommending a period of placement in detention. Woof! I feel like such a heavy whenever I talk like that. Let's see what I got here anyway [rereads section]. (G;PR/SG)

Later, when shown the above excerpt during his discourse interview, George elaborated:

Well, I wanted to get a message to the kid... because he didn't take his delinquency seriously. I wanted to get the message across to him and his mother that they were serious delinquencies. Uh, and that society does not accept that kind of behaviour and that there is a consequence to breaking the law.... I wanted to provide the court with as much information as I could, and to put the..to put the offences..help the court understand the offences in the most appropriate context. (G;DI)

George began writing as a social worker over 10 years before this study was conducted, but he still expressed some dissatisfaction with his reports. When he began in the unit, he used "model" reports from the files to guide him. He said, however, that these models were less helpful than the feedback provided by colleagues, judges, lawyers, and -- George was the only worker to acknowledge this -- secretaries. In fact, he said that the secretaries had helped him enormously with his spelling and grammar, a sensitive aspect of writing for this street kid turned social worker:

I'm also very conscious of my writing style also. In that, you know, I want to make sure that my grammar is all right and that I'm not using run-on

sentences, and that kind of stuff, because I think that that's a reflection on me as a professional.
(G;In)

I'm much happier with my writing now than when I was in university. And when I first started working here, I had a tendency to write a lot, like, too much, wasn't very concise, etc. So, I'm pleased that it has improved that way. I still think I could..my grammar could be better, but in general I'm quite satisfied with it. (G;In)

Alice

Alice, trained like George as a social worker, was also a veteran of Court Services, having worked there for most of ten years. She too had developed her own ways of collecting information and composing reports. She used her Progress Notes mostly to record the bare outline of interviews and phone calls; in their place, Alice used a two page form she had prepared with some of the PA and PDR report headings and space for "other pertinent data." In addition, she jotted notes on loose sheets of paper, some of them small notepad sheets or adhesive-backed notes. Her individual case files were filled with an assortment of forms and notes:

I personally have made an outline for myself that I keep, what I call "Intake Form," that at the initial interview [with client] I take down..I don't actually write in front of the client, I'm not comfortable doing that. I rely on my memory, except for names, birth dates, and all that.... If the kid's talked about drugs and things like that, I just make little notes for myself at the end of the interview. I don't put that much in my Progress Notes, except that I had an interview and, if anything major came out in the interview, then I'll put it in my Progress Notes, cause I figure my Progress Notes are for other people, if I'm not around. (A;In)

Alice kept her Intake Form in the client's file, along

with a growing collection of loose pages, until she was ready to begin the report. That meant at least three interviews with the client, perusal of relevant documentation, and telephone calls to all necessary contacts; unlike Sophie, Alice waited until all the information was in before composing:

The reason I don't go directly to it is because, before I can write up the Psychosocial, the way I operate, I need at least three interviews. And I'm..the way I write a Psychosocial or a Predispo, it's like I write from start to finish and I can't..if I add things it's like a phrase here and there, but I can't write a report...like a little bit in this part of the report, a little bit about that, it's like start to finish I have to write the reports.... my train of thought has to kind of flow. It's, like, I have to sit down in one day and just write the whole thing. (A;In)

Alice said she devoted her mornings to writing and her afternoons to her clients, but when a deadline loomed, Alice put everything on hold (including most phone calls). When Alice did start, she worked on a report until it was finished; in her estimation, that was 3 hours for a PA and 7-8 hours for a PDR. For this study, Alice composed a PA in 2 hours, one PDR in 5.7 hours, another in 2.3, and a third in 3.2 hours. These times, however, may not be typical and should not be seen as challenges to Alice's own estimates. For example, the PDR written in just over 2 hours contained a number of sections from a previous report by another worker; Alice simply brought the earlier report up to date and added a few short sections. And, as Michel put it, "It's hard to differentiate between writing the report and dealing with the case" (M;DI). Compiling notes, tracking down a

school principal for a telephone interview, and reading another worker's Progress Notes on your client may all be regarded as "writing" activities when they are essential to composing.

Like George, Alice did not provide much commentary on readers or plans as she composed; however, she did seem quite concerned with arrangement. Her protocols are filled with comments about order and direction: "Where do we go from here?"; "What's next?"; "So, what comes after School?"; "Where do I put that?"; "Now what?" As she herself said, "I have to organize my thoughts. I'm kind of compulsive, obsessive compulsive, in that line" (A;In).

As she wrote, Alice would read through her notes, crossing out information she had used and noting which sections the remaining information belonged in. Every once in a while, she would jot down a quick note to herself as a reminder to include some fact or observation in a particular section (e.g., "Family Assessment: Contradiction. [Parents] say that he [client] was a problem even as a young child."). Except where her concern for organization stopped her, Alice worked steadily, reviewing text only after a paragraph or full section was completed. She made few changes after the text was written, even during her final, proofreading check of the finished draft. Like George, Alice spoke text aloud as she wrote it. When she stalled part way through a sentence, she would say the sentence fragment over and over, as if taking a running jump at the end of the phrase.

Alice claimed to "hate writing reports"; in addition,

like George, she appeared to resent the writing demands made upon her by the agency:

first of all, it's an effort for me to sit down and write, to put my thoughts together on paper; that's a big effort.... And it's also, for me, it's not important; I mean, I know what I've done with the family. The actual work that you do with the family is more important to me than putting it down on paper. And I feel that that's just because it's a bureaucratic need.... I'd much prefer putting more effort into working with the family than doing paper work. So, I think it's partly just the system; psychologically, I hate this system for that reason. (A;In)

Her dislike did not appear related to uncertainty about her own writing. She herself said she was "pretty confident" and did not show reports to colleagues in order to get help with surface features of her texts. Rather, she sought help in anticipating response to reports:

I'll ask a co-worker, "What do you think the defence and the Crown are going to say [to] this report? How do you think the judge is going to interpret it? What questions do you guys think I'm going to be asked?" (A;In)

This interaction with her colleagues was one way in which Alice learned how to write reports. In addition, when she first started in Court Services, she checked others' reports and had the benefit of repeated practice:

I have to admit, when I started here, I had a supervisor who made me rewrite reports, like, seven times until I got it right.... And I didn't like the idea of going through rewriting reports seven to eight times, and then I got the hang of it and with the years I learnt what do judges kind of want to hear in your reports, what do the clients want to hear. (A;In)

Michel

Michel had a Master of Social Work degree and a private

counselling practice. He seemed more concerned than the others with the deeper psychological reasons behind a client's offence. His reports were often attempts to trace what he called a "developmental history," that is, an explanation of the client's behaviour in terms of life experience. The following protocol excerpt typifies that practice:

[When younger] Ron told hospital professionals that [crosses "that" out] "stories" ..I'm using the term "stories" because that's the word he used.."stories" for fear that his father be seen as a "child abuser". So already he's..[I'm] describing to the court here that Ron had to keep these things in. He couldn't really express to anyone around him. He didn't feel that he could express to anyone around him what he was experiencing at home, namely an abusive situation by father. I do want to portray to the Court here that Ron was a victim of violence..uh..a victim of violence. And eventually he did..that leads to much anger and frustration in him, mainly directed at his father, which he displaced in the person of the bus driver. Uh, this type of anger is pervasive, this displacement, this frustration, this anger is also shown to other authorities, as I've seen, to others -- teachers and stuff. (M;PR/RH)

This attention to cause is stated explicitly in Michel's answer to a question regarding his intended message in a PDR:

That there were underlying reasons for the youngster to commit the crime that he did. And to expose, to explain, to give some kind of synthesis, an overview of what those reasons were, what the context was, so that the Youth Court could understand the needs of the youngster and, hence, be able to give..render a fair, informed decision. (M;DI)

Michel's concern for the psychological variables in each case, inspired perhaps by his training and private practice, extended as well to the follow-up period with clients. Although the other workers frequently mentioned the proba-

tion which they almost invariably recommended, only Michel seemed much bothered by the shortage of time available for substantial therapeutic follow-up: "That's one of the frustrations in this particular job is that we assess so much and then we do so little with it" (M;PA/MP). Probation allowed the worker to monitor a client, but with 35 active cases there was not much time for attending to the causes underlying an adolescent's erratic, violent, or aberrant behaviour. To make up for this lack, Michel suggested outside help, although neither he nor the Court were authorized to order it:

What do I want to say here? Let me think about it a little bit..[We recommend...] that Ronnie undergo a psychological examination.. Um, this report will point out to the Court but also will point out to Ron his need for outside help. Um..I will use the psychological [test] and I will give him the results and this may influence him in seeking the outside help. It will also underline the fact that I feel, the school had felt, the [other] social worker feels, um, that he needs extra help. He even stated that to his other social worker. So, how do I want to phrase this? (M;PR/RH)

Michel, like George and Alice, spoke his sentences aloud before writing them and rarely commented in protocols on the thought process that went into his writing; however, he too was eloquent about the reports' complexities in interviews. Unlike George and Alice, Michel did make changes after he wrote. His revisions were mostly superficial: substituting one word for another, correcting spelling, adding qualifiers for greater precision or a "better sound." He wrote quickly and made changes after a section was completed. Like Sophie, Michel worked on sections as he felt ready to write them,

regardless of their actual order in the reports.

Despite many years writing court reports, Michel occasionally consulted one of his previous, successful PDRs before or during writing. In fact, he claimed that he had learned how to write reports by studying those reports that either his supervisor or the judge had told him were good PDRs. He retained a number of lessons from that feedback:

I was told by a judge that it's better to write less, than to write more. (M;In)

It was once said to me by a Youth Court judge that he can read between the lines and so it [PDR] need not be so detailed. And that's when I first started as a social worker in the Youth Court system and that always stayed with me. I guess it was after I had submitted a report where I was very explicit [laughs] and he knew I was starting fresh. (M;DI)

Readers

When composing the PA and the PDR, Sophie, George, Alice, and Michel wrote for a bewildering array of readers. Although the PA was rarely read by others, that possibility did exist. What made the PDR so much more difficult than the PA was the list of inevitable readers: the judge, the lawyers, the client, and the family. This difference between the reports was obvious in the workers' interviews and protocols. Throughout their initial and discourse-based interviews, the participants stressed the PA's heuristic and archival functions, but whenever they spoke about the PDR they emphasized its rhetorical difficulty. This difference was borne out by the protocols: in PA protocols, workers

rarely mentioned readers at all; whereas in PDR protocols, there were frequent reader references. As Sophie put it, workers wrote the PDR "with shields all around" them (S;In).

Each reader approached the text differently. Each had a particular role to play in the drama and a different set of relationships with the other people involved. Certain aspects of those relationships were fixed and, in a sense, faceless. For example, some interactions between the judge and the lawyers were determined by legal procedure and remained the same regardless of the people involved or the text being considered. However, since real, live individuals filled all the roles, interpersonal relations added a constantly changing dimension to the text and the activity surrounding it (i.e., the trial, the interviews, the writing, the sentencing hearing, the probationary period, etc.). This phenomenon of relationships predetermined by role and modified by individual personalities was captured by the workers' supervisor:

Different judges have different reputations: he'll never place [a youth in custody]; or he's off the wall, or he'll place anybody. Working with the lawyers, there's a distinction between the Crown and the defence. I think very few court workers feel they're working with the defence. The defence is there to get their kid off and, if he's not off, to minimize anything. And that can be frustrating 'cause the worker feels they're trying to balance rights and needs, whereas the defence is there strictly for the kid's rights. So, there's not a close relationship there. If anything, there's a closer relationship with the Crown. (Supervisor)

To complicate matters, the various sections of the report itself reflected (and caused) shifting relations between writer and readers and among the readers. For instance,

under the "Basis of Assessment" (or "Basis of Report") section, Sophie was careful to list each and every contact with the client and other sources of information. She felt this was important for her relations with the judge and the lawyers:

Okay, now we have to tell him how did I gather the information..how many effort did I put in this report in order to be credible. Tell him all the steps, persons contacted, for how long, so they see that I haven't taken a decision for the fun of it.
(S;PR/DS)

Moments later, in the same protocol, she writes in the date of her first interview and comments on the judge's possible response:

June 10th. He's gonna see that I didn't wait too long. I've been assigned on the 9th and I started moving on the 10th. (S;PR/DS)

A report that presented three or four versions of the same incident, public assessments of an adolescent and his or her family, and recommendations for punishment naturally set up a whole shifting series of alliances and oppositions. The adolescent and mother whose contradictory versions of the offence pitted them against each other in one section of the report might find that they were allies against the social worker when they read the "Family Assessment" section. Asked why he included a particular piece of information in a PDR, Michel revealed his understanding and use of this complex dynamic:

the youngster will be reading the report, his parents will be reading the report, and the youngster and the parents will know that the court is reading the report; so that's the reason I included it.
(M;DI).

Alice, too, demonstrated a subtle comprehension of the individuals and interactions surrounding one of her reports:

this is the first time I'm having [a] case heard before this judge. So I don't know how she views reports. She seems to be very fair. And because she's a woman, I tend to think she's going to be more towards being very hard on this kid [client]. Second thing is the Crown prosecutor is pretty meek, so he might not fight very hard, and the defence is very strong. (A;DI)

In the sections which follow, some of the workers' insights into this intricate social web are presented. Because the workers were most concerned about the PDR readers, those are the readers and that is the report most frequently mentioned.

The Judge

In typical fashion, Sophie bluntly captured the importance of the judge: "The judge is the one who will ultimately, you know, bless my report or kind of spit on it" (S;In). Because of this powerful position as primary reader, the judge was frequently referred to in interviews and protocols, and the writers displayed an impressive store of information about what did and did not work with individual judges and judges in general.

One broad distinction between judges concerned the degree to which they adhered to legal protocol, a distinction Alice explained as a function of their tenure :

...the older judges, the ones that have been here, like, 20 years and more...used to work under a very, very different system where there were no lawyers, nothing like that, and...they were less legalistic and...they called the social worker down to their office and "What do you want to do with

this kid?" and it was kind of like they trusted you without having all this legal stuff surrounding you. And, so, they haven't changed their attitude; their attitude is still..."I trust this worker, so you lawyers can do all the questioning you want; I'm going to go with what's in the report." (A;In)

There are certain judges, the newer judges, are very legalistic, by the book. So, the more legalistic they are, the more I'll be careful about what I put in my report. The older judges give us more leeway, in that the Crown or the defence may object to something in my report, but they don't really care. So, I try to be much more factual in reports that I am giving to certain judges that I know are very much by the book. (A;In)

Sophie echoed this belief when she said, "Certain judge[s] are very open-minded and will allow some information without too much problem. Some judge[s] will just be so legalistic that they will [criticize] everything in the report which is not directly relevant to the charge" (S;In).

For the workers, the major legal question concerned the admissibility of certain information. Caught between the need to explain an adolescent's behaviour and the restrictions imposed by legal regulations, workers often relied on the judge's tolerance and the fact that he or she read the report before it became a Court document:

...there's a lot of hearsay in the report which I'm not allowed to put in, in a Court report, so I took the risk of putting it in, thinking that it's important for the judge to know. She will have read the report by the time it comes to Court. So, you know, I'm the one that's going to get it, you know, from the lawyers in Court for having put that stuff in. But at least I'll know that the judge knows about these concerns. So that was pretty difficult 'cause this is pretty unusual for me to go out of bounds, and put stuff in the report that you're not supposed to.... It's weird to say, but when you write these reports, you often have in mind who's the judge that's going to be reading them. I think I was. Because I knew it was a woman judge, I think I gave myself a bit more leeway; maybe that's why I

felt comfortable in putting some of the hearsay in, because of the judge. It's a bit weird to say, but maybe if it had been a different judge, very legalistic, I might have thought twice about that.
(A;DI)

Perhaps as a result of their subservient relationship to them, and their experience of public censure in the courtroom, the workers had some animosity toward judges. This ill-will occasionally surfaced, but the workers were not above using blandishments to achieve their ends, especially where the question of address was concerned:

Judge: Um, which judge is this? God, I've got so many files I get mixed up in my judges. Smith. The Honourable, they like to be flattered, even if they are not all honourable. (S;PR/DS)

So, what's missing is judge's name [on the Face Sheet]. The judge is..which one is it? [Looks through notes] Tardiff? Yes, it is Tardiff. I'll just put The Honourable, they love it. The Honourable J. Tardiff. Just flatter the Judge's ego.
(S;PR/RP)

Louis [client] appeared before judge Fletcher and pleaded guilty on a count of robbery which occurred on October 12. The judge..A big "J" I guess [inserts a capital J for Judge.] They're full of themselves, and this one especially. (S;PR/LC)

...the above adolescent appeared before..who was the judge, anyways? Loiselles, before Honorable..I choke over that word Honorable..Judge Loiselles...
(G;PR/SG)

[In his discourse interview, Michel was offered "Honorable," an optional title, in place of "Judge":] Yeah, I would be willing to substitute it...it would be appealing to her authority..making her predisposed to my report. (M;DI)

The Lawyers

The roles and attitudes of the lawyers were predetermined to a much greater extent than those of any other reader.

There was an adversary relationship between the prosecution (the "Crown") and the defence that was defined by legal tradition and procedure. The prosecutor's job was to bring charges against the accused and to seek punishment; the defence, naturally, attempted to protect the client's interests. This established relationship of opposition was well understood by the writers:

I think overall I..I'm always more concerned about the defence than the Crown. I mean, the Crown is out, you know, to get the kid anyway, so I figured I could put as much as I wanted.... and knowing that this kid has a defence lawyer, she always gives me a hard time, I had a really hard time writing this report, cause I kept saying, you know, geez, you know, I shouldn't put this in or I shouldn't put that, and she's going to give me a hard time in court, but what the hell, it has to be said. So, I think the person that probably stood out..well, no, not just her, cause then I think, well, the parents, you know, the parents and the kid would read..get a copy of the report, too. But that doesn't concern me as much, cause they'll give me a hard time but in the end it's in the interest of the kid. Whereas once I'm in court it's not in the interest of the kid for me to be discredited by the defence lawyer. (A;DI)

The mandate is quite different, you know; the Crown receives its mandate from society and, uh, is there to accuse and to..to..[be a] shit disturber, you know. Whereas the defence lawyer has a mandate from the kid; if the kid agrees to go into placement they won't argue about it. They have to defend whatever the client wishes. (S;In)

This difference in mandate led naturally to a difference in relations with the writers; as the unit supervisor indicated, "there's a closer relationship with the Crown." Indeed, there was even a sense that the prosecutor and the social worker were on the same side and shared goals. As Alice put it, "I know the Crown is not going to discredit me; I mean, it's not to his advantage" (A;DI). Furthermore,

the Crown prosecutors' offices were a floor below the social workers, and there were frequent, informal exchanges concerning mutual cases. This proximity led to familiarity: "We have a very limited number of Crown prosecutors. Between [within] two years you have a chance to see them all, and to know which one[s] are open to discussion" (S;In).

Not so with defence lawyers, since there was a different one for almost every case. However, what the workers feared was not the individual lawyer, but the role the defence played and the possibility of being put on the stand and questioned. When asked why she had deliberated so long over part of a PDR recommendation, Sophie explained, "I could foresee the cross-examination, the big knife cutting my throat there" (S;DI). To avoid the potentially humiliating experience of a defence lawyer's attempt to publicly discredit them, the workers weighed their words carefully while writing, and some developed quite complicated strategies:

Okay, moving right along after a delay. Summary of Offences... Summary of Present Offence Before the Court: Description of charge: [Reads charge in French and transcribes it directly into his own report with quotation marks.] I'm describing the charge exactly as it reads in the proces-verbal [minutes] of the court. I'm not putting it in my own words, because if I do and I make a mistake the youth's lawyer can object. (G;PR/SG)

... when this worker asked what he thought he might receive as a sentence for this offence Richard [client] answered: "A lot." He thought he deserved, like, I'm sure the defence lawyer's going to blast me if I leave that. This looks like the kid is approving of whatever will be given. (S;PR/RP)

I usually try and sit down with the...defence lawyer beforehand, and give him time to read the report, to try and get an idea of, once in court, are they going to give me a hard time. So I try and

get an idea, are they for or against my recommendations? To get an idea of their feel of the report so I'll know what to expect. It's kind of preparing myself for court. And, also, it gives me a chance to kind of, more on a social level, explain the case to the lawyer, to make things go smoother in court. You kind of learn these tricks over the years. (A;In)

However, despite a strong sense of the potential courtroom dynamics and strategies to prevent confrontation, the writers inevitably faced the thorny rhetorical task of writing a report which opposing lawyers read and reacted to. The unit supervisor summed up this unenviable situation:

It's not uncommon to go in [to court] with the Crown wanting a heavier consequence, the defence wanting a lighter, and the worker feeling caught between both of them.

The Client and Family

As mentioned above, the major difference between the PA and PDR had to do with readers. Although there were many potential readers for the PA, the workers seemed most concerned with convincing themselves of the justice and wisdom of their recommendations. Certainly, the lack of a public forum for the PA, and the absence of legal constraints and dynamics, made the report an easier document to produce. In addition, the client and his or her family rarely saw the report, and that changed the rhetorical situation tremendously, though some of the workers claimed it was not a factor:

I don't write anything in there [the PA] that the clients have not told me. And...if I've made an assumption or if I've made an assessment, or I have feelings about the family and the kid, I usually verbally tell them that. So it comes as no surprise

to them when they, you know, if they would read this report. (G;In)

However, the PDR was a different matter. In fact, the variety and sensitivity of the relationships that the PDR created was, perhaps, the most unexpected finding of this study. Composition theory and pedagogy usually addresses the writer-reader relationship under the rubric "audience," as if the readers were a collective. Moreover, little or nothing is said about how texts influence relations between and among readers. And yet, the social workers were clearly aware that the writer-reader relationship differed from one reader to another, and they also realized the potential impact their reports had on relations between readers. Nowhere was this more obvious than in their concern for their clients and their clients' families.

The client and family played an unusual role: though they read the PDR, they were not, ostensibly, readers; that is, the report was not so much for them as it was about them. In a sense, when the family and client read the report, they were listening into a conversation about themselves -- they were eavesdropping. The report included plenty of information provided by the family, and the major consequences of the PDR were felt by them, but the actual text was not really addressed to the family.

Despite this position in the wings, so to speak, the client and family had major roles to play in the drama. Their contributions ran through the PDR, and the document served, in part, as a plan for aspects of their lives fol-

lowing the sentencing hearing. For example, the client almost always served a period of probation, during which regular meetings with the PDR writer were required. If the PDR was overly critical or the client overly sensitive, the ongoing relationship could prove difficult. Furthermore, the workers did not simply monitor the client's progress; they were involved in a therapeutic relationship, an attempt to help the adolescent work out his or her problems. As Michel put it, "I think there's a therapeutic relationship that I have to continue having and, certainly, I don't want to break that trust" (M;DI). This required an open and ongoing relationship with the family as well, since most attempts to change the client's behaviour depended on assistance from parents. The implications of this complex and delicate relationship are discernible in the following PDR protocol excerpts:

[Working on Parents' Version] One day that Richard had the flu and stayed home..yeah, let's show them [the Court] how irresponsible the mother is, I think it's very relevant....[Later, reviewing this section]..stayed home. Richard then called his mother at work and Mrs. Palumba advised him to go to the downstairs neighbour not to be alone when meeting with the police, but that he could not run away from something he had done. [Laughs.] The judge is going to like this. (S;PR/RP)

Later on in the same PDR:

Richard's father came back in the family's life two years ago after an absence of nearly ten (10) years following an assault on Mrs. Palumba while he was under the influence of alcohol. Huh-huh. There we go. Was he? That is something I should check or the mother is probably going to be at my place for mentioning it in the report when some of the people don't know about that [turns tape recorder off]. (S;PR/RP)

The next segment of protocol followed immediately after the above excerpt; it began with Sophie turning the tape recorder on:

Okay, following day; let's get back to this report because I want to have it finished today, present it to the mother tomorrow night, to the kid on Friday before the decision on Monday. Okay, the mother called me yesterday so I'm going to modify this report to let..to give the judge a little flavour of how, of how she [mother] feels about this whole thing, meaning the offence and, you know..I should really give the judge an idea of how hysterical the mother is and what can be expected and how she perceives the situation, which might in the end help me to say that, you know, it wouldn't be good for the kid to go back home, 'cause the mother's totally nuts and she won't help her son, if that's the attitude she has toward the offence. [Finds draft of Mother's Attitude and reads.] The mother has difficulty in dealing with the fact that her son is actually being detained inspite of the fact that this is the first offence. Mrs. Palumba..let's add something here..told this worker that Richard should be returned home. Mother is going to be happy because I put her point of view and the judge will see how unrealistic and protective she is. Isn't it nice! You break, you kill two birds with one stone. [Goes on adding.]... The mother does not wish to consider a custodial measure..um [reads back, inserts even before "consider"] as a way of helping Richard..[Reads sentence back, adds quote].."since we never had any problems in the past." There we go, that's rather clear, she's totally insane. (S;PR/RP)

As she is reviewing the report and matching sections against the expectations spelled out in the guidelines, Sophie struggles again with the response she anticipates from the mother:

..yeah, well, if I want to "assess the potential of the family in aiding the adolescent to curb his problematic behaviour" [a direct quote of a guideline phrase], I will have to definitely put something about the mother. Okay, um, um, how can I start? God, this mother's going to read this! I cannot offend her or be too raw in my assessment. [Begins to make a list of mother's "characteristics."]..... Okay, now, in this what do we see?

There's a bit of denial and a bit of protectionism. And then if I present it this way, I can lead on to say that right now Richard's best interest is not to be back home because the mother will really not help him to cope with it; she will just wipe it out of his memory.

Sophie then went on to write this sentence: "In brief, Mrs. Palumba is displaying a strong protective attitude towards Richard which involves a denial of any underlying problems that Richard might have, as well as a denial of the seriousness of the harm done to the victim." After she finished writing the section, she said this:

There we go. That's not so bad, it doesn't sound so harsh. I'm sure I'm going to get it when I present it to the mother, but what the heck!... [After a bit more reading and minor revising in the section.] O boy, am I ever afraid to face the mother with this tomorrow. I have to be honest. That's what I'm going to present and that's my point of view and..if she wants a lawyer, she can have a lawyer, for God's sake. (S;PR/RP)

Whereas the writers were most concerned about legal implications in their relations with the judges and lawyers, they showed great concern for the family's and client's feelings and for the relations within the family. Thus, for example, Sophie approves of a particular phrase because it "will not be too offensive for the kid, not too harsh, and does not risk to create a conflict in the family" (S;PR/DS). Other examples:

With regards to his sister, he continues to dislike her..that's mildly put, but I'd rather..I'd rather say "dislike" than "hate." With regards to his sister, he continues.. You know, I have to be sensitive as well. They're going to be reading that in court and, uh, I don't want to make it more than it is. (M;PR/RH)

This incident can be construed as a last.. [crosses out "last"] ..as an attempt..not a

"last".. I don't want to dramatize it more than it should be, especially if the youngster's going to read this. (M;PR/RH)

..when I haven't had time to work with the family, to try and resolve certain issues, family problems, I am glad I don't have to put [the problems] in the Predispo because they get a copy of it and if they see this, I mean, then my future work with them may be sabotaged because I haven't been able to work out this problem with them yet. (A;In)

Other Readers

Other readers of the PDR and PA were peripheral but, occasionally, important. Secretaries and court clerks, for instance, had to type and file all reports; if telephone numbers, addresses, names, and so on were incorrect, reports could be improperly routed. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and even sexologists were called in as experts on occasion, and they then read the documents on a client. Social Work students doing field placement sometimes read a report or two, according to Michel and George. And, despite the highly confidential nature of the reports, there were other possible readers:

..there is one other person who could read the report [PDR] and recently came to my attention, and I am now very concerned about what I put in the reports. I just found out that victims can read the report. Ah, I was subpoenaed to sit in a court in a civil suit, you know, a victim suing the parents for what the kid did, and I found out that he was allowed to have a copy of the report, and that concerns me.... I was concerned that a total stranger was going to know everything about the family. So, that's another person who could read it. That concerns me much more than any of the other parties who can read the report. (A;In)

..we are asked to deposit our Predisposition Report in the court dossier five days before the youth appears. And the youth is allowed a copy of that as

well as all the official people. But what I found is that sometimes I would go [into court] on the date my kid's appearing and he's sitting there with this report and also passing this report along to all his friends.... And they sit there and they joke about some of the things that we write about them. (G;In)

However, the likeliest of all possible other readers were the workers' colleagues, either their "buddies" who covered for them during holidays or illness, or social workers at other points of service. Included in this category were the infrequent but extremely important readers responsible for cases that fell under Youth Protection, which meant all cases involving physical or sexual abuse. The workers' supervisor might read a report now and then, especially if a worker recommended placement in custody. For all of these co-workers, the writers had two major concerns: that facts be clear and that a picture of the client emerge from the report. When asked if he would be willing to remove a PDR sentence that mentioned that the client's mother had been a foster mother, George responded:

Well, I think it's important for any other worker, if there ever is another worker involved with this family, that worker know that information. Also [it] indicates to people the type of person that she is, you know, that she is willing to extend herself to others who need help. (G;DI)

Court Services as a Discourse Community

Before moving on to the next chapter, in which the separate elements of setting, texts, writers, and readers are examined in action and interaction, it will help to reflect

on the tentative definition of discourse community offered in Chapter One and to compare that discussion to the description of Court Services provided in this chapter. That comparison can best be made using Swales' six-point definition as a guide:

1) "Communality of interest; common public goals." Swales suggests that one of the defining characteristics of a discourse community is that "at some level the members share common public goals" (4). The social workers within Court Services had at least two goals which they shared with others; indeed, these goals were occasionally in conflict and were the source of much of the social and rhetorical difficulty experienced by the workers.

Their first "public goal" involved the assessment and treatment of adolescents whose behaviour had brought them in to conflict with the law. Each worker shared this goal with all other workers involved in court-related work with adolescents, including those in other agencies inside and outside Quebec. In addition, a variety of other social workers, criminologists, guidance counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists shared this goal, although perhaps not as centrally. The goal of assessment and treatment was the workers' specific aim within the agency's larger mandate of providing social services to the community.

Their second goal concerned the legal "disposition" of adolescents found guilty of offences against the criminal code. To achieve this goal, which they shared with the judges and lawyers involved with the Youth Court, workers

had to provide an accurate assessment of the adolescent and, based on that assessment, a fair recommendation for disposition, or sentencing. Though there were adversarial relations built into the procedures for achieving this goal (i.e., prosecution and defence lawyers), the goal was definitely public and shared: all parties wanted to provide the adolescent and family with the best possible situation, though the definition of "best" might differ from person to person.

One feature of this context that Swales' definition does not describe is the overlap, most obvious in the PDR, between the social service and the legal communities. As Bizzell suggests "conflicts can arise when discourse communities overlap" ("What" 15), because different communities have different values, beliefs, and aims, and these differences may well lead to confrontation. Such conflict was inevitable, even desired, in this setting. The clash between the legal and therapeutic perspectives and between the defence and prosecution was designed to help the members of the community achieve their collective project, or common goal. Since no discipline or group of people is immune from influences from outside the group, the conflicts that result from such cross-fertilization should perhaps be considered an inevitable dynamic of discourse communities. The conflict need not be deliberate, as it was in Court Services, but it may well serve the same function by organizing contrasting perspectives. (See Chapter 6 for a further discussion of the implications arising from this overlap of communities.)

2) "Mechanisms for intercommunication." Swales' second

criterion is that the "discourse community has mechanisms for intercommunication between members," or "a forum" (4-5). Unlike academic communities and other special interest groups, the Court Services social workers did not attend annual conferences or publish a newsletter or journal. Naturally, there are many professional journals in the fields of social work and sociology, but none held a central role in these workers' professional lives, as College Composition and Communication or College English do for those people involved in the teaching of writing at the post-secondary level. However, a variety of formal and informal "forums" existed.

For example, as with other bureaucratic institutions, a large number of guidelines, policy statements, regulations, and other internal documentation crossed the workers' desks each week. In addition, the unit had many scheduled meetings, as did the agency itself. The participants in this study referred to a number of occasional committees and conferences which brought court workers together with social workers at other points of service, lawyers, judges, police officers, and other professionals whose concerns overlapped their own. These texts and meetings set the community's agenda, defined its goals, established its values, and helped shape its direction in much the same way conferences and journals help determine the activities of other communities. In addition, the courtroom provided a forum for the PDR; that is, it became a setting for the exchange of views held by those whose common purpose was to reprimand and pun-

ish an offending adolescent.

At the less formal end of the forum spectrum, there were social activities organized around such events as softball tournaments, family picnics, and so forth; as with any group with common purpose, a considerable amount of "shop talk" occurred during these events. And, of course, there was the constant informal exchange of information and ideas that went on in offices and hallways, over coffee and lunch, and after work.

3) "Information and feedback." The third criterion in Swales' definition suggests that, because of 1) and 2) above, "the discourse community survives by providing information and feedback" (5). Again, as mentioned, there were a variety of information and feedback channels within Court Services, both formal and informal. All of the workers spoke of learning to write on the job as a process of gradual improvement, based in part on feedback from colleagues, supervisors, judges, lawyers, and secretaries. Sophie, perhaps because she was the least experienced of the writers, was the most conscientious at collecting this response to her work: "I make it a point, a personal point of honour, to be there [in court], so if there is criticism, if there is praise, I'm collecting whatever; both helps my future practice" (S;DI). And Alice, ten years on the job, still occasionally asked colleagues to "role-play" the Youth Court judge who was to receive one of her reports.

There is, however, a potential mismatch between Swales' notion of information and the information contained in the

PDR and PA. Swales says that "the community survives by providing information and feedback"; the term "providing" might suggest a closed system, one not open to outside information and feedback. Much of the information in the Court Services reports came from outside the community -- from the client, the family, the victim, the school principal, and so on. Given the discussion of the conflict arising from overlapping communities, external influences, and internal dynamics, it makes more sense to say that the discourse community thrives on information and feedback.

4) "Discoursal expectations; the roles texts play; genres." The richest and most ambiguous of Swales' defining characteristics is stated as follows: "The discourse community has developed and continues to develop discoursal expectations. These may involve appropriacy of topics, the form, function and positioning of discoursal elements, and the roles texts play in the operation of the discourse community.... these discoursal expectations create the genres that articulate the operations of the discourse community" (5).

The two reports examined for this study were clearly governed by the "discoursal expectations" of the community. Every decision, from the ban on use of first-person pronouns to forms of address for judges to admissibility of evidence, could be traced back to the complex relations within the community. The community's expectations were most obvious and observed when they were most formal, so that restrictions on admissibility, for example, were quite strictly

adhered to, but the writers displayed great sensitivity to a wide range of other, less obvious, expectations, including the appropriateness of tone and diction, the order of information in reports, and the limits of their own roles.

Aside from the regulations governing admissibility, which are inscribed in law, the most visible codification of community expectations in Court Services were the guidelines for the PA and PDR. In essence, these guidelines were blueprints or rules for the genres; they identified the amount and type of knowledge necessary for the community to do its work -- that is, achieve its common goal. Bazerman describes it this way: "A genre is a socially recognized, repeated strategy for achieving similar goals in situations socially perceived as being similar.... A genre is a social construct that regularizes communication, interaction, and relations" (Shaping 62). The PA and PDR set in place patterns of action and interaction, based on the community's expectations; the guidelines spelled out those expectations. When George checked the guidelines before beginning a report section, he often asked, "What do they want here?"

The guidelines for both reports had been revised in recent years (and were subject to further revisions after this study was completed). In fact, the PDR was a revision of an earlier, agency-wide PA that proved inappropriate as evidence in court because it provided too much information. A committee of court social workers and lawyers designed a new report. When the genre did not meet the community's expectations, when it regularized inappropriate or ineffec-

tive action, it was revised. (See the following chapter for a more complete discussion of genre in Court Services.)

5) "Shared and specialized terminology." Swales' fifth characteristic: "The discourse community possesses an inbuilt dynamic towards an increasingly shared and specialized terminology" (5). Language is often coded; in other words, it holds meaning for the initiated but may not for those outside the group. The code may take the form of jargon (specialized terms and phrases), or it may be dependent on shared knowledge unavailable to others. That knowledge will be shared by group members but not by people outside the group because it is "local"; that is, it is knowledge that is rooted in the circumstances. Michel explains a common belief in the existence of such knowledge: "It was once said to me by a Youth Court judge that he can read between the lines and so it [PDR] need not be so detailed" (M;DI). Other workers mentioned the judges' ability to "read between the lines."

In the following excerpt, the workers' supervisor explains how specialized language allowed the writers to avoid the censure that came with including inadmissible evidence:

Sometimes, [the workers] know there'll be a request to strike something from their report. They put it in anyway. They can't say, "Johnny [i.e., client] has been convicted of 12 B and E's"; some of them will say something like, "Johnny, who's been known to our service since 1984."

The phrase "who's been known to our service since 1984" carries with it information for the judge about the recidiv-

ism of the client, but it does not risk the objection from the defence lawyer that a blunt statement of the client's prior offences almost certainly would. In the following excerpt, Alice uses a similar tactic:

This was his first known offence. That let's the judge know that he has others I can't mention.. yet. (A;PR/KM).

Such specialized use of language further indicates that Court Services qualifies as a discourse community.

6) "Members with...relevant discorsal and content expertize." Swales' final defining characteristic is an attempt to account for the stability of group membership and the continuation of community knowledge: "The discourse community has a critical mass of members with a suitable degree of relevant discorsal and content expertize.... people enter as apprentices and leave, by death or in other less involuntary ways. However, survival of the community depends on a reasonable ratio between experts and novices" (5-6). This seems the most self-evident of Swales' criteria and clearly describes, in part, the situation in Court Services. For example, as mentioned above, most new court workers studied the reports written by more experienced workers. However, what may be misleading is Swales' suggestion of developmental growth from novice to expert. Sophie, trained more recently than the other workers, and as a criminologist besides, had expertise the others lacked. In addition, Sophie had worked with the revised PDR from the beginning of her employment and seemed quite comfortable with it; whereas the others, used to the old version, struggled and referred

frequently to the guidelines. The point is, discourse communities are constantly changing, as their knowledge and activities alter. The new doctor is usually more expert in some areas than the doctor who is about to leave the profession, "by death or in other less involuntary ways."

When the modifications to Swales' definition are taken into consideration, Court Services meets the criteria for a discourse community. Those modifications, discussed above and in Chapter One, take into account such phenomena as dissenting or silenced voices, institutionally structured conflict, overlap between communities, and information and expertise from a variety of sources.

Moreover, the theoretical discussions of discourse communities and the present study concur on a central factor: the activities and expertise of discourse communities are constantly changing, and the defining characteristics are best viewed and most easily understood as agents of that change, rather than as fixed structures. In other words, even though the PDR guidelines determined much about the final report, it was only in the context of actual people in actual relationships that those guidelines exerted the community's expectations. In order to better understand the social dynamics which distinguished Court Services from all other discourse communities, the next chapter offers examples of the interaction between people and texts.

CHAPTER SIX: Action and Interaction

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to capture some of the social dynamics in Court Services by describing interactions between and among people and texts. It is necessary to focus on only some of the writing and reading activities because there were virtually a limitless number of actions and interactions in this small discourse community. In effect, this chapter will be an attempt to put into motion the separate elements described in the preceding chapters. To do that, three perspectives are offered: the first takes the form of a profile of one report, a PDR written by Sophie; the second presents a view of the constantly shifting roles and relationships among the people involved with the texts; the third perspective concerns the ways in which community expectations, in the form of the report genres, affected the writers and writing of reports.

Process in Context: A Profile of One Report

As mentioned in her profile in Chapter Five, Sophie displayed similar composing patterns for all three PDRs examined for this study. However, surface similarities in methods of collecting and collating information and in drafting and revising did not obscure the profound differ-

ences below the level of routine. Though Sophie proceeded in much the same way for each report, the dramas played out in and around the texts were considerably different.

The report described in this case study is attached as Appendix 9. It was written about Louis Crane, a fifteen-year old boy who had pleaded guilty to a charge of robbery. Sophie received the request for the report on May 13th, began collecting information on May 20th, and completed the report on June 6th for a June 8th disposition hearing. She wrote approximately 13 pages of rough notes, which included information from police and court documents, interview notes, test results, all the necessary facts and figures (names of family members, addresses, dates of birth, and so on), and a brief excerpt of the Crown prosecutor's cross-examination of the client (taken from a tape recording of the trial). The rough draft of the report was 15 pages long. Actual composing time, based on the report protocol, was just over 7.5 hours.

Information for the report was gathered primarily through a 3 hour interview with the client and his mother, a 2 hour interview with Louis alone, and a 2 hour home visit. In addition, Sophie spoke on the telephone to the vice-principal and to the guidance counsellor at the client's school as well as to the victim and a friend of the victim who had been present during the offence. She consulted the police and court dossiers, a tape recording of the trial, and the client's report card. Finally, she tested Louis on four commercially available instruments meant to measure such

aspects of personality as "social functioning" and self-awareness.

Although it is possible to fix precisely the date on which Sophie first knew about this report, such a measurement ignores the factors already in place when the request for the PDR arrived. For example, the mere fact that a request was made indicated that the client had committed an offence; indeed, the whole justification for Court Services assumed some aberration or deviation, certainly in the adolescent's behaviour, and probably in the family as well. That assumption was most apparent in the PDR guidelines, which promoted various, mostly critical, ways of looking, thinking, and writing. Add to this Sophie's own assumptions, values, and beliefs as a court worker and criminologist, and it is clear that the request for Louis Crane's Predisposition Report did not enter a neutral setting. On the contrary, Sophie began the report with a particular relationship to the as-yet-unknown client and a rhetorical stance determined by habit and the assumptions built into the context. In the following excerpt from her discourse interview, Sophie makes some of those assumptions explicit:

I was trying to really dig into every zone or area of his life to try and find something else that would let us know or lead us to believe that we were right. Because it is unbelievable that a kid starts as a first charge -- without antecedents, with no problem whatsoever -- in getting involved in something like that, which was a robbery. You start by shoplifting, breaking and entering, then you go into confronting people. (S;DI)

Sophie's attempt to prove that "we were right" was an effort to justify the community's assumptions; that is, she

wanted to demonstrate that Louis Crane's life followed the expected trends. However, the client's behaviour was compared to the typical offender's pattern and found "unbelievable"; that is, the client's history did not match the assumed progression of delinquency, and was therefore suspect. Sophie's admission exposes the momentum of habitual procedure. As Dorothy Smith explains, "a highly complex socially organized practice mediates the relation of knower and known" (257). The repeated practice of Court Services, including the composition and interpretation of the PDR, presumes that the adolescent is a known object. Smith continues:

The object constituted as known is already socially constructed prior to the knower's entry into the relation. Her relation to it, the act in which she knows it, has thus already a determinate structure. She may appear as investigator, discoverer, or inquirer, but so long as this social determination remains unchanged, her enterprise is closed by a boundary which cannot be transcended. (257)

Even before Sophie, the social worker, met Louis, the client, she expected he would fit a certain profile. In other words, before actual individuals filled the various roles of judge, lawyer, social worker, client, family, and so on, their parts were, to some extent, scripted, or predetermined. So, for instance, Sophie was committed to discovering what was "wrong" with the client's (and family's) life, and to recommending appropriate responses to the client's offence. The client and family were relegated to roles as passive but resentful observers. And, as mentioned in Chapter Five, one lawyer was almost certain to disagree

with the other lawyer about the recommendations.

When Sophie had completed this report, she admitted that it was one of the most difficult she had ever had to write. The reason, she said, was that she was "programmed to think of the kid as a bad boy," but she could not find anything to support that assumption. This struggle caused her to begin seven versions of the Assessment of Adolescent section of the report. The following protocol excerpts are typical of her vacillation and frustration during the composing of this PDR:

[Following one scrapped version of the Assessment of Adolescent section.] I'm on the wrong track again. There's just something wrong with this kid that's so hard to put together. (S;PR/LC)

[After finishing the Lifestyle section.] That ain't too bad. Clear, factual, and..whatever. [Inaudible] nice guy who has no problem. You can even see through this kid. (S;PR/LC)

[After reading second version of Summary] What else can I say about this kid? Feel I still don't know him. Something intangible, but I just cannot get my hand on it..something weird. (S;PR/LC)

[Working on Family Assessment section.] Aw, gee, what a painful thing: so many unsolved questions in this family. I don't have much choice, the deadline is for the day after tomorrow, and I have to produce it today, so let's give it the best shot about what I mean, what I know about this family. (S;PR/LC)

[Working on Assessment of Adolescent] Louis is a 15.11 year old mulatto adolescent [reads this back]..it's true, he's blank in my head. I've never seen that. I spend my whole working day on this phantom. (S;PR/LC)

[As she's starting version #7 of the Assessment of Adolescent section.] So many contradictions in this case. How can he be self-confident and self-assured and not be able to answer questions? Unbelievable! I've never had so many problems. For the kid.. amusingly enough, the harder the kid, the better I

am, but if it's just everyday kids, I'm zilch.
(S;PR/LC)

The final sentence of the last excerpt is telling, revealing a recognition of the variation in the usual worker-client relationship. Sophie was working on a "phantom" because she was writing a report about the client she expected, not the client she had. This was due, in part, to the assumptions built into the situation, as Sophie's comment about programming suggests, but there was another reason for her concern; the following excerpts offer a hint:

[Working on Description of Charge.] On May 28 1989, Louis Crane pleaded guilty on the following count before..which judge? [Reads from court dossier] Fletcher, aargh! The Iron Lady of the court! Judge Fletcher of the Montreal Youth Court. (S;PR/LC)

[Working on Basis of Report] Louis appeared before Judge Fletcher and pleaded guilty on a count of robbery which occurred on October 12 1989. The judge..A big "J" I guess [inserts a capital J for Judge.] They're full of themselves, and this one especially. (S;PR/LC)

During a discourse-based interview, Sophie expanded on her feelings about Judge Fletcher:

I don't know if I mentioned that Judge Fletcher gives me sweat just to see the name, just to have to go and present a report. She is dry, mean, and she despises social workers and the social field in general. So, to produce a report that I personally am not satisfied of, in front of her, is a major source of concern. Ah, I'm going to try to have the two lawyers on my side, because I'm sure she is going to tear me into pieces. When I presented a very excellent report, that I thought was the best I did, in front of her, I didn't come up with a clear recommendation and left it up to her, and she almost called me incompetent, you know; the only time in my career I did that. (S;DI)

Fletcher is, like, I know she only criticizes, and I know she's mean, she's dry, and I'm not sure I want to be there [in court for hearing]. I'll get the tape later on if I don't want to see her.

(S;DI)

I have been torn into pieces, a very respectable member of my team who has everybody's respect and is known to be an old timer and everything has been torn into pieces. She's just a..nobody has any status in her eyes. I got sick just to see it. I think just knowing I was presenting, working on this report for her, made it even harder. (S;DI)

[Fletcher] thinks that because she's a woman judge she has to be stricter, drier, meaner to gain respect and authority. (S;DI)

[When asked if she would drop the "Honourable" from the judge's title and replace it with "Judge."]
Sure, because she is less than honourable, so..but I thought it would be mean, you know. This is a bit of trying to get her on my side maybe, and I have a habit of that.... They are all being called "Honourable" whatever; they like that, it flatters their ego. (S;DI)

Clearly, this writer-reader relationship had a profound effect on Sophie; in turn, it influenced her attitude toward Louis. Her anxiety caused her to become suspicious: "I tried by every way to find out and to show the court that there was more to this kid than, excuse the expression, bullshit" (S;DI). In addition, Sophie was so concerned about the judge that she considered an alliance between herself and both lawyers, a radical realignment of normal courtroom relations. Already "programmed" to think of her client as a "bad boy," she was next faced with the difficult task of proving that to a judge.

Over the course of composing this PDR, Sophie's attitude toward Louis began to change, partly as a result of her ongoing relationship with him and partly because she failed to turn up convincing evidence that he was a "bad boy." This change in attitude was most obvious during the drafting of

the School section under Assessment of Adolescent. Sophie's interview with the vice-principal had turned up some very negative comments about Louis: "O, I'm going to have a hard time putting anything this guy says in the report. Sounds so much like he hates all the kids he sees" (S;PR/LC). And, indeed, the first draft of the section did not paint a flattering portrait of Louis. But Sophie returned to it again and again; finally, she decided to revise it:

O, geez, I can't give him [the principal] a page for himself. Not when he cannot be cross-examined. Nobody will ever know anything positive about this kid. (S;PR/LC)

She rejected the draft and began to rewrite:

Mr. Griff, vice-principal for grade 10 students...um..who yelled his way to..perceives [laughs] perceives Louis..that's his vision, not mine. And it's not facts, it's perception. (S;PR/LC)

Her second version was less critical of Louis; in addition, she added a paragraph reporting some positive comments from the school's guidance counsellor:

Mrs. Dale, guidance counsellor at the Academy has a very different perception of Louis. And I think possible trouble. I don't know, that's highly..I believe that's highly speculative. (S;PR/LC)

Speculative or not, Sophie left her interpretation of the counsellor's comments in the report. In her discourse interview she explained some of her concerns about the vice-principal, concerns which once again illustrate the assumptions that come with the context:

It's not the first time I'm dealing with this guy, and it really frustrates me every time. [He is an] angry, bitter, old man dealing only with disciplinary problems; he thinks that every kid is a trouble maker. And when I'm calling them, now that he knows

me for..[a] probation officer, criminologist, just me calling him and mentioning Louis, here we go! "I knew this kid was rotten, I felt it!" (S;DI)

So I didn't want really to emphasize on this guy because he didn't have much credibility in my eyes either; so I didn't want to state everything without explaining. And then I said to myself that it's a perception he had of the kid.... So I removed the whole thing about this incident with one teacher that was short-lived, dealt with, and now this [vice-] principal does not see the kid anymore for disciplinary problems. So. I didn't want to emphasize on a very, very isolated event with one teacher, that would not be fair to the kid. Because obviously [the] Crown prosecutor and judge will..are thirsty for stuff like that" (S;DI).

Sophie's anxiety about the "thirsty" judge reached a climax when she struggled with the Summary. In a first draft of this penultimate section of the PDR, Sophie had portrayed Louis in a somewhat unfavourable light. For instance, she had written this sentence:

Louis cannot convincingly explain or justify his involvement or reaction in the actual offence, and does not seem overly concerned by the upcoming Court decision.

However, when she returned to this section, she expressed dissatisfaction and turned the tape recorder off; when she turned it back on again:

[I'm back] after discussing with a colleague there, discussing that the kid doesn't have to be bad, necessarily, fundamentally. In short..[reads draft version of Summary and rips page out.] Let's twist this into something..[begins third and final version of Summary. This version is much more positive.] No major areas of concerns could be identified in this adolescent's life which could explain his involvement or reaction with regards to the present matter. That's it judge! Roll it and smoke it! If there's nothing to say, there's nothing to say" (S;PR/LC).

After talking the case over with her office-mate, Sophie decided to "twist this into something"; what she twisted it

into was a far more positive report on the client. In her discourse interview, Sophie reflected on the PDR:

This one [was] really a royal pain to write and, I wonder, maybe because it wasn't a clear case, maybe because I was trying to prove something to justify my credibility in front of the court.... And I think it became easier to write once I stopped trying to prove myself. (S;DI)

I have to convince the court, at least let them know, that I'm sorry, but if you were expecting to find a rotten little kid, I didn't find it. But it has to be credible also. I don't want to look in court, or seem like somebody who really, you know..the kid has been pulling a quick one on this one. He's got her in his pocket. And I..so, basically, I was trying to say that, yes indeed, I'm still not buying the version but, no, I could not find anything else to back up this. (S;DI)

This brief profile of a single report illustrates the profound influence of the context on the writer. Before writing began, certain values, assumptions, procedures, and relationships were already in place. Although the drama that unfolded around each client was different, and different in important ways, the dramatis personae and the plot were much the same from one report to another. What made each report distinct was the actual people who filled the roles and the detailed circumstances of their lives and relationships.

Roles and Relationships

The closer one looks at writing activity in context, the more involved and alive it appears. A single text can evolve from a complex history and set in motion an intricate chain of events. This complicated dynamic is most obvious in the myriad roles and relationships that surround and support a

given document. Even texts that seem tightly constrained by such conventional forces as guidelines, set roles, and established procedures are charged with implications for human relationships. As a result, a document like the Pre-disposition Report is not merely the record of an often repeated institutional process, but also the ground for complex social interaction.

When Sophie said, "I write with one pen and twenty hats" (S;In), she showed great insight into the range of roles she and her colleagues were required to play. They were, among other things, advisor to the judge, ally to the Crown, adversary to the defence lawyer, assessor to the family, probation officer to the adolescent, and collaborator to any colleagues who might have to use their reports. Part of each role was formal and predetermined, set in advance by habit or precedent. For instance, as a social worker to the court, Sophie's behaviour was constrained in certain ways: there were times when she had to speak and times when she could not speak; things she had to say and other things she could not say. Though there was some flexibility, there were strict rules governing the more formal aspects of each role. (The legal formalities within which the workers were constrained are described in the next section of this chapter.) A sense of the recurring roles acted out in and through each PDR emerges from Alice's comment:

I know the Crown [prosecutor] is not going to discredit me; I mean, it's not to his advantage. The parents and the kid will be upset with me no matter what's in the report. It could be a very good report and they'll still be upset with me. So, I

figure it doesn't matter. I'm trying to do something in the interest of the kid. So, it's always the defence lawyer; she's going to try and discredit me so the judge won't take into consideration my report. (A;DI)

However, though Alice's comment suggests a sameness, part of each role was determined anew every time: though workers almost always acted as probation officers for their clients, their individual relationships with those clients determined how that role was played out. Likewise, some information was uncontestably inadmissible, but certain judges were more tolerant than others. As the description of Sophie's PDR for the "iron lady" illustrates, subtle variations in one relationship affected all other relationships. For example, Sophie's concern about the judge made her more critical and skeptical about the client than she might ordinarily have been; furthermore, that same anxiety caused her to consider an unusual alliance with the two lawyers. What seems most surprising about these alliances and oppositions is that they worked in many directions: interactions caused by or related to the PDR occurred not only between the writer and readers, but also between readers. In fact, the text served as the centre of a complex web of roles and relationships.

In the following excerpt, Michel describes a PDR in which he exceeded his role as advisor by including a recommendation for psychiatric treatment, even though the court could not legally require such treatment. By doing this, he faced almost certain criticism from the defence lawyer and risked his credibility with the Crown and the judge. However:

the youngster will be reading the report, his par-

ents will be reading the report, and the youngster and the parents will know that the court is reading the report, so that's the reason I included it. And I was aware that the other social worker involved was attempting to get [the client] linked with outside resources. So it was just to reinforce that.
(M;DI)

The number of relationships suggested by this comment is remarkable. Michel risked censure for overstepping his role as advisor to the court, and thereby jeopardized his relationships with the judge and lawyers. However, he seemed to feel that his relationships with the family and client took precedence, and he was determined to give them a strong message. In addition, by going beyond the limits imposed on recommendations, that strong message alerted the court to his concern about the client, thus affecting the court-client and court-family relationships. Finally, his recommendation indicated support for his colleague, thus creating an alliance against those who might disagree with the need for treatment.

George describes a similar dynamic in the following interview excerpt:

If I felt it was going to be helpful for the youth, certain information I'll include [in the PDR]; and if I want to get a message across to the parents.. Like, recently I wrote a Predisposition Report where I recommended, even though the youth was 18, I recommended that the court impose a curfew, which I knew in advance that the Crown would object to and so would the defence lawyer.... There are some things that I will recommend even though I know in advance that the defence lawyer may object or the Crown may object or the judge may object. But I put them in there for the purposes of either helping the family, or getting a message across to the family or the kid, or vice versa. (G;In)

Like Michel, George was favouring one set of relation-

ships above another set. By recommending a curfew, he transgressed an (unwritten) rule of the court, but he sent a message to the family about a punishment they could impose on the client. In other words, his recommendation, ostensibly for the court but actually for the parents and client, was meant to affect relations in the family.

It was by no means necessary to jeopardize one role or relationship in order to satisfy another. The writers were adept at achieving double, even contradictory, goals. For example, when a violent client's mother insisted that he be taken out of custody and returned home, Sophie made the following comments:

Mrs. Palumba..let's add something here..told this worker that Richard [client] should be returned home. Mother is going to be happy because I put her point of view and the judge will see how unrealistic and protective she is. Isn't it nice! You break, you kill two birds with one stone. (S;PR/RP)

George killed a similar number of birds, if not more, when he included a victim's version that had not been reported previously, even at the client's trial:

I think it was important for the court to understand one of the victim's perspectives in terms of what had actually taken place in the incident. I thought it was important for also the mother to see how one of the victims felt, and the kid to see how one of the victims felt. I just, you know, I felt that for the Crown attorney, the defence lawyer, the judge, it's important that they get a global picture of actually what went on and not just be distorted by, uh, the version that the kid gave. (G;DI)

By increasing the mother's and client's awareness of the victim's suffering, George was working in his capacity as social worker to the family; at the same time, he realized

his responsibility to the court. Although no conflict arose because of this report, the dual role of advisor to the court and social worker to the family occasionally caused the writers a sense of divided loyalty, and forced them to make difficult choices.

For example, during the composing of one PDR, Sophie lamented the restrictions on reporting unofficial antecedents -- that is, acquittals, charges pending, or previous offences which were not considered grievous enough to warrant a trial. Such information was inadmissible, although the workers had ways of introducing it indirectly. Her client had committed many minor offences and was awaiting trial on a relatively serious charge. However, after much deliberation, she decided not to refer, even obliquely, to antecedents (later she changed her mind again); at the moment of decision she said this:

Alright, that's nice enough for me if I'm working with the kid but.. I shouldn't put too much or else I won't get what I want. (S;PR/DS)

This short comment is rife with implications for the relationships surrounding the text. By not including the information, Sophie was maintaining her dual role. First, she protected her ongoing relationship with the client, with whom she would have to work after sentencing ("if I'm working with the kid"). If she had referred to his many offences, the sentence would likely have been considerably less lenient and he might have been considerably more difficult to work with. Second, she chose not to upset either the defence lawyer or the judge; the former would certainly

object to inadmissible evidence, and the latter might ignore Sophie's recommendations ("what I want") because of her professional indiscretion. The potential clash of relationships was explained by Sophie:

you must be able also to give information to the judges and lawyers in a clinical, professional way, [and] it has to be understood by a parent who is very emotionally caught up into the situation about their child. You are describing them, you have to be careful not to hurt them also. (S;In)

This concern for the family's feelings was quite common.

Consider Michel's tact in this protocol excerpt:

With regards to his sister, he continues to dislike her..that's mildly put, but I'd rather say "dislike" than "hate." With regards to his sister, he continues.. You know, I have to be sensitive as well. They're going to be reading that in court and, uh, I don't want to make it more than it is. (M/PR/RH)

Another example of the intricate social relations played out through the PDR can be found in the excerpt below from one of Sophie's protocols. The report concerned an adolescent who, as Sophie said, was "lying like he's breathing." However, although she wanted to make that clear to the judge, Sophie did not want to state it directly. These comments came as she finished the Assessment of Adolescent section:

Um, last, how can I leave? I don't want to end like this, talking about he's a compulsive liar. Um..how can I say that? Mother also stated that Dennis [client] has a tendency to "tarnish the truth" when he is in some kind of trouble. Who's the judge for that? [Looks through her files.] Is it an English judge, at least? Yeah, Judge Smith, so he's going to be able to read between the lines, which will not be too offensive for the kid, not too harsh, and does not risk to create a conflict in the family. (S;PR/DS)

Once again, numerous social interactions are implied by these comments. Sophie fulfilled her role of advisor to the judge by alerting him to the client's capacity to deceive. That information affected the judge's relations with the client. Being English-speaking, the judge would catch the subtlety of the mother's quoted phrase, a subtlety which would preserve relations in the family. In addition, because it was the mother and not the social worker who identified the client as a liar, relations between the worker/probation officer and the client were not adversely affected.

Such trade-offs between blunt honesty and euphemism were common. As Michel said, "Because there's so many people reading [the report], I think it's important to be..to chose one's words judiciously" (M;DI). He continued his explanation:

...in most instances, what I write on a report I try to write and describe, in a neutral type of fashion, certain dynamics that I see. I won't use "father has been jealous of mother's involvement in the community." I might say something like, "there has been tension within the marital situation with regard to mother's involvement with the community." So, I try and use neutral types of information or descriptions of what's going on. (M;In)

Judicious word choice did not always mean obscuring observations with social work jargon. The following excerpt captures Sophie in the process of making two word choices for two quite different readers and reasons:

Um, which judge is this? God, I've got so many files I get mixed up in my judges. Smith. The Honourable, they like to be flattered, even if they are not all honourable. The Honourable..uh, what's his first name? Humphrey. Just put H. or else the kid's gonna have cramps laughing at the judge's name. The Honourable H. Smith. (S;PR/DS)

Another interesting feature of the shifting relations among the PDR writers and readers was the evolution of some of those relationships during the writing of the report. In composition studies, current discussions of readers or "audience" usually describe a static entity or collective that does not alter while composition is in progress (see Chapter Seven for a more complete discussion of audience theory). However, the PDR and many other documents are written within contexts where ongoing, sometimes daily, contact between writers and readers is inevitable. Therefore, the composition of texts, and the texts themselves, reflect the development of these relationships. For example, Sophie's relationship to Louis, her client for the PDR profiled at the beginning of this chapter, changed radically over the course of her investigation and writing, partly due to interviews with the client and mother. A similar change occurred during the writing of another PDR, when the client's mother continued to telephone and pester Sophie. Though the mother had not figured centrally in the report initially, her constant interactions with Sophie shaped the eventual document and its recommendations. The comments in the following excerpt were made after the mother had phoned:

Okay, the mother called me yesterday so I'm going to modify this report to let..to give the judge a little flavour of how, of how she feels about this whole thing, meaning the offence and, you know.. I should really give the judge an idea of how hysterical the mother is, and what can be expected, and how she perceives the situation; which might in the end help me to say that, you know, it wouldn't be good for the kid to go back home, 'cause the mother's totally nuts and she won't help her son.

If that's the attitude she has toward the offence.
(S;PR/RP)

Once again, the effect on relations was not simply one way, between Sophie and the mother. It is clear from the excerpt that Sophie intended to influence the judge's attitude toward the mother. In addition, the mother's relationship to Sophie would certainly change when she read the report and over the months which followed, as Sophie worked with the family. The point is, the relationships surrounding the PDR were not static; they changed during composing, at the point of reading, and in the follow-up period of probation and treatment.

The PDR and, to a lesser extent, the PA were the textual manifestations of complex, ever-changing webs of human relationships. Before them, through them, and after them, an intricate social dynamic was acted out. To understand the documents and their composition, it is necessary to examine the community expectations that created and supported the reports. Although the social service and legal communities exerted enormous influence in a variety of explicit and implicit ways, their expectations were most obvious in the printed guidelines for each of the reports and the legal restrictions which governed the PDR.

Expectations and Regulations: Genre as Social Action

The roles and relationships described in the previous section had a curious, chicken-or-egg connection to the form

of the Predisposition Report and the Psychosocial Assessment; that is, it is impossible to say which came first, the relationships or the forms. In fact, both the human interactions and the shape of the reports appear to have developed simultaneously, even symbiotically. In other words, there was a reciprocal relationship at work: the social activity formed the texts, and the texts formed the activity. Some proponents of a social view of writing, especially those concerned with non-literary texts, have described this reciprocity as genre:

A genre is a socially recognized, repeated strategy for achieving similar goals in situations socially perceived as being similar.... A genre is a social construct that regularizes communication, interaction, and relations. (Bazerman, Shaping, 62)

This explanation of the term meets Carolyn Miller's criterion for a "rhetorically sound" definition of genre, because it focuses "not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (151). If textual meaning arises from a transaction between readers and texts, then genre, in the sense given it by Miller and Bazerman, regularizes meaning by replicating, as closely as possible, a particular transaction between readers and texts. This redefinition of the term genre shifts attention from repeated formal features of the text, such as syntactic, semantic, or structural patterns, to repeated features of the social activity that accompanies texts. Graham Smart puts it this way: "From the social perspective, the notion of genre extends beyond the linguistic regularities of texts to include the connected discourse activities of community

members working within the context of recurrent situations to develop, argue, and assess knowledge claims" (9).

In this section, the two major means of regularizing "communication, interaction, and relations" through the PDR and PA are examined. First, the agency guidelines governing the reports are described, as are their effect on the writers; second, the legal restrictions on reporting in the PDR, and the writers' responses to those restrictions, are described. Together, the guidelines and the legal restrictions represented the rules for the genre. They were the codification of community expectations: they guaranteed that the social work and legal activities leading up to and resulting from the texts would be similar each time the texts were composed. Ironically, they regulated in opposite ways: the report guidelines suggested all that could/should be written, and the legal directives indicated all that should not be written.

Report Guidelines: Admissible Evidence

As mentioned in Chapter Four, there were quite detailed guidelines for both the PA and the PDR (see Appendices 5 and 6). These guidelines were part of a complex set of rules and regulations, both explicit and implicit, that governed the writing and other activities of the social workers in Court Services. In the words of their supervisor: "We have guidelines for everything!" There were procedures to follow and forms to fill for almost every step of a worker's contact with a client. The first step was to send a form letter

to the parents in order to set an initial interview date; the last step was to write a short report called a Closing Summary. In between, there were many required or possible texts, including Progress Notes, intake sheets, permission slips, interview notes, and the reports themselves.

Every document set in motion or resulted from particular activities and each could be considered a separate genre, "If we understand genres as typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (Miller 159). At one extreme, these documents were rigid, allowing no individual input. For example, the first form letter was, in a sense, an inflexible genre: it was already composed and it initiated a repeated and relatively predictable pattern of events. (Parents occasionally ignored the letters and a follow-up telephone call was necessary.) At the other extreme, reports such as the PA and PDR gave the writers quite a bit of leeway, though there were obvious generic qualities -- that is, repeated patterns -- in the texts and in their enactments. The report guidelines were meant to ensure that the texts and the situations they invoked were recurrent, as much as possible. Thus, for example, the information called for in the PA, and outlined in the PA guidelines, determined much about the workers' interviews with clients and families. And the limitations placed on recommendations, listed on the final page of the PDR guidelines, regulated the post-report consequences to the adolescent and shaped the ongoing relationship between clients and workers. Put another way, in Smart's words, the two genres attempted to regularize the

"connected discourse activities of community members working within the context of recurrent situations."

The PA guidelines in use during the study were seven pages long. Over the preceding decade, they had on a number of occasions been revised and further revisions were planned. Changes to the guidelines were motivated by changing circumstances in the unit. One major cause for change had been the implementation of the Young Offenders Act, in 1984. That law had altered the relationships and activities that made up Court Services. Moreover, at about the same time, a new supervisor had arrived and responded to the widespread dissatisfaction with the old PA guidelines by organizing a revision committee. As she said, the unit needed "to make it [PA] ours in terms of thinking, making it a tool that's helpful to us, not a fill-in-the-blank because somebody ten years ago thought we should ask this question of somebody." In other words, the genre had been revised to regulate a different social situation. A revision committee was at work during this study, and minor revisions were made constantly but unofficially by the workers.

The guidelines set out the sequence of sections in the report and provided a list of questions and/or comments under each section heading to help workers complete that section. For example, under "Present Social Situation of Family," there was this guideline:

Provide brief description of interaction between family members in the interview. Also indicate if any other persons are living in the home and outline their role. Describe activities undertaken by the family together. Comment on whether any other

family members are in conflict with the law. Indicate if any problem exists with regard to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Give a brief description of siblings (including school and work).

According to the unit supervisor, the PA guidelines indicated "the maximum amount [of information] that we'd be looking at here, and it will depend on the youth; and the workers have professional judgment in how detailed they go into each of these categories." In other words, within the guidelines there was room for variation, depending on the client, the case, and the individual worker. However, despite this apparent flexibility, the workers often felt compelled by the guidelines to conduct a complete and thorough investigation. In anticipation of "situations socially perceived as being similar," the genre's "repeated strategy" often ignored variations in situation. That expectation of similarity was at the heart of Sophie's difficulties with the PDR described in the first section of this chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the workers were unanimous in their criticism of the detail asked for in the PA guidelines. They felt the guidelines called for intrusive questioning, beyond what was required. George explained:

they [PA guidelines] are suggesting that we ask the family what their financial situation is, whether there were any prior psychological or psychiatric problems in the family, whether any of the parents or grandparents have committed offences or been involved with the law before. I find that difficult.... It's difficult asking for that information, because I feel it's a real imposition on them. (G;In)

Although he may have been more dissatisfied with the guidelines than his colleagues, George's displeasure was

shared. Some other comments:

...this [PA guidelines] is too extensive, in some cases. As a social worker, I would not go into all this stuff, depending on the case, depending on how serious the charge is, and the dynamics in the family. (A;In)

I find that a lot of the information that they request in the Psychosocial report is redundant, it's repetitive. (G;In)

...a lot of them [PA sections] are very redundant to one another. (S;In)

...you know, I get a little annoyed personally with going and finding the background history of the parents and I don't always do it. I let them volunteer the information. If I see something important then I'll follow up on it. (M;In)

I don't find that the background information regarding the mother, father, youth is all that important. It's not that important for me to go back and find out what the kid was like when he was two years old, or was he breast-fed. I find that's not necessary. (G;In)

The detail of reports did in fact vary, so workers were occasionally able to ignore the overly inquisitive guidelines, but often they could not:

there's a lot of sub-sections [in the PA] and we have been told you have to write them. Even though you have nothing to say about it, you have to have it and say why there's nothing to say about it. (S;In)

It becomes just like fill-in-the-blank, like you are doing it just because the agency is demanding you do it. It's a lot of..for me it's a waste of time. I find it's demoralizing for me to have to go through and write all this stuff. It's not what I went to social work school to do. (G;In)

In the midst of writing a PA, George repeated his complaint:

[I] don't think I need to put any more there [in section]. This report's getting so long. Feel like I'm writing this thing just to fill in the blanks, or at least some of the sections, anyway. So, what am I going to put there? (G;PA/DR)

In an interview, Sophie described a similar compulsion, and gave a hint about why the workers found the detail excessive:

But sometimes, also, when you don't have anything, you see..like, I don't know. Ah, "Assessed Liabilities" [refers to part of the PA as an example], you know, and you did not go that far; you meet them for two hours, you know we are not God to spot people's liabilities in two hours. So you see this section and you realize that it's not worth putting anything in it. And sometimes I find myself trying to dig in my interviewing notes just to plug something there just for the sake of the report. You know? ...my main problem is dealing with sections that may not be justified to be filled; I have to..find myself forcing, or making extra effort just to fill that little blank. (S;In)

Part of this resentment was simply the common complaint against paperwork, an understandable gripe from people who spent 30% or more of their time writing. There was more to it, however, than mere grumbling. As Sophie indicates in the excerpt above, the guidelines assumed extensive knowledge of the family, knowledge that could only be gained through lengthy, intrusive interviews or, as Sophie suggests, supernatural insight. In addition, both George and Michel mentioned that there was a disproportionate relationship between writing about clients and actually working with them:

...it takes me a good 5 or 6 hours to write this report [PA] and..when I could be spending my time better interviewing other clients, doing more preventive work. (G;In)

So it seems to me that I don't need to go into too, too much depth in my Psychosocial, since it's short term intervention. And that's one of the frustrations in this particular job is that we assess so much and then we do so little with it. (M;PA/MP)

This widespread dissatisfaction with the genre's

"repeated strategy," to use Bazerman's term once again, led to a call for further revisions, and when the data collection phase of this study was completed, a proposal was being considered. George had been active on the revision committee and was able to point to likely changes:

Yeah, they are talking about combining certain sections, being able to write in narrative form, instead of writing in point form the way it is now. For some of the more minor charges, they're considering leaving out certain sections. (G;In)

The problem with the genre was that it over-regularized social action, causing the workers to treat dissimilar situations in similar ways. This put the workers in conflict with the expectations of their own community, at least insofar as the PA guidelines manifested those expectations. The ongoing revision process, in its official and unofficial forms, was an attempt by the workers to devise a genre that regularized appropriate action while allowing for variation. In turn, the new genre would influence community expectations.

The PDR guidelines were considerably shorter and more succinct than those which governed the PA, and there was no criticism from the workers about them. That did not mean, however, that as a genre the PDR was considered appropriate. Though the textual features of the PA and PDR were similar, in terms of content and arrangement, the social actions which each were part of differed enormously; as a result, they were different genres. Both were "typified rhetorical actions," but they were based in different "recurrent situations" (Miller 159).

Part of the PDR's situation was the legal context it entered. According to the unit supervisor, the legal status of the PDR and the implications of the social workers' comments were being questioned:

There's some controversy around the Recommendation [section], actually; many of the Crown and defence lawyers feel we shouldn't be putting it in, that that's not our domain. We feel we should be putting it in and we put it in.

George reported that there were other aspects of the PDR which lawyers objected to, mainly because they affected the social action of the report:

I was at a conference just a couple of weeks ago, where the judges were present, the Crown attorneys were present, people from our office, as well as the defence lawyers. And one of the big things that the defence lawyers were objecting to was that they didn't feel that it was appropriate to have the youth's version [of the offence] in a Predisposition Report, because that could go against their role as defence lawyers, and could work against the kid. They also didn't feel it was appropriate to have..I believe they mentioned the victim's version as well, because they felt that could prejudice their client. (G;In)

However, at the time, these discussions were in a preliminary stage, and were not yet affecting the text or the workers. What did influence the workers when they wrote PDRs was the variety of legal restrictions known collectively as "inadmissible evidence." These restrictions, like the report guidelines, were generic: they were part of the "repeated strategy" meant to regulate communication and relations. However, when moving from the PA, which was governed primarily by the expectations of the workers' own social service community, to the PDR, which was more of a legal than a therapeutic genre, the workers occasionally found themselves

in conflict with the expectations of the legal community.

Legal Restrictions: Inadmissible Evidence

Under the rules of Quebec law governing the writing of the PDR, three types of information could not be entered as evidence. One type of inadmissible evidence was self-reported delinquencies; that is, the social workers could not repeat in the PDR any delinquencies reported to them by the adolescent but not officially recognized. This prevented self-incrimination. A second category of inadmissible evidence concerned charges pending against a client or charges on which the client had been acquitted. In the Official Antecedents section of the report, the workers could list only those offences for which the youth has been found guilty, no matter how often an adolescent had appeared in court, and regardless of outstanding charges not yet brought to trial. The final inadmissible category was hearsay evidence, which is "Evidence not proceeding from the personal knowledge of the witness, but from the mere repetition of what he has heard others say" (Black, Nolan, and Connolly 368). This restriction prevented the writers from reporting what X said Y said; in other words, the worker had to have heard X say it directly.

Legal restrictions on reporting in the PDR created a writing problem which was almost exactly opposite to that posed by the PA guidelines. Whereas the workers felt that the guidelines often asked for too much information, the categories of inadmissible evidence prohibited the use of

information that workers often felt was essential to the case. The PDR fell precisely on the overlap between the social service and legal communities. As social workers charged with assessing an adolescent's behaviour and situation, the workers frequently depended on information which, if reported, put them in conflict with the legal community they served as advisors. However, the workers had ways of solving this conflict:

Yeah, well there are some things that are definitely not admissible, but if you phrase them and they become admissible..it's very touchy. If you don't think it's relevant, you don't even mention it; if you think it's relevant, you try to slide it in subtle so that people know you are not in contempt or you don't lose your credibility that way, with the court as witness. (S;DI)

The potential consequences of using inadmissible evidence, as Sophie indicates, were grave. At the least, workers could receive a severe reprimand and lose some credibility; at worst, they could be charged with contempt of court and fined. They took the risk when they believed the inadmissible evidence had a strong bearing on the offence for which the client was being tried, or when they needed it to justify their recommendations; that is, when they thought it was "relevant," to use Sophie's words. Alice explains their quandary:

By the third interview they feel more relaxed and they will start telling about, well, "before I actually got caught for this B and E [breaking and entering] I was stealing bikes, I was doing this." You know, I know a kid that's gotten into B and E is not the first time he's done something. It's the first time he's been caught. And, you know, I had a kid who started stealing cars when he was 8, but wasn't caught until he was 12. I mean, there were four years of outlandish stuff this kid was doing

and I couldn't tell the court. And it was an obvious placement case, but I could not give enough facts to the court to prove it. (A;In)

It was Alice's belief that a twelve-year old who had admitted to four years of car theft should be removed from his home. However, to justify such a drastic consequence, Alice would have had to use the client's self-reports, and that was forbidden information. In order to "slide it in subtle," as Sophie described the discreet inclusion of inadmissible evidence, workers relied on coded phrases or terms. Such specialized language could be challenged, but it did reduce the risk. Some examples:

Sometimes, they know there'll be a request to strike something from their report. They put it in anyway. They can't say, "Johnny has been [charged with] 12 B and E's"; some of them will say something like, "Johnny, who's been known to our service since 1986." (Supervisor)

This was his first known offence. That'll..that lets the judge know that he has others I can't mention..yet. (A;PR/KM)

Another tactic was to include the information, knowing that it would be struck from the record, but knowing as well that the judge would have received it anyway:

So I know that some judges are just, like, hitting the ceiling when they see that [inadmissible evidence], and once everybody read it, even if they [erase] it after, the damage is done; so I know some judges will not allow that. So, sometimes, if I know the judge is not too picky, I'll try to push it, because I think it is very important for the judge to know that. (S;In)

Ah, sometimes [workers are] struggling with how do I get the information in? When it's borderline acceptable, how do I think of it? How do I create it in such a way that the judge will overrule any objection that it be stricken? And sometimes they say it will be stricken, but he'll know anyway. (Supervisor)

Some of the complicated implications of these generic restrictions on reporting in the PDR are captured in the following series of excerpts. The first series comes from one of Sophie's PDR protocols and her discourse-based interview. She was writing the report about the adolescent who was "lying like he's breathing" (S;PR/DS). He had bragged to her of his delinquent activities. In addition, because he had used both his mother's and his father's family names, he had two separate files in Court Services. Finally, he had been acquitted on one charge and had three charges pending, two of them minor infractions of municipal by-laws (jumping the subway turnstiles). Sophie was frustrated because so much of this information was inadmissible. In the excerpt, Sophie is just beginning the Official Antecedents section of the report:

Hm..Official Antecedents, here we go, that's easy. Official Antecedents. The kid has been acquitted, two files have been closed in our services; I cannot mention them. He's been acquitted in court for a charge I cannot mention either. Is that considered to be an antecedent? O God, it's so bad that the court cannot know everything that happened prior to this. Technical stuff. Feel that this kid has so much hidden, and he's a liar. Okay, let's play by the book. Official Antecedents: None.
(S;PR/DS)

"Technical stuff" and playing "by the book" are references to the regulations governing evidence. The workers appeared to respect the fact that these generic restrictions insured that the PDR was a "repeated strategy," that each client was judged in a similar way; however, that did not prevent them from occasionally chafing under the limitations

when they felt the need for full disclosure. In the next excerpt, Sophie returns to this section sometime later:

Okay, Official Antecedents. I'm going to say [crosses out word "None"] Dennis has no prior conviction before the Youth Court, however he is awaiting trial on a minor charge? however he is awaiting trial on a charge.. Do I have the legal right to mention that it is a theft? however he is awaiting trial on an offence.. Should I keep it vague or should I mention it? however he is awaiting trial on a charge. Maybe I shouldn't even mention it. on a charge. Oh, what the heck, I shouldn't do that [crosses out whole sentence]. No, this kid has the right to be considered innocent until he's undergoing trial so I'm going to keep it.. He has no antecedent at this point. I have no right of mentioning anything. Here we go.. Unless it would serve a purpose but, no, municipal by-laws are not criminal offences anyhow.... Alright, that's nice enough for me if I'm working with this kid but..I shouldn't put too much or else I won't get what I want. (S;PR/DS)

As mentioned in the previous section, the last line of this excerpt suggests a variety of social implications. Obeying the restriction protects Sophie's ongoing relationship to the client, a relationship which would certainly be jeopardized by revealing evidence which should have remained unreported. Moreover, if Sophie had "put too much" -- that is, broken the rules of the genre -- the judge might not have been positively disposed to her recommendations ("what I want"). When Sophie was shown the above protocol excerpt during her discourse interview, she explained her frustration:

It's too bad that all of this legally cannot be used, because I feel as a criminologist it's important. Even self-reported offences that were not even brought to the court tell you something about this kid. If he got out on a technicality but he admits the fact, I think it should be in.... for some kids I say, well, it's not really that important, but in some cases, like this one, he already

got away with a wrong name, having a file here -- two of them have been closed -- now he's coming back and I say it's too bad the kid..the court cannot know more about this kid, and I'm trying to really put it in, avoiding the legal trap. (S;DI)

The difficult balance between a full assessment and the client's rights under law clearly disturbed Sophie. Finally, she attempted a compromise, as the following excerpt from the very end of her protocol indicates; she is in the process of a final review before sending the draft for typing:

Official Antecedents: None. I feel like I should put something in Official Antecedents. The kid is having, like, phew! Am I allowed to say that? O, this is an eternal dilemma.. None, however Dennis is awaiting trial on another charge and awaiting arraignment on two (2) municipal by-laws. I think I would feel better because I look like a dummy. Kid's been too, like, you know, he's not a bird of paradise. (S;PR/DS)

Sophie avoided looking "like a dummy" by providing information which suggested that the client was no angel, thereby supporting her recommendation for sentencing. On the other hand, she did not report the nature of the charge pending; that is, she respected the spirit, if not the letter, of the genre. By doing this, she was attempting to avoid the wrath of the defence lawyer and the censure of the judge. She explained her decision thus:

I am reporting something for which he hasn't been found guilty; however, it is something to be dealt with by the court.... sometimes one judge could postpone his decision to have both charges dealt together.... I'm not mentioning the charge, if I recall, so it's not very incriminating either.... I'm just telling them there is something else going on in court, and leave it up to the judge to check it up. (S;DI)

As mentioned, a considerable amount of the flexibility in the system was attributable to individual judges. The older

judges, those whose tenure pre-dated the Young Offenders Act of 1984, tended to be more lenient and less legalistic. It appears that Sophie was counting on a judge who would feel that the information she supplied was important enough to outweigh her indiscretion in reporting it.

The next series of excerpts, also from a PDR protocol and a discourse interview, provide insight into Alice's decision to include some inadmissible evidence in her report. The PDR was written about a violent young man (Howie) who was charged with a variety of offences against his common law wife (Linda), including assault, death threats, sexual assault, and forcible confinement. In the first excerpt, Alice is working on the Victim's Version section:

It is to be noted that Linda's social worker, Martin Hanna, told this worker.. That's hearsay. Jesus, I wonder if I can put that in? It's just so important. She told her social worker that she was afraid of Howie. [Stops tape recorder.] Okay, I've gotten several different opinions, but I think I'll put it in anyway. This is, like, hearsay, but it's important for the judge to know, so let it be struck from the record.... Boy, I'm going to get into trouble for putting that in, but I've got to.
(A;PR/HF)

Despite (implied) advice against it, Alice did leave the hearsay evidence in the report; in fact, she included a considerable amount of information she had received in a telephone call from Mr. Hanna. The information concerned Linda's fear of Howie, and it contradicted what Linda had told Alice. In her discourse interview, Alice was asked what was most difficult about this PDR:

...there's a lot of hearsay in the report which I'm not allowed to put in, in a court report, so I took the risk of putting it in, thinking that it's

important for the judge to know. She will have read the report by the time it comes to court. So, you know, I'm the one that's going to get it, you know, from the lawyers in court for having put that stuff in. But at least I'll know that the judge knows about these concerns. So that was pretty difficult 'cause this is pretty unusual for me to go out of bounds, and put stuff in the report that you're not supposed to. (A;DI)

Clearly, the consequences of breaking the rules of the genre are quite severe, given the social implications described by Alice. However, asked if she would be willing to remove the hearsay from her report, Alice replied:

Nope. No, because I thought about that, and I asked several people, and it was something that took me a lot of time to decide to put it in. So, I thought about it enough to say I'm going to put it in. (A;DI)

Alice elaborated on the likely effect of her decision (the case had not yet gone back to court for the disposition hearing):

...once it's in the court the defence lawyer will say, "your Honour, this is hearsay, therefore it's not legal," and then it will be struck from the record. In essence, the...the greffier, the person writing down what's going on in court, will put in her notes that such a paragraph has been struck from the report. So, you know, but, like I say, the judge will have already read it, so it's not kind of a big deal.... I'll be given a very hard time in court. Like the defence lawyer, before it's struck from the record, you know, she'll be going over my report asking me questions, and then she'll get to that part of the report and, you know, start giving me a hard time about how come I put that in.... I'll be cross-examined on that and, "how dare" I put it in and.. It's part of the defence's ploy to try and discredit me, discredit me, you know.... That's why I felt, well, I was very ambivalent about putting it in, because it's such a serious report; if the defence lawyer starts to discredit me for having put that in the report, then what's the judge going to think of the rest of the report? But I figured I'd take the chance because I figured it was important. (A;DI)

Alice believed that the judge needed to know about the victim's fear of the client, so she took a risk; but it was a calculated risk:

It's weird to say, but when you write these reports, you often have in mind who's the judge that's going to be reading them. I think I was. Because I knew it was a woman judge, I think I gave myself a bit more leeway; maybe that's why I felt comfortable in putting some of the hearsay in, because of the judge. It's a bit weird to say, but maybe if it had been a different judge, very legalistic, I might have thought twice about that.
(A;DI)

Alice's decision was complex, involving a number of roles and relationships, as well as the community expectations contained in the genre's restrictions on reporting. However, just as the workers felt that the agency guidelines were, from time to time, overly intrusive, so too did they sometimes feel that the regulations concerning evidence were too restraining. In effect, they believed that the "repeated strategy" of the PA and PDR genres, meant to guarantee replication of social action, occasionally flattened out important distinctions between individuals. In the case of the PA, most anyone's life would begin to look aberrant under the relentless inquisitiveness of the genre. And the generic restrictions of the PDR prevented the workers from arguing that a particular offence was not an isolated incident.

The many examples provided in this chapter -- Sophie's PDR for the "iron lady," the shifting roles and relationships the texts invoked, and the effects of genre -- describe an intricate and active context for writing. To

understand any single aspect of that context, from the cognitive process of the individual writer to the communal expectations contained in genre, requires a broad view, one which encompasses the full complexity of social action and interaction. The implications of this view, especially for writing pedagogy, are many and daunting. How can teachers "teach" the type of local knowledge that so clearly guides these social workers? What writing knowledge is general, and therefore transferable to any situation? How can instruction and assignments prepare students for the bewildering array of relationships any one text can involve? How should genre be approached in the classroom? These questions and others are addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Implications

Introduction

The study reported in the preceding chapters describes writing as a complex and dynamic human activity. Everything about that activity -- the form of texts, the thinking of writers, the response of readers -- was shaped by the writing context, by the community within which the writing occurred. Indeed, the PA and PDR are inconceivable without reference to the human relationships and events which shaped them and which, in turn, they shaped. This collaboration, the reciprocal and dynamic connections among writers, readers, texts, and contexts, is the essence of a social theory of writing.

To say that writing is a social act is by no means a new observation; rhetoricians have always recognized the public nature of discourse. However, recent considerations of writing, including this study and others like it, have allowed us to look at the social nature of writing with new eyes. Moreover, contemporary contributions to writing theory have come from a variety of disciplines and offered unusual perspectives on composition. As a result, the implications arising from the current interest in writing as a social act are not merely restatements of old notions. Those implications have begun and will continue to transform writing theory and practice. In this chapter, some of the implica-

tions confirmed or created by the writing in Court Services are addressed.

Implications for Theory

Perhaps the most important theoretical implication of this study arises from the degree to which the social workers were influenced by their discourse community. Each retained an individual identity and brought some idiosyncrasies to the writing of reports, but much of their overall perspective and behaviour was determined by the rhetorical, legal, therapeutic, and social parameters of the community with whom and for whom they wrote. This perception of the writer's role in community extends the notion of writing as social action beyond the current discussion in composition studies. Social theory has portrayed the writer as a collaborator in the writing process, as opposed to an isolated or atomistic creator, and this study contributes detailed and lively examples of that collaboration in action. In addition, however, the study suggests that writers are not only members of discourse communities, but also their agents. The social workers in this study acted on behalf of their community and wrote, in a sense, as its delegates.

One way to conceive of this relationship between the writer and his or her community is, once again, to draw comparisons to ecological systems. Indeed, without denigrating individuals or underestimating the importance of their contribution, it is possible to liken the individual writer in

a discourse community to the single cell in a complex organism. According to Cooper, "The metaphor for writing suggested by the ecological model is that of a web, in which anything that affects one strand of the web vibrates throughout the whole" ("Ecology" 370). The writer, like the single cell or strand, performs a particular function within a larger organism, and ultimately serves that larger entity. However, the metaphor does not imply that the writer simply fulfills a predetermined role; all ecological systems depend on synergy. There is a reciprocal relationship between the individual writer and the environment, each affecting and altering the other. At least, there is such reciprocity in healthy systems.

This conception of the writer as part of a complex system raises two related questions. First, what are its implications for writer-reader relations? That is, how are separate individuals linked within the community? And, second, what does this view imply about the autonomy of the writer within the authority of the community? Some answers to these questions are proposed in the following sections.

Writer-Reader Relations: The Metaphor of Audience

Writing implies a reader. The act seems straightforward and unremarkable: the writer writes, the reader reads. However, despite the apparent simplicity of the arrangement, the idea of the writer's "audience" has always been an important and difficult concept in composition and rhetoric. The problem is fundamental: where and what is the "audience"

and how does one come to "know" it?

The current social constructionist perspective on writing, with its attendant focus on discourse communities, has further complicated the writer-reader relationship. How does "audience" fit with "community"? Are the terms complementary? Synonymous? Contradictory? The idea of "audience," with its evocations of classical rhetoric, implies a group at some distance from an author who controls the discourse and manipulates the readers. The idea of "community," with its postmodern and poststructural connotations, reduces the importance of the author and locates power (and the writer) within the group.

Concern for the writer-reader relationship is ancient. Plato argued that rhetoricians must classify human souls and speeches in order to "show why one soul is persuaded by a particular form of argument, and another not" (271a-d). Aristotle answered this challenge in Book II of his Rhetoric, where he attempted to describe "the various types of human character in relation to the emotions and moral states, to the several periods of life and the varieties of fortune" (131-32). As both Ede and Kroll ("Writing for Readers") have pointed out, Aristotle's method of matching types of people with persuasive techniques, and the image of "audience" it implies, has remained influential.

Underlying the Aristotelian method, in many of its contemporary versions at least, is the assumption that broad segments of the "audience" will respond in similar ways to certain arguments. The elderly will respond one way, the

young another; the rich one way, the poor another; and so on. This seems true enough; after all, voting patterns, consumer habits, opinion polls, and other gauges of public response do indicate quite sharply defined demographic trends. A related assumption appears to solve the problem of "audience": successful writers will be those who most effectively combine their stereotypic knowledge with their persuasive strategies. The audience analysis techniques commonly found in composition textbooks are based on this assumption, as is much audience-related research.

However, Park points to the problem with this conception of the writer-reader relationship when he explains that "the basic image from which the concept of audience derives is that of a speaker addressing a group of people in some fairly well defined political, legal, or ceremonial situation" (249). In other words, "audience" is literally correct in reference to those present during formal speeches; however, when applied to written discourse, "audience" becomes a metaphor. Somewhere in the transfer of rhetorical concepts from the classical to the modern tradition, the audience changed from fact to figure of speech, but much composition theory and practice seems unaware of that altered reality. Kantor and Rubin explain: "The whole rhetorical tradition derives from the field of classical oratory and the concerns of the speaker for appealing to and influencing an audience" (56). Walter Ong puts it this way: "when orality was in the ascendancy, rhetoric was oral-focused; as orality yielded to writing, the focus of rhetoric was slowly shifted, unreflec-

tively for the most part, and without notice" (9). One result of the unreflective use of "audience" is an overly literal interpretation of the metaphor: "all those folks out there in chairs" (Park 249).

As the conditions described in this study suggest, calling readers an "audience" may lead to two misconceptions about the writer-reader relationship. First, "audience" implies a gap or dichotomy between those who compose texts and those who use them; and, second, it assigns a collective label to what is often a disparate group of individuals.

Under the first misconception, in which the reader is seen as audience "out there," the writer becomes orator or actor and the text operates as performance rather than interaction. The writer is outside and separate from the group. The relationship is one to many, but many as collective. The audience here becomes an aggregate -- the opposition, the jury, the voters, the congregation, the mob -- the motivation becomes manipulative: the orator seeks to move the crowd. Instances of discourse are completed statements, not moments in a dialogue.

The actor/writer image has a certain romantic richness and may complement the notion of "persona" in literary discourse, but between actor and audience is the proscenium arch and the imaginary "fourth wall" of the theatre. Actors on stage stare into the bright front-of-house lights and see only the dark, indistinct shape of a faceless crowd. It is true that good actors sense the audience, adjusting their performance by heeding the subtle cues of sound and silence,

but the audience only responds, never initiates, and the relationship begins with curtain up and ends with curtain down. In their role as readers of the PDR, the judges, lawyers, clients and others were more like actors than audience; the social workers performed with their readers, not to them.

Under the second misconception, "audience" as collective, individual readers blend into a homogeneous mass. But the readers described in this study were individual members of a complex social structure created by the variety of explicit and implicit roles, relationships, interactions, and expectations within the community. Each reader had his or her own attitude and approach to the text; each had unique responsibilities, relationships to others, and reasons for reading. The text had a different meaning for each reader, although everyone read the same words. This intricate web of individual writers and readers was not a fixed or immutable structure; it shifted somewhat from text to text, animated by the relationships, the alliances and oppositions, of the writers and readers within it.

When the term "audience" is used indiscriminately to refer to readers, as if they were a collective entity at some distance from the writer, a number of other misconceptions follow:

- The writer-reader relationship is largely one way: the writer initiates the text and acts on passive readers.
- It is monologic: the writer speaks, the readers listen.

- It is singular (one-to-one): multiple readers of the same text form a single, monolithic entity called "the audience."
- It is temporary: the writer's relationship to readers begins and ends with the text; the relationship is embodied (given form) or created by the text.

This study, and the theory and research which support it, challenges these ideas about the link between writer and readers. The writing in Court Services contradicts the notion that writers develop arguments for a particular group of people simply by drawing on their stereotypic knowledge of that group. To be sure, the social workers in this study occasionally relied on such knowledge -- for example, when they generalized about judges. However, the form and much of the substance of the PDR and PA were given to the writers by the community; that is, by the writers and readers themselves, or by their representatives. Community regulations governed the types of arguments that were advanced and determined what could and could not be said. Those community dictates were deeply ingrained, implicitly in assumptions and procedures, explicitly in guidelines and legal prohibitions. Moreover, the arguments were not singular, based on broad inferences, but rather, multifaceted, sensitive to a variety of reader roles and writer-reader relationships, and fine-tuned by attention to the individuals who filled those roles. Viewed from the perspective of Court Services, the writer-reader relationship takes on quite a different shape. The following beliefs are offered as correctives to those listed above:

- The relationship implied by texts is not simply one way, from the writer to the reader, but between the writer and other writers, between readers and other writers, and between readers and other readers.
- The relationship is not monologic, but dialogic; the text is the writer's "turn" in a conversation.
- The relationship is not singular, but plural; through the text, the writer is involved in a variety of different relationships with different people.
- The relationship may not be created, defined, or bound by the text; it often exists prior to the text, changes during composing, and may be continued, altered, or ended by the text.

When considered as a social act, writing can be seen to happen between and among people in ways not captured by the audience metaphor: "The social perspective...moves beyond the traditional rhetorical concern for audience, forcing researchers to consider issues such as social roles, group purposes, communal organization, ideology, and finally theories of culture" (Faigley, "Nonacademic," 235-236). From this perspective, the "writing process" is not the isolated mental activity of the individual writer, and the text is not an inert "product"; rather, both are part of a larger process: a conversation among members of a discourse community. Or, to return to the ecological metaphor, writers, readers, and texts are seen as elements in a system: mutually dependent and mutually defining.

Current discussions of the social nature of writing have benefitted from reader-response theory, and therefore acknowledge the active participation of the reader in the making of meaning. However, the writing activity described

in this study suggests a further dimension to this collaborative act. The judges, lawyers, social workers, clients, and others who read the documents produced by Court Services brought their own expectations to the reading of the texts, but they also approached the reports in the roles they filled within the community. Those roles were sanctioned and regulated by the community, through procedures, guidelines, restrictions on reporting, and job descriptions. Certain patterns of relationship developed between and among the people in the various roles. Some of those patterns were set and repeated, more or less identically, with each report; others varied depending on the idiosyncrasies of individual cases. Given this complex social dynamic, the idea of readers as an "audience" seems limited. In Cooper's words, "the ecological model transforms...the abstract 'general audience' into real readers" ("Ecology" 371-72).

A new vision must replace the monolithic conception implied by "audience," and its accompanying suggestion of one-way relations between writer and reader. Composition theory must account for the enormous variety of roles and relationships that exist because of the human interaction around and through texts. This requires that we expand our thinking and speculating; rather than narrowing concepts into overgeneralized categories, such as "audience," composition scholars should be expanding the possibilities and welcoming multiplicity. Just as the writer's process changes for every act of writing, so too does her stance toward readers.

A more flexible understanding of readers would acknowledge them as collaborators in the process of making meaning. Furthermore, it would recognize the leading role readers often take when they initiate or motivate a text. The "audience" metaphor suggests that readers watch the writer's play; but in this study the writers and readers were participants in the same drama. Within the discourse community, writers and readers play complementary roles. In effect, it is the community that "writes" the text; the writers and readers simply enact the discourse which is required to conduct the community's business.

This foregrounding of community makes a subtle but important difference in contemporary composition theory. It shifts the focus from the particular discourse of a community, the emphasis in most writing-across-the-curriculum programs, to the community sanctioned processes which generate the discourse. It highlights relationships, activities, and procedures, rather than documents or individuals; in short, it stresses dynamics over the apparently static features of community. Thus, readers, in their multiplicity and in their constantly shifting relationships to writers and to each other, are favoured over "audience," with its implications of sameness and passive reception of the writer's performance.

This view upsets traditional and contemporary notions of the writing process and the place of the writer. Composition scholars have rejected the romantic myth of the individual creator in favour of a more collaborative model. Thus,

responsibility for the making of textual meaning has passed from the writer to the community, with the writer playing a central but essentially cooperative role. However, this study points to a darker side of this partnership between the writer and his or her community. Posed as a question, it is this: How much autonomy does the writer have within the authority of the community?

Autonomy versus Authority

The social workers in this study fulfilled a particular role within a structured web of relationships. Although each PDR case presented unique dynamics and involved different individuals in the roles of judge, lawyers, client, and family, there was an inevitability to the proceedings, a similarity to all other cases. This repetition was governed, in part, by design, as the titles of the various roles suggest: the judge judged, the defence lawyer defended, the prosecutor prosecuted, and so on. The PDR was an element in a complex routine. Basic underlying assumptions also guaranteed repetition. Thus, for example, Sophie spoke about being "programmed to think of the kid as a bad boy," because Court Services operated on the premise that the clients it received were delinquent. Most importantly, the genre of the PDR assured the community of repetition in its procedures, as described in the preceding chapter. As "a socially recognized, repeated strategy for achieving similar goals in situations socially perceived as being similar" (Bazerman, Shaping, 62) , that is, as a genre, the PDR was sensitive to

the community's roles and relationships and embodied the community's assumptions.

The point is, because of the assumptions and expectations implicit in the genre, the social workers wrote to specifications provided by the community. This raises important questions about the individual's power to shape texts within the pervasive influence of the group. How much freedom did the workers have to say what they wished? Were the workers conscious of the world view imposed on them by virtue of their membership in the Court Services discourse community? Testimony offered by the workers in the previous chapter suggests that they had some sense of and resentment toward the community's authority as well as enough leeway to challenge it occasionally, albeit at some risk. However, was this merely token autonomy, a small space to manoeuvre within the community's constraints?

Persistent contextual factors -- set roles and relations, fundamental assumptions, the "repeated strategy" of genre -- affect what writers can and cannot say. Also, and more ominously, they determine what and how writers can know. Berlin describes the relationship between discourse and knowledge from a social perspective:

Meaning emerges not from objective, disinterested, empirical investigation, but from individuals engaging in rhetorical discourse in discourse communities -- groups organized around the discussion of particular matters in particular ways. Knowledge, then, is a matter of mutual agreement appearing as a product of the rhetorical activity, the discussion, of a given discourse community.
(Rhetoric and Reality 165-66)

It follows, then, that restrictions on discourse neces-

sarily limit knowledge: the categories of inadmissible evidence prohibited the discussion of certain types of information in the PDR; in effect, this was censorship of knowledge. Conversely, regulations governing what must be said create compulsory knowledge; for example, a standard feature of the PDR forced writers to indicate whether the client's family was intact, separated, or blended. The form of the report, and the formulaic procedures which accompanied it, shaped discourse and knowledge. By following the form and the procedures, the Court Services social workers viewed their clients through a lens provided by the community and explained them in the community's terms. Coe puts it this way:

Rhetorical structures are...the social memory of standard responses to particular types of rhetorical situations and subject matter. Like language, form is thus social. One function of discourse communities is to provide, prescribe, and prefer forms.... Insofar as a form is socially shared, adopting the form involves adopting, at least to some extent, the community's attitude, abiding by its expectations. (19)

Coe's use of "form" here to mean "the social memory of standard responses" is synonymous with Bazerman's definition of genre (above) and Miller's description of genre as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (159). However, whereas the concept of genre as social action looks outward to the community, Coe's discussion of form points inward: "Like any heuristic, [form] motivates a search for information of a certain type: when the searchers can anticipate what shape of stuff they seek, generation is less free, but much more efficient; by constraining the

search, form directs attention" (18). A community's generic forms guarantee repetition of social action, but they also regulate perception and, therefore, cognition.

The implications are grave. To return to the earlier metaphor from an ecological model of writing, genres are like genetic coding: they are the organism's instructions to the cells. By directing the individual's attention, genres ensure the production of discourse and knowledge appropriate to the community's project or goal; they guide the development of the community. In the context of Court Services, this function of genre may seem benign. After all, individual workers could take advantage of the genre's flexibility by ignoring some of the questions suggested by the PA guidelines, or by disguising PDR evidence that bordered on the inadmissible. They had some freedom to resist the regulations and, therefore, the focus of attention that the genre imposed. Moreover, they could directly affect the genres that influenced them through the discussion of reporting that was the topic of occasional committees, as described in the previous chapter. However, members of other discourse communities may not have as much power.

For example, Bazerman argues that the form of articles reporting psychology experiments, as prescribed by the APA Publication Manual, is a "codification of behaviorist rhetoric" (Shaping 275). Despite major changes in psychology over the past twenty years, and the increasing influence of a cognitive perspective, Bazerman contends that "The official APA style...embodies behaviorist assumptions about

authors, readers, the subjects investigated, and knowledge itself" (259). If this is so, then users of the genre are unconsciously adopting a particular perspective or world view, one not explicitly stated in the Publication Manual.

Bazerman describes this effect:

[The manual] offers a programmatically correct way to discuss the phenomena under study; moreover, it stabilizes the roles, relationships, goals, and activity of individuals within the research community in ways consistent with the community's beliefs about human behavior. (275)

Thus constrained, the writer may be unwittingly manipulated by the community, via the generic features of text and context. Rather than working as a collaborator with and within the community, the writer becomes an agent, a scribe or mouthpiece who sees and says what the community deems appropriate. The picture seems dire, perhaps exaggerated or overdramatic. However, when one considers the implications of even minor generic features, their possible impact on the writer does not appear far-fetched. For example, the prescription against the use of the first person pronoun in much "formal" writing can create a subtle but powerful effect: the knowledge expressed exists without reference to individuals ("It is believed"). This separation of knowledge and knower creates what Dorothy Smith calls "documentary reality." Indeed, the knower may disappear entirely, as in this example from one of George's PAs:

Regarding this young man's delinquent activity it is felt that he has learned his lesson. Despite this, it is assessed that Dean could find himself in difficulty with the law again.

Who felt? Who assessed? Ironically, in a community that

distrusts third party information enough to ban it as hearsay, the generic rule against the first person pronoun results in passive constructions that sound very much like someone else's knowledge. This is but one of many consistent textual features; together with the repeated aspects of context, they create "assumptions about authors, readers, the subjects investigated, and knowledge itself," just as Bazerman suggests the APA Publication Manual does. Smith describes the phenomenon:

Socially organized practices of reporting and recording work upon what actually happens or has happened to create a reality in documentary form, and though they are decisive to its character, their traces are not visible in it. (257)

Although there has been some debate about the power of the group to oppress the individual (e.g., Trimbur), composition theory has, on the whole, uncritically accepted the notion of discourse community. Indeed, as a number of theorists have pointed out, "community" suggests a voluntary and supportive gathering (Cooper "Why"; Harris; Williams). But there is clearly a darker side to group influence. Faigley points out one negative feature: "commentators on writing processes from a social perspective have neglected the issue of what cannot be discussed in a particular community" ("Nonacademic" 539). The flip side of that restriction is what must be said, and how it must be said. Discourse communities permit, prescribe, and prohibit. Through those actions, the community develops a habit of mind in its members. When the routines which create that habit are open for discussion, change may occur. So, for example, the workers

in Court Services could alter the way they viewed their world by revising the form of their reports. However, even they struggled with, and occasionally succumbed to, the vision forced on them by the generic factors of text and context. In communities where those factors are unexamined, the potential for "group-think" is high; that is, there is pressure to accept community assumptions and values without critical appraisal. The propensity of communities to shape their members' views and beliefs must be considered in the evolving social theory of writing. The last words on this come from Coe:

A form may be generative insofar as it motivates a search for more information; but any form also biases the direction of the searching and constrains against the discovery of information that does not fit the form.... Form can, in this sense, be ideological: when a particular form constrains against the communication of a message contrary to the interests of some power elite, it serves an ideological function. Insofar as form guides function, formal values may carry implicit moral/political values. (20)

As composition theory develops, it is important to examine basic assumptions and principles. In a rapidly changing field heavily influenced by diverse disciplines, contrary notions are bound to coexist. Such clashes are not only inevitable, they are also beneficial, since they reduce the possibility of stagnation. The current social theory of writing seeks to place the act of writing in a wider context than that afforded by previous perspectives on composition. In particular, the theory is concerned with explaining the place of the individual in community and the relationship

between the writer and the social context within which he or she writes. As a focus for that concern, the notion of discourse communities has provided composition scholars with a site for observations as well as parameters within which to observe. The broad view of writing as social action is reduced somewhat by attention to specific groups and the ways in which writing occurs within them.

As this study indicates, the observation of discourse communities may well result in challenges to traditional and/or recent composition theory. For instance, the concept of "audience," with roots deep in the classical rhetorical tradition, appears unable to account for the complexity of writer-reader and reader-reader relations in Court Services. And to the notion of genre as social action, which is a recent conception, must be added the view of genre as a regulator of community knowledge and a shaper of individual perception. These implications for theory also have implications for further research.

Implications for Research

Since the mid-nineteen sixties, writing theory, research, and instruction have been in a state of constant change and discovery. However, the emerging social perspective on writing, though perhaps not revolutionary, has caused dramatic reconceptualizations in all aspects of the discipline. Nowhere are these changes more obvious than in the area of research. From a somewhat tidy cognitive perspective, sym-

bolized by the boxes and arrows of Flower and Hayes' cognitive process model of writing, we have shifted to the unruly spectacle of writing as a social act. By providing a detailed description of one writing context, this study has brought some order to that spectacle, but more such profiles are needed. If we are to understand writing as a social act, and benefit from that understanding, we must have some sense of the many different dynamics at work in discourse communities. Faced with the task of studying writing in the world, the composition researcher must confront two central questions: What to look for, and how to look. In the following section, some answers to those questions are proposed.

A Focus for Research: What to Look For?

The basic premise of a social constructionist theory of composition is that no two settings for writing are exactly alike. Indeed, any single setting is in a constant state of change. The anti-foundational philosophy that supports much recent discussion in composition is based on the belief that human experience, and our understanding of it, is shaped by the ever-changing historical and social forces within which we exist. As a result, it is difficult to make generalizations about writing and writers, since the dynamics of each setting are different. What appeared even recently to be universal principles, now seem contingent on the practice of individual writers and the local conditions of writing. For example, a statement such as, "The writing process is recursive," was gospel until researchers discov-

ered that in some circumstances writers seemed to have quite linear processes (e.g., Selzer). The present study has confirmed the infinite variety of context and the danger of overgeneralizations. "The writer adapts her process and product to a specific audience" may well have been a safe statement once, but this study challenges the assumptions on which the statement is based. Much of Alice's process and product was determined for her, and there were many PDR readers, not one specific audience. In fact, it might be argued that in certain situations the community, rather than the writer, determines the individual's writing processes and products.

On one hand, this interpretation shifts the impulse for writing from the solo writer to the group, and suggests that goal-setting, planning, generating ideas, and other composition activities normally associated with the individual might be considered the outgrowth of community norms and practices. On the other hand, there was enough variation among the four participants in this study to argue that context affects but does not necessarily eradicate individual action.

There are two lessons for research in this double outlook. First, composition researchers should continue to build up a broad picture of writing as social action. Their focus should go beyond individual texts and writers to the larger social processes of which writing is a part. What function do texts serve in a community's production of knowledge? What events and procedures accompany and influ-

ence the composition of texts? How do texts influence the settings in which they are written? How do they affect the community's work and the structure of its relationships?

Second, the individual's role within community should be considered. In particular, we need to know more about the power of the community to instill certain assumptions and values in its members through the persistent repetition of discursive practices. What blinkers do writers don when they voluntarily obey the writing regulations of their disciplines? Must they ignore, suppress, or compromise personal beliefs in order to fulfill their obligations to their discourse communities? When do the demands (and privileges) of membership threaten the integrity of personal knowledge? What happens when individuals challenge community rules?

This research approach acknowledges a universal and defining characteristic of all discourse communities: the creation of texts. At the same time, such a focus accepts the diversity of goals, activities, relationships, values, conventions, and content that go into the composing of texts. This, in a sense, is the anti-foundational solution to the problem of composition research from a social perspective, since it favours change over stasis. That is, rather than ignoring the historical, ideological, social, and cultural factors that shape human writing activity, such a research agenda chooses those very factors as its focus.

For example, the present study raises a number of questions about writer-reader relationships that cannot be addressed, much less answered, without reference to broader

social issues. In particular, the place of the PDR client and his or her family seems peculiar and unaccounted for by recent theory or research reports. Although these people are an integral part of the report -- its subjects, in fact -- they are only peripherally involved. Despite the profound effect it can have on their lives, they are essentially powerless readers, unable to affect the text in any substantial way. In a sense, when the family reads the PDR, they are eavesdropping on a conversation about them. They become objects of discussion, not participants.

There are other texts that do not include all readers as equals. Sexist language makes women inferior partners in the dialogue. Unnecessarily technical or otherwise coded language excludes some readers or places them in relationships of dependency. Consider contracts, insurance policies, and other written agreements; ostensibly these texts are for all the people concerned, but, in fact, readers to whom the documents refer often feel they are listening in to a conversation between lawyers, technocrats, bureaucrats, or civil servants. And what about the PA and many similar texts that are secret, that remain hidden from the very people they describe, assess, explain, and affect? What balance of power is there between the writers and readers of a given document? What influence does a reader have over the many documents that affect his or her life? Conversely, what influence do those documents have on the person?

A whole spectrum of relationships exists between and among readers, a fact not much explored in composition

research. The effect of the PDR on relations between the adolescent clients and their families, between the two lawyers, between the clients and judges, and between other readers is central to a full understanding of the text and context. Texts change the social structure of the communities within which they operate. They set in motion, alter, end, or otherwise influence the interactions between and among their readers. In many organizations, the c.c. (carbon copy) or distribution list on documents alerts all readers to all other readers and exploits the complex interactions that occur once a document has entered a community. Yet, this crucial dynamic is barely mentioned in composition theory, which has stressed writer-reader relations. Moreover, to my knowledge, reader-reader relationships have not been explored by research. People studying writing in discourse communities should become sensitive to this phenomenon. Aside from the announced reader(s), does anyone else receive a text? Why? What patterns of distribution exist in organizations? What justifications are there for those patterns? How does multiple readership of a document affect the structure of relationships in a group?

Another social consideration, not much addressed in this study, concerns relations between writers. Especially in academic discourse, references to other writers create alliances and oppositions that can have profound effects on the creation of knowledge within a discipline. Favourable comments about one member's work, and criticism of another's efforts, might result in or support the formation of oppos-

ing camps within a community. And citing the "correct" scholars in a given field can have an influence on the success of grant applications and manuscripts submitted for publication.

The present study has suggested that the rhetorical concept of "audience" and the composition research into that concept have not provided an adequate explanation of the great variety and complexity of writer-reader, reader-reader, and writer-writer relations. Composition researchers must begin to explore this great diversity of human interaction and to describe how these relationships shape discourse and knowledge.

This study also suggests the need for further research into the effect of generic features of text and context on the individual members of discourse communities. In Court Services, those features included the roles writers and readers filled and the prescribed forms and procedures associated with the texts. These roles and genres were developed and sanctioned by the community as a means of guaranteeing the repetition of the social action necessary for the community to fulfil its mandate. Neither the roles nor the genres were entirely unique: judges and lawyers exist elsewhere, and a version of the PA was used at other points of service within the agency. However, along with the community's underlying assumptions, the roles and genres combined to create certain context-specific discourse and knowledge. By playing the role assigned and by employing the community's genres, the social workers in this study adopted a particu-

lar outlook. Though they had some freedom within the constraints of role and genre, as described in the previous section, these repeated features of the context did compel them to see and think in certain ways. This dynamic raises questions worthy of further research.

For example, using Bazerman's analysis of the APA Publication Manual as a model, we need to know more about how genres embody particular theoretical positions. How do forms, or other repeated aspects of context, shape the writing and thinking of individuals? To what degree are community members aware of their commitment to the group's values and beliefs? Can they step out of their roles, or disregard textual conventions? In any given context, are individuals involved in the review or revision of established roles and/or texts? In terms of the individual writer's autonomy, is it possible to describe a continuum of dependence, with complete freedom at one end and full compliance with the community at the other? We need a greater sense of the reciprocity that fuels discourse communities, the give and take between individuals and the group. In addition, to return to the ecological model once again, we need to understand how healthy systems create a balance between individual freedom and the well-being of the entire organism; and we need to explore the dynamics in unhealthy systems, where critical discourse is silenced.

There is no end to the questions one could pose about writing as a social act. As an arena for that act, discourse communities offer endless variety and constant change. While

answers to our questions emerge from research, the communities we study are evolving, and no two are ever alike. As a result, we should proceed with caution, avoiding overgeneralizations or dogmatic assertions and, instead, striving to capture a moving picture of writing in action. In the following section, the methods used in this study are discussed in terms of their suitability for further research.

A Method for Research: How to Look?

There seems little doubt that research which seeks to challenge or confirm a social theory of writing must take a broad perspective. Close analysis of texts or writers without reference to their contexts is no longer acceptable. As a result, methods which allow a panoramic view have been imported into composition research from, among other sources, anthropology, sociology, and linguistics. Although the methods are given various names -- ethnographic, naturalistic, holistic, qualitative, descriptive -- they do share some characteristics. Perhaps the most important similarity is their systemic approach to the examination of phenomena, their concern with the full context under study. In the application of these methods to composition questions, this has meant attention to as much of the writing context as possible, and recognition that the context is more than a mere backdrop to the writing. In some studies, this concern with context has caused researchers to enter the research setting as participant-observers, or merely as observers, for up to a year.

Although issues of confidentiality made on-site observation impossible for this study, other features of the methods listed above were employed. For example, a variety of data collection methods was used, including two types of interview, composing aloud protocols, and examination of artifacts (notes, drafts, final reports); multiple sources help to increase the reliability of findings. In addition, the study, and therefore the data collection, was spread out over almost a year, reducing the likelihood that the novelty of the research tasks would alter significantly the writing activity of the participants. Moreover, the research tasks -- the interviews and protocols -- focussed on writing the participants were familiar with and did regularly as part of their jobs. Finally, the report of findings is offered in the form of a "thick description," a detailed account of the system which determined the setting's writing processes and products.

The initial interview, designed to gather background information, and meant to replace the slower (and disallowed) on-site observation, was helpful but insufficient. The fact that the interview was standardized (similar for each participant) permitted comparison among the social workers' responses to questions; however, observation would almost certainly have led me to a greater understanding of the setting. As preparation for the initial interview, the wide-ranging discussion with the unit supervisor was valuable but, again, insufficient. Time spent in the setting observing, questioning, and reflecting would probably have

allowed me to develop a more thorough interview.

The "think-aloud" protocols proved to be an effective method of gathering information about the participants' contextual concerns during composing. And the fact that they were collected while the social workers composed actual reports in "real time" gives the data greater ecological validity than the data from protocols produced in lab-like settings. The drawbacks of the protocols for this study were their length and the lack of control I had over their production. The former problem was reduced somewhat by taking excerpts from the protocols, rather than transcribing entire recordings. To solve the latter problem, I kept in touch with the participants and continued to encourage them over the period of the study. I would not hesitate to use the composing aloud method again, especially in conjunction with the discourse-based interview. Together, the pair make a powerful research method: one captures the writer during composing, the other guides the writer through a retrospective account of the composing process.

The discourse interview was effective at uncovering beliefs or conventions that went unstated during composing. Confronted by an option to retain, delete, or substitute part of their texts, the social workers often articulated community rules that might otherwise have remained implicit. Furthermore, by presenting the social workers with sections of their protocols during the discourse interviews, I was able to get explanations for puzzling comments or decisions.

Overall, the methods used for this study were effective

at answering the questions which motivated the research. The use of protocol methods in a natural setting with real writing tasks, as opposed to a lab-like setting with researcher designed tasks, represents an important contribution to writing research methods. "Think-aloud" protocols can provide detailed and often dramatic evidence of the individual writer's awareness of the setting within which she works and the effect of that setting on her writing processes and products. Though protocol methods have fallen into some disfavour in recent years, largely because of their association with a cognitive process theory of writing, this study indicates that they are effective as a means of testing a social theory of composition.

Composition studies has been richly influenced by a variety of disciplines. Along with the theoretical perspectives offered by those disciplines come research traditions and methods. I believe that writing researchers should remain open to a range of approaches and procedures.

Implications for Teaching

The process theory which guided composition research and pedagogy until quite recently was rich in instructional implications. Much of that theory was developed from studies of individual, often expert, writers; when the composing behaviour of those writers was compared to the writing process of novices, the differences appeared to be mainly strategic. As a result, the process of applying theory to teach-

ing seemed relatively straightforward: teach students to mimic the mental activities, or strategies, of effective writers and they, in turn, would become effective writers.

Two basic assumptions supported this belief. First, it was assumed that cognitive strategies were general and could be employed in all writing situations. Second, writing was considered an essentially individual act, occurring in the world but originating in the head. However, as predicted by social theory, and confirmed by recent research, writing processes and products rely heavily on human interaction and the details of context. In other words, writing is collaborative and shaped by specific conditions. Although some general writing strategies may well apply across all contexts, much knowledge about how one writes is particular to where one writes: it is local knowledge.

This fact creates a problem for composition teachers. It is clearly impossible to prepare students for all the writing contexts they may encounter. Indeed, during their academic careers, students write within many different discourse communities. Furthermore, even in a single discipline, such as biology, they will find that conditions change from class to class, teacher to teacher, level to level. What value would there be in teaching social work students the form of the PDR or PA, when those forms are so deeply rooted in the context which produced them and, anyway, are subject to more or less constant revision? With genre conceived of as social action, merely teaching the repeated textual patterns of a discipline's documents

ignores the social enactment of those texts. Unfortunately, the structure of roles and relations that supports that social interaction is also subject to constant change and subtle variation. Having a Youth Court judge speak to social work students might well prepare them for writing a PDR -- for that judge at that particular time. If they work in Court Services after graduation, they will face many different judges and circumstances. A rash of violent incidents by adolescents would almost certainly result in profound, if perhaps temporary, variations in the attitudes of the Court Services community. The multiple forces acting on the writer in any given context cannot be anticipated, much less taught. So, what must teachers do?

As LeFevre says in her discussion of a social perspective on writing, "changes in practice have preceded the articulation of corresponding theory" (122). Even before the present discussion of writing as social action began, teachers were aware that cognitive strategies, no matter how numerous or sophisticated, were insufficient preparation for writing. In composition classrooms, this knowledge led to a variety of collaborative activities, including pre-writing discussions, peer editing, and conferencing. In the field as a whole, the need for attention to writing across the curriculum (WAC) has been discussed since the early 1970s (and, under different names, since much earlier; see Russell). Whether or not the WAC movement has been or can be successful is uncertain, but its very existence points to an awareness among teachers that writing in history differs in significant ways from

writing in chemistry.

This study suggests that writing instruction in general, including WAC programs, would be most effective if it focussed on variations in collaboration and context rather than on specific types of text or language. In other words, the emphasis should switch from artifact to activity: instead of teaching students about the lab report or the specialized language of a particular science, teachers should create opportunities for students to experience some of the social dynamics that accompany writing in the world.

One essential element in any classroom situation which aims to simulate or recreate the conditions of a discourse community is consequence. Writing in the world has results: it changes, challenges, questions, answers, explains, instructs, and so on. Texts affect the social structures created by a community's roles, relationships, genres, and activities. They enter and influence the process of the community. For instance, most writing in organizations has political consequences; it affects or adjusts the relationships of power within institutions. A simple memo supporting a colleague's proposal may mark the writer as friend or foe to others in the organization. Likewise, an academic article becomes part of an ongoing debate, aligning the writer with some in the field, and pitting her against others.

For school texts to matter, they must be more than mere exercises, they must have an impact on people. In a writing class, assignments which involve students in interaction with others may take a variety of forms. Students might

identify a situation that bothers them or causes them problems and then write a letter or report to someone in a position to change that situation. This could be done in groups or individually. If copies of the document are sent to others with a stake in the situation, some of the very real dynamics of writing will likely result. For example, a letter concerning racism in the school, and critical of school policies or inaction, could be sent to administrators, the school newspaper, and the student government, and might cause some of the reverberations that accompany texts in all discourse communities. Such a letter could make the same demands as more traditional essays or compositions, with the added dimension provided by a variety of readers, possible responses, and the opportunity to witness writing in action. Among the many potential lessons to be learned from this assignment is the way in which the various readers' roles and relationships to others determine the nature of their responses to the original text. Another discussion might centre on the letter of complaint as a genre and attempt to identify the social action that typifies the genre.

In an attempt to give engineering students in my composition course an experience with authentic rhetorical situations, I have them write papers on technical or scientific topics for students at a local high school. A recent variation on that assignment had them working in teams of three to prepare a paper on physics for a senior (grade 11) class. They began by reading the high school physics text and selecting a topic they believed was poorly or inadequately

explained in the textbook. In their teams they discussed their topic, explained concepts to each other, argued, drew diagrams, and went off to do more reading. Next, each team collaborated on a first draft. Naturally, they read and responded to each other's work as they drafted. That draft was reviewed in my classroom by a committee of peers: each team received comments on their draft from at least one other team. Once a second draft was prepared, each team met with some of the high school students for a discussion of the draft. Finally, the papers were presented to the physics class and my students received feedback from the high school students and their teacher.

Outside of the composition classroom, school writing may matter more if it actually serves the processes of teaching and learning. Perhaps the most ambitious attempts to create writing assignments of consequence have been undertaken at St. Thomas University, in Fredericton, New Brunswick (Hunt et al.; Reither and Vipond). There, teachers in English literature, psychology, religious studies, and anthropology have worked together to devise courses in which writing is used not merely to prove that knowledge has been gained but actually to produce knowledge. In effect, these teachers have turned the responsibility for learning over to their students. In Hunt's eighteenth century poetry course, students decide on the broad themes or topics for the course and proceed to conduct initial research on those topics. Class activity and discussion centres on texts produced by individual students or small groups and circulated to every-

one. As might be expected, different opinions are expressed, controversies arise, debates ensue, further research is required, patterns are discovered; in short, the writing creates the very dynamics that fuel academic discourse communities.

These are but a few examples of the many possible writing assignments that would exploit the effects of writing in actual social contexts. Though they are different in design and intention, a number of common features are worth noting. First, the texts in all three situations are read by multiple readers. As this study has shown, concern for "audience" does not merely double with the addition of a second reader; in a sense, it triples, since the writer must now be aware of the impact the text might have on the new reader as well as on interaction between the readers. Each additional reader adds a new geometry of relations.

Second, the various readers of the assignments approach the texts from different positions. In the first situation, the dean of students or director of studies has a very different mandate from the newspaper editor or the president of the student council. In the second situation, the high school students, the engineering students, and the physics teacher represent different levels of expertise. In the third situation, a text challenging a previously reported opinion might realign the classroom debate. The multiple readers of a document often read for different reasons. They also might read different parts of the text, or read the same parts differently.

Third, each task permits students to write about what they know or about what interests and concerns them. Naturally, such freedom of choice is not always possible in school settings: the first assignment above leaves topic choice open, but the second and third constrain the selection somewhat. However, even within the strict confines of subject-area courses, it is possible to give students a variety of topics, readers, and reasons for writing and reading. In fact, having students write about course material to people outside the course, people who are less knowledgeable, has two advantages. First, as every teacher knows, teaching a subject is the best way to learn it. And, second, writing in the role of expert is the rule rather than the exception once students graduate from school. Ironically, most, if not all, school writing puts students in the role of novices writing to experts, a situation which is reversed in most, if not all, non-school writing.

Fourth, each situation allows for cooperation among students, from initial selection of topics, through research, to actual co-authoring. This study, and others focussed on writing in context (e.g., Ede and Lunsford, Singular Texts), have demonstrated the extent to which colleagues assist each other in the preparation of texts. This collaboration may take the form of highly structured group efforts, or it may simply involve informal chats in the office, over coffee, or after work. Given similar opportunities, students will develop some of the ability to cooperate which is clearly essential to success in many writing contexts.

Indeed, collaboration should be at the heart of the composition course, or any attempt to implement WAC programs. The business of academic disciplines is the production of knowledge, and that is done by communities, not by individuals in a vacuum; discourse creates knowledge. Studies of academic and nonacademic discourse, some of which are reviewed in Chapter Two, describe a great variety of cooperative dynamics that might productively be modelled in the classroom. Document cycling, peer review, multiple authors, writer-reader interviews, and other opportunities to interact about or through texts create conditions for learning about writing and about the subject of the texts.

The simplest form of collaboration is talk. Surrounding and supporting most documents is a torrent of talk: meetings, telephone calls, interviews, speeches, conversations, discussions, and so on. For instance, an academic article might begin as an informal conversation, grow to a conference presentation, and end up in a professional journal. Along the way, the writer(s) might talk about it with colleagues, family, friends, conference participants, and editors. Similarly, a business proposal might start as a casual chat, develop through a variety of meetings, briefings, and oral presentations, and end up as a written document.

Not all writing need be done by multiple authors for multiple readers, nor must every text be as public as those described above. Students will benefit from writing for themselves or for readers close to them: friends, family, teachers. Diaries and journals allow a kind of private dial-

ogue that makes use of the heuristic value of writing. Expressive writing, to use the term Britton and his colleagues coined, encourages reflection and, because it is private, allows for chance-taking and discovery. When all a student's writing is public, he may well chose to explore safe ideas only. Just as the social workers in this study used their Progress Notes for private speculation, questions, and reflection, so too students can benefit from writing which is exploratory and not final. The catch here, however, is that though this type of writing is less public than the assignments described above, it must be no less consequential. In other words, students must see and experience its value or it will become just another school exercise.

Finally, studying a discourse community, one perhaps to which they aspire, can provide students with a sense of how writing and knowledge work within a discipline. Once again, however, the focus of such study should be the community's actions, not its artifacts. Examining the PDR guidelines and examples of the report would be of some benefit to social work students, but a sense of the overall social action within which the PDR operates would be of greater value. In other words, identifying repeated textual patterns is of little use without some understanding of the full genre, including the roles and relationships created, altered, or sustained by texts. Assignments that promote such understanding might include exploring the evolution of a document, from its inception as an idea, through its composi-

tion, to the effects it has when published. Alternately, students could interview family members or friends to discover the place of writing in a variety of contexts. The teacher could supply, or help students develop, a list of questions: What sort of texts are produced? What form do they take? What purpose do they serve? Who writes them? Who reads them? The purpose here, as with all the suggested assignments, is to increase the students' awareness and experience of writing as a social act.

Conclusion

This study offers evidence in support of a social constructionist theory of writing. I have made no attempt to disprove that theory, as an experimental study might have done. I set no null hypotheses, controlled as few variables as possible, and relied on description and argument rather than statistical significance to draw attention to what seemed to me noteworthy, extraordinary, or unexpected. I do not believe we need proof of the social nature of writing. Rather, we need examples of how writing is social, of how it shapes and is shaped by its context. We need descriptions of individuals within discourse communities, in order to see how membership in those communities affects writers and writing. We need profiles of writing in various contexts, so we can learn more about writer-reader relationships, about the social action of genres, and the production of knowledge through discourse. Most importantly, perhaps, we need

examples of how discourse can influence the individual's and the community's conceptions of reality.

This study presents an example of only one context at one point in time. However, although that context was clearly unique in certain ways, much of what occurred there bore a strong resemblance to descriptions of writing in other contexts. Thus, this profile of Court Services contributes to a growing picture of writing as a social act. In particular, the study provides a number of new perspectives on some central concepts in composition studies.

First, the description of writer-reader relationships in Court Services challenges the notion that readers form an "audience." Frank Smith says that "Metaphors are the legs of language, on which thought steadily advances or makes its more daring leaps. Without metaphor, thought is inert, and with the wrong metaphor, it is hobbled" (117). The metaphor suggested by "audience" hobbles our thinking about the social dynamics of writing and reading.

Second, this research adds a dimension to the discussion of genre as social action. Bazerman speaks of genre as "a socially recognized, repeated strategy for achieving similar goals in situations socially perceived as being similar" (Shaping 62). The description of Court Services hints at another side to genre. It suggests that the repetition of discursive practices can lock writers and readers into certain ways of seeing and knowing. The discourse regulations which social workers followed are examples of the degree to which the community can control the writer's process and the

production of knowledge.

The social perspective on writing has broadened the scope of composition studies. But that new vision brings with it new problems and challenges. We will need to reexamine our assumptions, our questions, and our practices. In particular, we will need to reconsider our teaching. Students must be given the opportunity to see and experience writing as a collaborative act. As readers, they must be more than a passive audience; as writers, they must work with others to create meaning. In composition classes and within the disciplines, the nature and function of discourse communities should be explored. The advantages and disadvantages of communities, the ways in which they promote and prohibit, should be discussed. Perhaps, above all, we need to be patient. If, as some suggest, the social perspective on writing raises composition studies to the status of a discipline, we are very young and have much to learn.

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APPENDICES

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Appendix 1:	
Initial interview questions.	328
Appendix 2:	
"Think-aloud" protocol instructions.	330
Appendix 3:	
Letter to participants.	332
Appendix 4:	
Standard discourse interview questions.	335
Appendix 5:	
Guidelines for the Psychosocial Assessment.	337
Appendix 6:	
Guidelines for the Predisposition Report.	345
Appendix 7:	
Sample of rough notes from interviews.	350
Appendix 8:	
Sample Progress Notes.	352
Appendix 9:	
Sophie's Predisposition Report (Louis Crane).	354

Initial Interview Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Psychosocial Assessment?
2. What do you hope to achieve by writing the PA?
3. Which part of the PA is most important? Most difficult?
4. When you are writing a PA, what takes the most time?
5. How long does it take to write a PA?
6. How do you collect and keep the information that goes into the PA?
7. Do you use standard questions for client interviews, or do you follow the outline of the PA?
8. Who might read the PA?
9. Do you know all the possible readers personally?
10. How does knowing that other people could read the PA affect you?
11. The PA guidelines say this: "Ensure that readers in other points of service could clearly understand the facts."
What does that mean?
12. What is the purpose of the Predisposition Report?
13. What do you hope to achieve by writing it?
14. What part of the PDR is most important? Most difficult?
15. When you are writing a PDR, what takes the most time?
16. How long does it take to write a PDR?
17. How do you collect and keep the information that goes into the PDR?
18. Who might read the PDR?
19. How does knowing that all those people will read the PDR affect you?

20. Do you know who the judge and lawyers will be when you are writing a PDR? If so, how does that affect you?
21. What is the purpose of keeping Progress Notes?
22. What do you write in your PN?
23. Who reads the PN?
24. Are you a good writer?
25. How did you learn to write PAs and PDRs?
26. When you first started, did you look at other people's reports?
27. Do you ever show your drafts to other people?

Appendix 2: "Think-aloud" protocol instructions.

"Think-Aloud" Protocol Instructions

While you are writing, think out loud. Say everything that occurs to you or goes through your mind as you think about the writing you are doing. There is no "right" or "wrong" thing to say, so don't edit, censor, or select from what you are thinking. When you aren't actually putting words on paper, remember to think out loud. Before you begin writing or whenever you pause, just say what you are thinking. When you write, say the words you write out loud. When you read, read out loud. Don't stop when you are trying to make a decision or solve a problem; make your decision or solve your problem out loud.

Appendix 3: Letter to participants.

Dear

It's been a while since I explained to you the tape recorded "think-aloud," so I thought a brief reminder of its purpose and procedure might be helpful. Some of the people who generously agreed to help me in my research have not yet had the dubious pleasure of thinking aloud while writing, and those who have may have forgotten why they were doing it.

Basically, I am interested in learning about the writing process you go through when producing a report - the sources of your information, the choices you have, and the decisions you make. I want to understand how a report's purpose, topic, and audience affect you. So, briefly, here is what I'm asking you to do :

While you are writing, think out loud. Say everything that occurs to you or goes through your mind as you think about the writing you are doing. There is no "right" or "wrong" thing to say, so don't edit, censor, or select from what you are thinking. When you aren't actually putting words on paper, remember to think out loud. Before you begin writing or whenever you pause, just say what you are thinking. When you write, say the words you write out loud. When you read, read out loud. Don't stop when you are trying to make a decision or solve a problem; make your decision or solve your problem out loud.

Despite the artificiality of thinking out loud while you write, I'd like you to try to be as natural as possible. In other words, I hope the procedure does not change the way you would ordinarily write. If you find that the process affects

you adversely and makes you less effective in your work, please do not hesitate to tell me. I don't want to interfere or make your work more difficult.

Those people who have completed a report while thinking aloud say that after some initial discomfort the writing goes smoothly. The trick is to focus on the report itself, and let the thinking aloud take care of itself.

I know that some of you are wondering what I could possibly find interesting in what you see as a mundane, day-to-day activity. But I can assure you, the tapes that I have listened to are fascinating. They are full of information that will help writing researchers and teachers.

Once again, I can't thank you enough for your time and effort. Please let me know if you have any problems.

Sincerely,

Appendix 4: Standard discourse interview questions.

1. Standard pre-discourse interview questions.

- What was your goal or intention with this report? In other words, what did you hope to achieve with it?

- What messages did you hope to convey?

- Are you happy with the report?

- What was most difficult about this report?

- Was the report successful? Why, or why not?

2. Standard post-discourse interview questions.

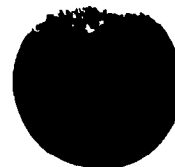
- How did the various readers of this report affect you while you were writing? For example, were you aware of the judge who would eventually read the report? The client? The parents? The lawyers? Other professionals?

- Can you be specific about where and how readers affected you?

Appendix 5: Guidelines for the Psychosocial Assessment.

**Centre de services sociaux Ville Marie
Ville Marie Social Service Centre**

PROTECTION DE LA JEUNESSE — YOUTH PROTECTION
SERVICES A LA COUR — COURT SERVICES
6181 RUE ST DENIS ST CHAMBRE 340 A MONTREAL H2S 2R5 — 273 0633
16845 HYMUS BLVD KIRKLAND QUE H9N 3L3 ■ (514) 694 2521



Date (Assessment written)

Guidelines for
PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT

1. BASIS OF ASSESSMENT

Indicate date(s) of offence(s), date case was received at Court Services and date that case was assigned to worker. State the name and position of the referring professional, their point of service and the reason for the referral.

This report is based on material obtained from the following sources:

- a) interviews - total number of interviews, listing them in chronological order with the dates, location and persons present at all interviews.
- b) telephone contact - total number of telephone contacts, listed in chronological order, with the dates and persons contacted.
- c) reports - list all written reports obtained, including the date they were written, the professional involved and the point of service.

2. DESCRIPTION OF CHARGE

a) Official Version:

Describe charge as outlined in:

- i) résumé des faits - police report
- ii) précis - S.P.G. file
- iii) copy attached to request for pre-disposition report

Give, as clearly as possible, a picture of the reported incident and related facts - ensure that workers in other points of service could clearly understand the facts.

.../

2. DESCRIPTION OF CHARGE (contd.)

b) Child's Version:

Include in the youth's description of the incident, the following information (to the degree applicable):

- the role played by the youth (leader/follower)
- level of activity
- incident planned or impulsive
- use of tools (describe)
- under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- precipitating factors (i.e. argument with parents, break-up with girlfriend, school problems, etc.)
- how was he caught (at the time of offence or later; if later, describe circumstances)
- accomplices - how many, known juvenile offenders
- what happened to the merchandise or money - if spent, on what or whom
- victim's relationship to youth (if any)
- describe youth's reported feelings prior to, during, and immediately following offence, as well as currently
- how did youth feel about meeting with youth worker
- what consequences does youth feel should be undertaken

c) Parent's(s') Version:

- were police able to inform parents - if not, who did youth select to be contacted by police - when and by whom were the parents eventually informed
- their description of the facts - any discrepancies with youth's version
- do both parents know (if not, why not - fear of abuse etc.)
- what were their reactions (anger, fear, etc.) to the youth and his/her offence
- what were their reactions (anger, fear, etc.) to the police process
- what consequences or measures did they take and what was the outcome
- how do they feel the youth worker should deal with the situation

d) Victim's(s') Version:

- how was the victim's version obtained (official reports, face to face, telephone, etc.)
- description of the facts
- impact on victim (short/long term)
- does the victim know the accused
- what does the victim think should be the consequence

.../

3. PREVIOUS OFFENCES, LEGAL DISPOSITION, WORKER'S INVOLVEMENT

a) Official Charges:

- list in chronological order - old Article 40's, or Y.O.A. charges
- outline the measures taken for each charge (voluntary measures, if old 40, or closed, alternative measures, or Court for Y.O.A.) and the outcome
- outline the service that youth and family have received in relation to previous charges

b) Self-reported Offences:

- indicate if none, or some
- if some, include brief description outlining age of onset, type of offence, variety, duration, intensity, as well as youth's belief as to reason(s) he/she was not apprehended (or charged)
- describe youth's feelings re. not being apprehended (or charged)

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

a) Mother:

- date of birth
- information re. own family of origin (stability of case, number of siblings, death or divorce of parents, placement: foster care, hospitalization etc. or any other traumatizing events)
- country of origin (if immigrant to Canada, age at time of immigration)
- education level
- economic background
- work history, including period of unemployment
- any history of physical or emotional illness
- substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, etc.)
- any history of delinquency in her family
- relationship with her family of origin, in-laws, and friends
- date of own marriage - history of divorces/separation, etc.

b) Father:

- date of birth
- information re. own family of origin (stability of care, number of siblings, death or divorce of parents, placement: foster care, hospitalization, etc., or any other traumatizing events)
- country of origin (if immigrant to Canada, age at time of immigration)
- education level
- economic background
- work history, including period of unemployment
- any history of physical or emotional illness
- substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, etc.)
- any history of delinquency in his family
- relationship with his family of origin, in-laws, and friends
- date of own marriage - history of divorces/separation, etc.

.../

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION (contd.)

- c) Youth:
- description of youth's earlier years (include information that you will not be putting in section entitled "Present Social Situation")
 - date and place of birth
 - number of siblings
 - early childhood experiences (adoption, loss or separation from parents - death, divorce, foster care, hospitalization, private placement arrangements, etc.
 - radical changes in family's economic situation
 - previous school functioning and history (starting with Grade one) including both academic and behavior
 - community activities (history of sports, clubs, groups, etc.)
 - history of friendship with peers
 - history of relationship with extended family/siblings

5. PRIOR SOCIAL SERVICE INVOLVEMENT (OTHER THAN COURT SERVICES)

In chronological order, describe:

- all social service interventions (including psychiatric and psychological) both voluntary and involuntary (i.e. Youth Protection, Chapter 48)
- include reason for referral, name and location of practitioner, duration of contact and reason for termination, and client's(s') perception of the service offered.

6. PRESENT SOCIAL SITUATION OF YOUTH

a) Description of Youth:

Brief physical description as well as affective expression and attitude toward interviewer.

b) Health:

Describe in detail any specific health problems (both physical and psychiatric, include references to any psychological or psychiatric assessments).

c) Description of Family by Youth:

Youth's description of his/her family, including the amount and type of supervision he/she feels he/she receives, and by whom. Include youth's description of any disciplinary measures he/she receives, by whom, and the level of frequency. Does he/she feel parents are in control of him/her, care about him/her?

.../

6. PRESENT SOCIAL SITUATION OF YOUTH (contd.)

d) Financial Situation:

Comment on youth's finances, including allowance, savings, inheritance, etc.

e) Employment:

Chronological listing of employment, including duration of jobs, number of hours per week, salary, and attitude towards work.

f) School:

Describe present status, both academically and behaviorally, as well as youth's perception of school. Include comments of school personnel when relevant.

g) Community:

Describe involvement in clubs, groups, sports, etc.

h) Friends:

Include number of close friends (or indicate if no close friends), indicating length of friendship, reason for friendship and whether friends are involved in delinquencies and/or known to Court Services.

i) Interests:

Describe how youth spends free time, hobbies, etc. Indicate if youth is involved in substance abuse (if yes, outline type, quantity and duration).

Note: g), h), and i) may be combined in one section if worker prefers.

7. PRESENT SOCIAL SITUATION OF FAMILY

a) Description of Parents:

Include any noteworthy physical attributes as well as affective expressions of each parent.

b) Health:

Significant illness or handicaps of all family members (including psychiatric illness).

.../

7. PRESENT SOCIAL SITUATION OF FAMILY (contd.)

c) Family Situation:

- Provide brief description of interaction between family members in the interview. Also indicate if any other persons are living in the home and outline their role. Describe activities undertaken by the family together. Comment on whether any other family members are in conflict with the law. Indicate if any problem exists with regard to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Give a brief description of siblings (including school and work).
- Clearly outline the parents' description of the type and degree of supervision given to the youth (i.e. curfew, friends, etc.). Indicate which measures are taken to discipline the youth, by whom, and how effective are they. Do parents feel they have control of the youth? Any discrepancies or consistencies with youths' description of supervision and control.

d) Socioeconomic Situation:

Provide a brief description of the family home (owned/rented, size, etc.), neighborhood, expenses, income, serious debts, length of time in that community. Include also description of current jobs of both parents and length of time at the job.

e) Community:

Clubs, groups, sports, etc. of family members.

f) Interests:

Use of spare time by family members.

8. ASSESSED STRENGTHS (What will enable your work with this youth and his/her offence - i.e. what is there for you to work with)

- a) Mother: Enumerate any factors that you feel are strengths in relationship to dealing with the youth and his/her offence.
- b) Father: Enumerate any factors that you feel are strengths in relationship to dealing with the youth and his/her offence.
- c) Youth: Enumerate any factors that you feel are strengths in relationship to dealing with the youth and his/her offence. For example: ability to articulate well, express emotions appropriately, school and/or work success, stable peer group with positive influence, participation in structured community activities, family and community supports, etc.
- d) Other situations or factors that you consider strengths.

.../

9. ASSESSED LIABILITIES (What will impede your work with this youth and his/her offence)

- a) Mother: Enumerate any factors that you feel are liabilities in relationship to dealing with the youth and his/her offence.
- b) Father: Enumerate any factors that you feel are liabilities in relationship to dealing with the youth and his/her offence.
- c) Youth: Enumerate any factors that you feel are liabilities in relationship to dealing with the youth and his/her offence. For example: his/her reaction to lack of continuity of care, unstable family history, lack of success in school or work, learning disabilities, illness or handicaps (both medical and/or psychiatric), lack of friends, involvement in peer groups with negative values, lack of interest, substance abuse, etc.
- d) Other situations or factors that you consider liabilities.

10. SUMMARY

Outline your overall impressions of the youth with facts (examples) to support your views.

11. RECOMMENDATION AND REASONS FOR DISPOSITION

- a) List all the factors that you have considered, both pro and con.
- b) Outline your recommendations with reasons for your decision.

12. PROGNOSIS

Indicate how successful you think the measures that you have recommended will be and why.

What is the risk you see of recidivism by this youth.

HD/1k
86.04.14 (date of typing)

Appendix 6: Guidelines for the Predisposition Report.

Date:

PREDISPOSITION REPORT

NAME:

D.O.B.:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

PRESENT LOCATION:

FAMILY COMPOSITION

Mother:

D.O.B.: where possible

Address:

Telephone:

Occupation:

Father:

D.O.B.:

Address: where possible

Telephone:

Occupation:

Siblings: where possible

Worker

Date of Intake:

Court Status: (e.g. Awaiting predisposition report; date of decision; Judge's name

A) SUMMARY OF OFFENCES

1) a) Description of charges

- adolescent's involvement in offence;
- precipitating factors;
- police's version;

b) Adolescent's Version

- Adolescent's version of the facts;
- Adolescent's attitude regarding offences;
- Adolescent's willingness to make amends;

c) Parents' Version

- Parents version of the facts;
- Parents attitude;
- Measures taken by parents following offence;

d) Victim's version

- When possible and appropriate;

2) a) Official antecedents

- Summary of prior delinquencies for which the Court was seized either under the old Juvenile Delinquency Act or the new Young Offenders Act and provincial and municipal laws for which the adolescent was found guilty.

b) Prior Alternatives Measures

- Summary of Alternative measures undertaken in the past with the adolescent and his parents and the results obtained following such a contract.

B) ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT

- 1) Describe the adolescent according to age, maturity, character, and personality.
 - 2) Evaluate adolescent's degree of motivation and his capacity to curb his delinquent behaviour.
 - 3) Assess any plans put forward by the adolescent to change his conduct or to participate in activities or undertake measure to improve himself.
-

C) ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT'S SOCIAL SITUATION

1) School/Work

- Report on school attendance and performance record;
- Report on employment record;
- * - Describe any significant factors on how the adolescent relates with peers, teachers, employers.

2) Lifestyle

- Adolescent's recreational activities;
 - * - Types of individuals or groups with whom adolescent socializes;
 - Consumption of drugs or alcohol.
-

D) FAMILY ASSESSMENT

- 1) Assess relationship and dynamics between adolescent and parents;
 - * 2) Assess sibling interaction;
 - 3) Assess degree of control and influence of parents over adolescent;
 - * 4) Assess family's potential in aiding the adolescent to curb his problematic behaviour.
-

E) SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

* 1) Summary

- The summary should give a global picture of the adolescent's evolution and of his interactions with his family and social milieu in order to help the court understand the adolescent's involvement in delinquencies.

2) Recommendations

a) The recommendations to the court must take into account:

- the availability of resources, community services, and facilities;
- the adolescent's potential to follow through with the recommendation;
- the recommendation must focus on correcting the delinquent situation;
- the recommendation must be clear, justifiable, concrete and operational.

b) The recommendation must remain within the Judge's possible dispositions (as per article 20 of the Young Offenders Act):

- the adolescent may be discharged absolutely (case closed);
- the adolescent may be fined no more than \$1000.00;
- the adolescent may be ordered to financially compensate the victim for loss of income, loss of property, injury.
- Restitution: the adolescent may be ordered to replace stolen property or repair damages.
- If restitution is not possible the adolescent may be ordered to repay the victim according to the cost of the lost or damaged property.
- The adolescent may be ordered to compensate the victim by way of personal services;
- The adolescent may be ordered to do community work (no more than 240 hours which must not extend over 1 year).
- The court may make an order of prohibition, seizure or forfeiture.
- The court may order that an adolescent be detained in a hospital for treatment purposes; if adolescent, parents and hospital agree.
- The adolescent may be ordered on probation (see art. 23 for possible conditions of probation).
- The court may commit an adolescent to custody, to be served continuously or intermittently (eg. weekends), for a period not exceeding two years; or three years if under the Criminal Code the punishment for the offence is imprisonment for life.
- Any other reasonable conditions as it deems advisable with regards to the best interests of society and the adolescent.

* This indicates what would be appropriate to include in a predisposition report but is not called for under article 14 of the Young Offenders Act.

Appendix 7: Sample of rough notes from client interview.

Physical change - grew a lot
Tough kid now

Good kid, no problems there
late, absent but not bad

This year developed throughness
body + attitude with peers
with a group, fairly tough one

↳ Personally likes him
Comes from fairly good home
Saw tremendous change since grade 7

No problems with adults
When in offence with him princ because
late & absent. Would say sick, cold etc.
Mother on protective side.

Teacher were ^{glad} happy to see him strengthened
since 2y. to stand up for himself
Solidly built now

→ With teacher, principal & authority
figures is quiet, inhibited, other
side of himself when with peers.

Appendix 8: Sample Progress Notes.

Client: K. M.

Worker: [REDACTED]

Case Number:

PROGRESS NOTES - OPEN ACTIVE ONLY

TYPES OF CONTACT

Interview	: I	Correspondence	: C
Visit	: V	Court	: CT
Telephone Call	: T	Other	: O

Date	Type of Contact	Place	Persons Involved	Service Rendered
6 July 87	—	—	—	CASE ASSIGNED for predispo due August 5 th
6 July 87	tel	home	mother	Initial interview set for July 13, 11:30.
6 July 87	tel	Station 33 [REDACTED]	Cat. [REDACTED]	He informs me that 1 gr is approximately \$1.25 on the street today; therefore the 24 grams would be approx \$42.00.
9 July 87	home visit	home	mother & K.	Mother covers for K. "all's fine - he's good boy" K. very evasive - Changes stories re: school, offence, work - Claims to stay in most of time since offence - Denies possession of drugs (although he's been found guilty); says it belonged to friend. General attitude: indifferent. Next appt: 13 July [REDACTED]

Appendix 9: Sophie's Predisposition Report (Louis Crane) .

**Centre de services sociaux Ville Marie
Ville Marie Social Service Centre**

PROTECTION DE LA JEUNESSE — YOUTH PROTECTION
SERVICES A LA COUR — COURT SERVICES
6161 RUE ST DENIS ST CHAMBRE 340 A MONTREAL H2S 2R5 — 273 9533

June 4, 1991

PREDISPOSITION REPORTIDENTIFYING INFORMATION:

- . Family Name: C[REDACTED], [REDACTED]
- . D.O.B.: [REDACTED].07.01
- . Address: 1991 [REDACTED] [REDACTED], Apt #1
Montreal, Quebec
- . Telephone Number: [REDACTED]
- . Present Location: Home
- . Language(s) spoken: English

LEGAL INFORMATION:

- . Court Status: Awaiting Predisposition Report
- . Decision Date: June [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- . Legal File Number(s): 500-03-000[REDACTED]-[REDACTED]
- . Presiding Judge: The Honourable [REDACTED]

. . . /2

Predisposition Report

Page 2

[REDACTED], [REDACTED] - [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

COURT SERVICES INFORMATION:

- . Worker: [REDACTED] - Criminologist
- . Point of Service: Montreal Court Services
- . Date of Report: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

FAMILY COMPOSITION:

Blended, mother divorced (from [REDACTED] father since over 10 years), mother has legal custody.

- . Mother: (Biological) [REDACTED]
d.o.b.: 1948.05.10
Address: [REDACTED], #1
Montreal, Quebec
Tel. No.: [REDACTED]
Occupation: House manager
- . Father: (Biological) [REDACTED]
d.o.b.: 1943.04.25
Address: Toronto
Tel. No.: unknown
Occupation: Tile Setter
- . Stepfather: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
d.o.b.: 1947.11.11
Occupation: unemployed
Common-law husband for the past 8 years.
- . Siblings: [REDACTED], 19 y.o. - home, student
[REDACTED], 15 y.o. - our subject
[REDACTED], 11 y.o. - home, student
[REDACTED], 10 y.o. - home student
[REDACTED], 6½ y.o. - home, student

. . . /3

Predisposition Report
[REDACTED] - [REDACTED]

Page 3

BASIS OF REPORT:

On May [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] appeared before Judge [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and pleaded guilty on a count of robbery which occurred on October [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. The Judge postponed her decision to June [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and ordered that a predisposition report be available to the Court on that date.

This worker was assigned to prepare the said report on May [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

The information conveyed in this report was gathered from the following sources:

- . A three (3) hours interview with [REDACTED] and his mother on May [REDACTED], [REDACTED];
- . Another interview for two (2) hours with [REDACTED] alone on May [REDACTED], [REDACTED];
- . A two hours home visit on June 1st, 1988;
- . Phonecalls were made to: - Mr. [REDACTED], vice-principal for grade 10 at [REDACTED] on May [REDACTED], [REDACTED];
 - To [REDACTED], guidance counsellor at the same school also on May [REDACTED], [REDACTED].
 - The victim D.H. on May [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and to his friend O.C. the same day.

. This worker also consulted the precis de police, the adolescent's school report card and tested the adolescent with the Jesness inventory, the P.E.N.D., the S.O. and the Heimler scale of social functioning.

A) SUMMARY OF OFFENCE

1. Description of charge:

On May [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] pleaded guilty on the following count before Judge [REDACTED] of the Montreal Youth Court:

"On, or around October [REDACTED], [REDACTED], in Montreal district of Montreal, committed the robbery of a sum of money belonging to D.H. thus, committing the criminal act described in article 303 of the Criminal Code".

2. Adolescent's Version:

[REDACTED] told this worker that October [REDACTED], [REDACTED], was a day off from school. The youth claims that he went to the [REDACTED] Arcade alone to play, because none of his friends were available that day. [REDACTED] stated that he had never been in this arcade before, and that it was almost deserted when he walked in.

Predisposition Report

Page 4

██████, ██████ - ██████, ██████

The youth said that while he was wandering to find a new game to play, he was approached by two older guys who told him "Come in the back for a second". ██████ explained that the "back" of the arcade was only twenty feet away from where he stood, so he became curious and figured that there might be a special game there or something else of interest.

When he arrived in the back, ██████ said that there was only two boys playing on machines. It was then that one of the guys asked the two boys for a quarter. The boys replied that they had no money. One of the big guys asked ██████: "You check them out". ██████ claims that he was intimidated because the two guys were bigger so he complied and searched the pockets of one boy. ██████ remembers that one of the two boy was punched in the stomach by a guy but does not remember which boy nor when it happened. ██████ removed the wallet of the boy he had searched and handed it to one of the guys who removed the money from it and gave 5.00\$ to ██████. This older guy kept the rest of the money, dropped the wallet and ran away with his accomplice. ██████ stated that the two victims followed them outside and that he was left alone in the arcade so he decided to go back home.

██████ did not tell anybody about what had happened and was arrested two months later at the Atwater Metro after being recognized by one of the victims.

3. Attitude:

██████ could not describe what had happen very accurately and believes he could not even recognize any of the persons involved in this incident today. The youth claims that he had no idea of what was going to happen when he was asked to step in the back by the two men who approached him and stated that he realized what was going on, only when one of them asked the boys for money. ██████ said that he did not attempt to run and that he complied with the man's order to search the boy because the built of these two older guys was enough for him to feel threatened. ██████ believes that they recruited him to outnumber their victims, and that the guy gave him the five dollar because he had searched the boy for them. When asked why he had not informed the police or his parents, ██████ answered that he "did not want to make a big deal out of this".

4. Parent's Version:

Mrs. ██████ told this worker that on December ██████, ██████, she received a phone call from the police saying that ██████ was at the station and had been involved in a robbery at an arcade. The mother stated that she was eager to see ██████ arrive home and when he did, she asked him what had happened. At that moment, her son apparently told her the same version as the one conveyed in this report. Mrs. ██████ states that she was confused about her son's story, and could not understand why ██████ felt threatened. She told him that he just had to say "NO. It's not my policy" and leave the premises. The mother did not impose any measures on ██████ in view of the role he played in the offence and also because the police had told her that she would receive Court papers in the mail.

. . . /5

Predisposition Report

Page 5

5. Victim's Version:

D.H. told this worker that he was in Canada since only four (4) months when this incident occurred. He stated that he did not have any school on October [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and went downtown with his friend O.C. where he was suppose to meet his own father to purchase a pool table as his birthday gift. He arrived too early to meet his father so the two boys went to "kill some time" in the [REDACTED] Arcade. At some point three black boys - 1 tall and two average size - approached them and asked for a quarter. They replied that they did not have any quarters and the tallest of the three, told another to search him. The black boy searched him and took his wallet. D.H. said he tried to get it back and that is when the tallest of the group who was watching came and punched him in the stomach. The boy who searched him removed the money from the wallet and gave it to the tall guy, who ran out with the money. Then the boy who searched him apparently told D.H. that he would go to catch the tall one for them and ran out with the third one. D.H. stated that he stayed there because he was too afraid to follow them, and waited with his friend for an hour to report the incident to a passing patrol car.

D.H. was hoping that he could get his 85.00\$ back since this money was sent to him for his birthday from an uncle living abroad, and once put together with his father's money it was suppose to buy him a pool table that he never got because of this incident.

D.H. also stated that he was not seriously hurt by the punch he received in the stomach and that inspite of this adventure, is not scared of going in arcades. The youth explained that he would never allow something like this to happen again because now that he has more friends he would know how to react that is to fight for his property.

6. Official Antecedents

None

7. Prior Alternative Measures

None

B) ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT

[REDACTED] is a 15.1 year old mulatto adolescent of average size and built.

. . . /6

Predisposition Report

Page 6

██████, ██████ - ██████, ██████

During the interviews ██████ was cooperative but constantly sought this worker's directions in answering the questions, as if he wanted to say only what he thought this worker wanted to hear. His difficulty to verbalize increased when the topic was calling for personal feelings or opinions on the actual offence. This discomfort was almost absent when discussing facts or non-threatening subjects.

The results obtained by ██████ in the various criminometric instruments were, for the most part, non significant or at least not revealing of a delinquent or problematic personality. The results however suggest a low level of maturity as well as a tendency to repress or suppress unpleasant feelings. The youth is apparently satisfied with every aspects of his life and possesses a strong sense of self-esteem. This might explain why ██████ is quite uncritical of himself and of others. When asked what he could improve in his personality, ██████ could only think of his height, since he wants to become a great basketball player.

In short, ██████ is an immature 15 year old youth who has good emotional adjustment but who lacks insight and affects which keep his speech at the superficial level of facts.

██████ believes that he will never run into troubles again and stated that he has learnt from this experience that Arcades are not a safe place to be. The youth expressed the opinion that a fair measure for his involvement would be a probation without any follow-up since there are no chances of him getting into more troubles in the future.

C) ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT'S SOCIAL SITUATION

. School:

██████ attends the ██████ in grade 10. The youth is at the appropriate academic level for his age, his attendance is regular and his marks are within the average for the three main subjects, whereas his results for optional ones are below the passing mark.

Mr. ██████, vice-principal for grade 10, students, perceives ██████ as an unmotivated youth who is not doing very well, and who is disruptive in class. The vice-principal claims that ██████ is a very "mouthy" adolescent but also a smart one who is able to remain within the limits of tolerance of the school to avoid being suspended.

Mrs. ██████, guidance counsellor at the ██████ has a very different perception of ██████. She believes that ██████ is a very open and friendly youth who is constantly on the move and who likes to be surrounded by friends. The adolescent came to see her in order to explore his future academic orientation and apparently signs up everytime there is a special activity in school.

Predisposition Report

Page 7

██████████ - ██████████

. Work:

██████████ has no record of employment as of today.

The adolescent expressed the idea of getting himself a job this summer in order to earn just enough money to get by. ██████████ stated that he does not need much money to be happy.

. Lifestyle:

██████████ does not consume drugs or alcohol.

According to the mother, ██████████ would have many friends. Mrs. ██████████ knows her son's acquaintances and approves of most of them. The mother told this worker that ██████████ does not pose any discipline problem at home. He respects his curfews and usually lets her know when he cannot be home on time.

During schooltime, ██████████ goes to play basketball with his friends at the ██████████ every Mondays and Fridays. This place is however closed for the summer and ██████████ is now considering going to a Catholic camp for the two first weeks of July.

D) FAMILY ASSESSMENT

Mrs. ██████████ lives with her common-law husband and her five children in a nice apartment of the South Centre of Montreal. The family members appear to be very united to one another and both parental figures contribute to the household as well as the discipline of the children.

██████████ claims to get along well with his brother and sisters, particularly with Wanda who is the oldest. Mrs. ██████████ stated that ██████████ is a very quiet and soft boy who thinks more than he talks at home. The mother claims that ██████████ respects her rules even though he does not always obey immediately when asked to do something. She also believes that her son is too lax about his studies.

Mr. ██████████ participates in the upbringing of the children and even went to ██████████ school to discuss ██████████ problems with the vice-principal. The mother believes that her husband can be quite demanding towards ██████████ but that it is mostly to avoid him to make certain mistakes Mr. ██████████ made when he, himself was about ██████████ age. The youth acknowledges the fact that his step-father is sometimes "picking on him" but says that this does not bother him.

. . . /8

Predisposition Report

Page 8

██████, ██████ - ██████, ██████

E) SUMMARY

██████ is a 15.11 year old adolescent who comes to the attention of the Court for the first time in relation with a charge of Robbery which occurred last October ██████. The youth has no antecedent and no other offences were committed by him since then.

No major areas of concerns could be identified in this adolescent's life which could explain his involvement or reaction with regards to the actual matter. ██████ is attending school regularly even though he might experience some difficulties with certain academic subjects and/or teachers but his situation is far from being alarming. The youth is involved in healthy sporting activities and benefits from the support of adequate and caring family.

F) RECOMMENDATION

In view of the information contained in the actual report but more specifically considering:

1. The age of commission of the offence (15.3 y.o.)
2. That this is a first offence
3. That the youth is under control at home
4. That he is attending school regularly

but also considering:

5. The accessory but nevertheless active role played by ██████ in the commission of the offence
6. The seriousness of the offence
7. The dubious circumstances of ██████ involvement in the offence and
8. The fact that he never reported this crime to anybody prior to his arrest,

This worker believes that even though the parental controls are adequate, ██████ would benefit from being supervised by a six (6) month probation with follow-up, in which a formal interdiction to go to any arcade should be included according to the mother's request.

In addition, ██████ could perform a suggested number of thirty (30) hours of community work as an incentive to make better use of his sparetime while reminding him that getting involved in an offence even without the intention to do so, is not to be encouraged.

It is believed that if ██████ feels the supervision of the probation and an additional concrete consequence on his life (like the community work) he might learn from this experience and avoid getting involved in future offences.

. . . /9

Predisposition Report

Page 9

Please the Court to receive these recommendations and to dispose of them in whatever way it will consider to be in the best interest of the youth and of society.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] - Criminologist
Youth Worker
Montreal Court Services