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Secrets of the self: The reconceptualization of gender-role identity in contemporary Latter-day Saint women

by

Kelli Jo Kerry Moran

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Major Professor: Jackie Marie Blount

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Major Professor

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For the Major Program

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For the Graduate College
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the resolution of gender role conflict in female members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Contemporary women are faced with contradictory pressures as they strive to develop gender-role identity. As a highly patriarchal religion, cultural pressures within the LDS church increase the paradox surrounding gender roles as women are encouraged to follow traditional gender role patterns. Women with ambitions and talents that do not fall within traditional role expectations are challenged to develop independent conceptions of their gender-role identity. Paradox in gender roles and gender-role identity results in fragmenting of the self as women strive to find balance between their religious teachings and their sense of self. Personal conflict is resolved as women develop gender-role identities based on personal knowledge, study, and revelation. This research focuses on two contemporary LDS women and has been carried out using case study and oral history methodology.

As an active, lifelong member of the LDS church and a woman, I also explore issues surrounding subjectivity in insider research. Additionally arts-based research is used as a method of representation in the form of two one woman, one act plays. Arts-based inquiry as a form of methodology is also discussed.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The woman behind the desk shifted. Her eyes caught me and she said, “the issue should not be so much how should a woman or a man behave, but how should an individual behave.” We were talking about women’s place in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, Mormon, hereafter also referred to as “church”). The two of us, both women and active members of the LDS church let the words run through us. We were separated by age, status, and occupation, but we shared a common pain. We felt devalued within our church’s system. We felt confused by the conflicting messages that surrounded us. Yet amid this confusion we knew that regardless of what we thought, or perhaps how little we understood, the issue was still very much how should a woman or how should a man behave.

Background

As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a woman, creating harmony out of the complexity of my life has not been easy. Women continue to struggle against negative stereotypes and prejudices, and I have often felt that I had to be better than the best to justify my gender both within my Church and society at large. Often I wondered why the positions of power in the Church were always held by men. I tried hard to understand how men and women were equally important and equally valued. Sometimes I succeeded. Most often I failed. However, I have always felt loved and esteemed by God. And I have never felt belittled by Him.

Self examination disclosed that while I was troubled by Church structures oppressive to women, my religion was also my greatest source of self esteem and courage to excel in non-traditional roles. I saw other Mormon women who
possessed the strength of independence and spoke with many women confident in their intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical equality to men. These women were not downtrodden by oppression nor was I. Like Amina Mama (1995), a black woman who writes about black women in higher education, I started my research with preliminary ideas about the education of LDS women based on my observations and experiences as an LDS woman. I believe LDS women often reconcile the sexist role definitions of the Church in ways that promote independence and diversity. This is the reason why I have chosen to undertake the topic of examining the educational reconciliation of Latter-day Saint Women.

Literature largely focuses on Mormon women as oppressed and the LDS Church as an oppressive religion. While scholars have condemned the institutional oppression of the Church and the male dominated organization, most have not attempted to understand the Mormon woman from her perspective, to hear her voice as she interprets her life and purpose. This phenomenon is not unique to the study of Mormon women but is evident in many studies of women in conservative, patriarchal religions. Pevey, Williams, and Ellison (1996) acknowledge this criticism and recognize that current feminist research attempts to understand women's association with patriarchal organizations from the women's perspective. There is little question that men dominate the institutional organization of the LDS Church, and women's institutional role is small by comparison. Yet Mormon women continue to display behaviors of devoted religious women (Mauss, 1994; Seamons, 1993; Charles, 1987; Anderson, 1986; Evans, 1985). Most studies of Mormon women stop at this point, failing to deeply explore the non-institutional lives of LDS women. If Mormon women are largely excluded from institutional church
responsibilities, how do they define their lives, purpose, and relationship to their religion? If woman's voice is nearly absent from the institutional church, perhaps an institutional study is not a good way to hear it. When Mormon women do in fact speak, the relationships they express between themselves and their religion are far different from the oppressive, disengaged story that is often told (Beck, 1994; Warner, 1996; Ulrich, 1994; Seamons, 1993). Like the Southern Baptist women studied by Pevey et al., Mormon women "experience ambivalence, contradictions and complexities in their religious beliefs" (p. 175) that they synthesize in such a way to create dignity, individuality, and self worth within the male dominated framework of the LDS religion. This study is my attempt to listen to Mormon women's voices and hear their stories of reconciliation—how they reconcile their religion with their broader life education. Like Suzanne Riches (1987) I have felt a rift developing between myself and Mormon culture and hope that by studying two women's development within that culture, I might better understand and interpret the dynamics between my Mormon upbringing and my life experiences. I wish to make it plain that this dissertation is social science research and not a theological critique. The LDS church is not democratic and theological issues are not subject to change based on sociological critique. However, this research may benefit Mormons and non-Mormons in understanding how the theology and culture of the LDS church influence contemporary LDS women.

Gender is a broadly defined term with many different meanings. These differences in meaning make gender study problematic as we may lack a common language with which to discuss the many areas surrounding sexuality and gender. Hawksworth (1997) provides a clear description of the terminology used by feminist researchers.
Although usage varies from text to text, most feminist scholars would grant that there are important conceptual differences between sex construed in biological terms; sexuality understood to encompass sexual practices and erotic behavior; sexual identity referring to designations such as heterosexual, homosexual/gay/lesbian/queer, bisexual, or asexual; gender identity as a psychological sense of oneself as a man or a woman; gender role as a set of prescriptive, culture-specific expectations about what is appropriate for men and women; and gender-role identity—a concept devised to capture the extent to which a person approves of and participates in feelings and behaviors deemed to be appropriate to his or her culturally constituted gender. (p. 656)

Throughout this dissertation I will focus on gender role as culture-specific expectations and the evolving gender-role identity of my two research participants.

While my research does not represent the diversity of LDS women as a whole, it does represent the diversity inherent in my respondents (Reinharz, 1992). As such, this study has broader value in contributing to our understanding of individual constructions of gender-role identity. Probyn (1993) states that the self is the process of being gendered and the project of putting that process into discourse. She goes on to add that the gendering process must be theorized in order to understand its full strength. A study of the gendering process of Mormon women contributes to this broad goal. Furthermore, if we wish to better understand gender roles it is important to study them theoretically in addition to descriptively (Mama, 1995) so that we might have hope for improving the way our culture deals with gender. In addition, reading about oppressed groups may help readers find connections between themselves and
the group (Richardson, 1990 as cited in Barone, 1995). I am hopeful that this dissertation will help to remove some of the mystery surrounding Mormon women.

Methods

I choose to explore gender-role identity conflict in contemporary LDS women by focusing in-depth on the experiences of two LDS women. I had only three items of criteria in selecting respondents for my research. First, I wanted to explore gender conflict of women thoroughly entrenched in LDS culture so I limited my selection to women who were active participants in the LDS church. Second, I limited my search to middle-aged women because it was important to work with women who had lived long enough to have the opportunity to thoroughly and repeatedly engage with issues of gender roles. Third, I had noted that most research on contemporary LDS women is conducted with women who live in areas where Latter-day Saints represent the major portion of the religious population. Since most LDS women live in areas where they are the religious minority, I believe it is important to do research with LDS women who have spent most of their lives living in predominantly non-LDS communities. Finally, because I knew I would be exploring issues that were sensitive and working with women who were older than me I wanted to be able to approach these women from a friendly yet somewhat professional standpoint. Consequently, I did not approach women with whom I already had a close relationship or a great deal of contact.

Using these criteria, and the not so small detail of finding women who were willing to invest significant time and energy, I selected two participants from the mid-west. I use the pseudonyms Eliza and Hannah for these women and pseudonyms are used to refer to all individuals mentioned in this work
with the exception of cited researchers, authors, and international LDS church leaders. This research has been carried out using case study and oral history methodology. However, while this research does contain historical perspective, the narratives of Hannah and Eliza tell much about their present. How we choose to construct our stories indicates how we situate ourselves within our current context (Smith, 1987). Consequently, this research explores the process of gender-role identity as it evolves. Informal, face-to-face interviews conducted over a year and a half provide my primary data source. However, my desire to interpret women's experiences within the context of Mormon culture has compelled me to supplement this data with informal observations and LDS materials such as talks by church leaders, lesson manuals, and LDS publications. Quotations come directly from interview transcripts although they have been edited for clarity. Member checking and peer debriefing have been rigorously applied to ensure the trustworthiness of this research.

LDS Beliefs

O my Father, thou that dwellest
In the high and glorious place,
When shall I regain thy presence
And again behold thy face?
In thy holy habitation,
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood,
Was I nurtured near thy side? (Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985 p. 292)

The complex and layered nature of human experience also means that in order to make an honest attempt to understand Mormon women, we must
know something about Mormonism. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a Christian religion. Members of the church are expected to keep the Ten Commandments as given in the Old Testament in addition to latter-day commandments peculiar to the LDS church. These latter-day commandments include a revelation given to Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith on February 27, 1833. The revelation is commonly called "The Word of Wisdom" and is a revelation that commands Latter-day Saints to care for their bodies. The most direct result of this revelation is that Mormons are required to abstain from alcohol, tobacco, coffee, and tea. The entire text of the revelation is in the 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants (1981). Joseph Smith also wrote a statement of LDS beliefs that is still used by the church. This set of thirteen belief statements is called the "Articles of Faith" and is reproduced in Appendix A. An additional and vital part of Mormon doctrine is the priesthood. Latter-day Saints believe that the church is a restoration of the biblical gospel that was organized and preached by Jesus Christ. Following Christ's crucifixion, His church fell into apostasy. The LDS church purports to be the restoration of this gospel complete with the priesthood power held by Christ and His disciples. Varying levels of the priesthood are held by worthy Mormon boys and men ages 12 and up, but women are not permitted to hold the priesthood. The priesthood governs all spiritual and organizational aspects of the LDS church. Latter-day Saint beliefs in a present day prophet, contemporary revelation, the word of wisdom, and a widely held and exclusively male priesthood combine to set the LDS religion apart from other Christian faiths.

Much of what Latter-day Saints collectively believe is portrayed in the poem and song, "O My Father," a portion of which is given at the beginning of

1 For a discussion of LDS women and the priesthood see Peterson, 1987.
this section. Latter-day Saints believe that all people are the literal spirit children of divine parents. Life on earth is a testing period to see if we can learn to manage the passions of our physical bodies and resist temptation so that we will be obedient to all righteous principles. If we succeed, we will return to live again with God as we progress towards becoming gods and goddesses like our heavenly parents. This is the Latter-day Saint goal and it depends on education—learning who we are, why we are here, and where we are going. But understanding the purpose of our existence is not a simple task, and each generation of Latter-day Saint women has struggled to define themselves within an eternal gospel, a dynamic church, and turbulent world. We all exist within macro and micro cultures and one cannot expect to understand Latter-day Saint women without trying to see them through the context of their lived experiences.

The experiences of my two research participants cannot represent the totality of LDS womanhood. They aren’t meant to. However, understanding how each woman has reconciled her place as an LDS woman with her personal beliefs and membership in the wider community adds to our understanding of the complexity of the religious female experience. Research paints a surprising picture of women who broadly interpret their roles within conservative, patriarchal faiths (Anderson, 1986; Evans, 1985; Pevey et al., 1996). Understanding the sociological education of individual LDS woman is a step towards better understanding how femininity is shaped within Mormon culture.

Oral History Research

Our definitions of ourselves and our lives change throughout the acts of living. Our personal histories are necessarily meshed with our cultures, values, and experiences. Etter-Lewis (1993) writes that, "Oral history...is not exclusively history, but also sociology, political science, literature, linguistics, anthropology,
and a host of other fields. An individual's account of her/his own life is not just personal, but also social, historical, political, and so on" (p. xiii). Etter-Lewis goes on to explain that the researcher can not be separated from her research. For this work it means that my influence as researcher, as sister in the gospel, as friend, and as young person cannot be divorced from the telling of my respondent's stories (Krieger, 1991). It also means that their experiences as LDS girls and women cannot be removed from their experiences as Americans, or mothers, or any of the other influences that may be part of their lives. It also means that as a researcher, I am subject to the influences my Mormon background and life experiences bring to this research. Lastly it means that while this methodology is devoid of any perceived preciseness, it is rich with the complexity of lived experience. A life is more than the sum of its parts.

**Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation will explore the ways in which contemporary LDS women resolve gender role conflict and the implications this holds for education. I also use this dissertation as an opportunity to experiment with arts-based inquiry as methodology and performance as a vehicle to present research. This chapter is an introduction to my research and the context in which it has been conducted. The implications of my position as a Latter-day Saint woman researching the lives of other Latter-day Saint women is the topic of Chapter 2. Researching as an insider is in itself a controversial issue, but positioning the researcher self within inquiry is an obligation of all qualitative researchers. My perspective as insider and my experiences as researcher are explored so that my researcher self, the origin of these interpretations, may be better understood.
Chapter 3 is a deconstruction of femininity in the LDS church and is a historical analysis of the place of women within the church from its organization until the present day. This chapter provides the necessary context for understanding how modern-day conceptions of femininity have been formulated within LDS culture.

Chapter 4 is the text for a one woman show based on the life history interviews with my respondent Eliza. Within the dissertation text the play provides context to sustain the proceeding analysis of the life history narratives. However, the play also serves two other important purposes. The first is to make the information and issues raised in this work accessible to a broader audience. Secondly, dramatic performance provides a medium through which the context surrounding Eliza’s life may be communicated on a physical and emotional level.

Chapter 5 is the analysis of Eliza’s life history narratives. The narratives are particularly examined for the information they reveal about gendered expectations and development in Eliza’s life.

Chapter 6 is the text for the one woman show about my respondent Hannah. This chapter serves similar purposes as the one woman play about Eliza.

Chapter 7 is the analysis of Hannah’s life history narratives as they relate to gendered expectations and development. Hannah’s perceptions of gender roles are explored through a historical framework of learned constructs of femininity, resistance to those constructs, and finally the formulation of new constructs of femininity.

Chapter 8 is a discussion of performance formats in research. In this chapter I argue that arts-based approaches to research serve representative as well
as methodological purposes. Arts-based representations of research enable audiences and researchers to explore different, often more emotive, aspects of study. Artistic processes may also help researchers gain insight or diverse perspectives on the phenomenon of interest.

Chapter 9 is a discussion of concluding thoughts on LDS women’s gender-role identity. Attributes of Hannah and Eliza’s experiences are examined for suggestions of how independent gender-role identities may be developed for LDS women. Finally, I explore the implications of this research for me as an LDS woman and for my gender-role identity. Further suggestions for research are made.
CHAPTER 2. RESEARCHING AS AN INSIDER

...when a subject is highly controversial—and any question about sex is that—one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one’s audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker. (Woolf, 1929 p. 2)

Introduction

A few years ago I composed a poem while struggling to write a dissertation proposal that would satisfy my yearning for meaning in my work and the demands of my department. The poem itself seems insignificant now. But at the time it was monumental in expressing how I felt. The words embodied my frustration in trying to find a topic that connected with my life. I eventually changed my dissertation topic to a study of women’s roles in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (often known as Mormons or LDS). Studying Mormon women satisfies the desires I expressed in my poem, but it also brings up issues of researcher roles. I am a life long member of the LDS church. I engage in this research to answer questions in my own life about my relationship to my religion. I am inside this research emotionally, culturally, spiritually. My subjectivity is spread throughout this work so that there is no semblance of traditional objectivity. I am an “insider,” a “native” researching in my own backyard.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss my position as an insider in researching the role of women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Issues of insider research may be approached from a variety of perspectives. I
choose to address insider research as it relates to ethics. Does a researcher’s insider status compromise her ability to see, hear, and tell what her respondents say with accuracy? My response to this question is grounded in the concepts of researcher objectivity and subjectivity.

**History of the Insider Problem**

An insider is any person who maintains membership or identity with the group to be studied. The question of whether a researcher can ethically research a community to which she belongs is a question deeply rooted in the interpretivist paradigm. However, this concern has roots in the positivistic notion of objectivity. Pure objectivity, the ideal of removing all bias from research, makes insider status problematic because a researcher with an established relationship to the people studied has beliefs and ideas about those people before beginning the study. This skepticism of an insider's ability to tell the “truth” is linked with issues of power and domination. Haraway (1988) talks about how scientific objectivity has given the scientist the right to speak from nowhere—to be bodiless and unaccountable while the objectified, or those studied, have been unable to make knowledge claims because of their situatedness. Insider research is taboo within this framework. How can a scientist who is part of an objectified “body” under study, still have an omniscient perspective? Harding (1991) discusses how power and knowledge are linked to objectivity stating that objectivity “permits scientists and science institutions to be unconcerned with the origins or consequences of their problematics and practices, or with the social values and interests that these problematics and practices support” (p. 147). Insider perspectives elevated to the status of respected research threaten the hegemonic perspective as insider’s social values and interests are given voice.
However, the qualitative paradigm rejects positivism. If objectivity is a relic of positivism, do concerns about insider research crumble? While rejecting the possibility of obtaining pure objectivity, qualitative researchers do not simply throw issues of researcher bias to the wind. The qualitative researcher is herself an interpretive instrument. Issues of researcher bias become more critical because the qualitative researcher has no standardized instruments and statistical tests to hide behind. She stands exposed, with nothing but herself, theory, rigorous methodology, and ethics to which she may cling. The positivistic claim to objectivity is refashioned into what Harding (1991) calls “Strong Objectivity.”

Strong Objectivity is to “value the Other’s perspective and to pass over in thought into the social condition that creates—not in order to stay there, to ‘go native’ or merge the self with the Other, but in order to look back at the self in all its cultural particularity from a more distant, critical, objectifying location” (Harding, 1991, p. 151). Researchers are challenged to explore the relationships between themselves and Others rather than denying these relationships. Strong objectivity neither idealizes nor condemns insider research, but it problematizes research in such a way as to question all researchers’ beliefs and motivations. Researchers are forced to deconstruct themselves and their relationships to discover and confront the biases dominant in all human interaction.

While concerns over bias remain, concerns over colonialism and privilege push the pendulum to the other side as researchers debate who has the right to speak for whom. Issues of insider research have roots in colonialism. Narayan (1993) explores the background of "native" anthropology concerns in colonialism. Historically, social scientists have used the native as a vehicle for getting the insider's perspective. Eventually, some "natives" received university degrees in anthropology but even with social science degrees to back up the
insider perspective, the native, usually a person of color or a woman, was still regarded as a second class researcher, admitted to the ivy tower more as a vehicle for white male anthropologists to gather data than as a respected scholar. Nevertheless, anthropology is changing. Anthropologists formerly considered the "native" or "Other" have positions in academia. Anthropologists are increasingly studying their native cultures. But novice researchers are still advised to avoid research of groups to which they belong (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) because of the difficulty in separating private opinions from public truths. Suspicion of subjectivity remains.

Hooks (1995) discusses the criticism she has received for including personal experiences in her research. Although talking about pedagogy, not qualitative research, she contends that the stark separation academics encourage between public and private selves is intellectually damaging and politically repressive. If theory is to emerge from practice, there must be a bringing of what we consider private into the public sphere. And we must explore the connection between notions of keeping the personal out of research and the maintenance of patriarchal domination. Admitting the personal and subjective to research may threaten the dominance of power between institutions and the populace. Every person has a self; every individual has personal experience. When private experiences are given public legitimacy the possibilities for what positions may be legitimate and who may hold them are expanded. The power institutions hold in determining what is true and right in the world may consequently decrease. Yes, there is a movement to include the "native" but there is also suspicion of how the native may taint research (Bartunek & Louis, 1996; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984).
Scholars acknowledge that most research has placed the western white male as the ‘us’ talking about ‘them’ (Alcoff, 1995). In response to this power imbalance, some researchers have taken the extreme position that only insiders should speak because no outsider researcher can ever understand another culture well enough to really “get it right.” Alcoff discusses the reasons for this belief including researcher guilt for taking credit, making money, and gaining prestige by using the words of the Other. Many anthropologists are rightfully concerned about these power issues. Behar (1993) repeatedly talks about her personal struggle in dealing with the vast inequities between her life as a middle-class American white woman and the life of her respondent Esperanza, a poor Mexican peddler. Both Alcoff and Behar remain uneasy with the prospect of speaking for others but conclude that it is better to speak in behalf of Others than to have Other’s voices go unheard.

**Researcher Subjectivity**

The question of insider research is linked to notions of subjectivity and the place of the self in research. Krieger (1991) argues for the self in social science research, stating that “understanding others actually requires us to project a great deal of ourselves onto others, and onto the world at large. It also requires taking others into the self in an encompassing way” (p. 5). Krieger continues to demonstrate that the self is so much a part of what we know that a researcher can not separate her self from her interpretation. If this is true for all researchers, then arguments both against and for insider research essentially hold that only certain selves should do certain research. Such exclusionary dogma contradicts paradigms that strive to include multiple perspectives and expand the peaceful possibilities for how we see each other and our world.
Much has been written about the multidimensional and fluctuating qualities of the self (Alcoff, 1995; Bartunek & Louis, 1996; Mama, 1995; Narayan, 1993; Probyn, 1993; Stephenson & Greer, 1981). Mama writes that the self is “multiple, dynamic and continuously produced in the course of social relations that are themselves changing and at times contradictory” (p. 2). If subjectivity is not static, but is shaped by social interaction rather than unchanging human characteristics, the issue of whether one is an insider or an outsider does not become an issue of right or wrong, but is an issue of disclosure. A researcher must identify herself in relation to those with whom she studies. My insider status as a Mormon woman neither weakens nor strengthens my research; it defines it. Yet this definition is not permanent. My relationship to studying Mormon women changes as my interactions with those women change. All relationships between researchers and participants change throughout the study. As Narayan (1993) states, an outsider may become an insider and deserves respect as an individual who through intensive fieldwork has become bicultural. With the exception of autobiographical research, it is impossible for anyone to be a complete insider because of the multidimensionality of subjectivity. There will always be some aspect of human experience in which we differ.

However, subjectivity does not replace the gap left by objectivity. Reflexivity helps a researcher situate herself within her study, but reflexivity can not dismantle subjectivity so that the researcher is in control of her biases, freed from the fear of “getting it all wrong.” Heshusius (1994) argues that attempting to define what is subjective insinuates that we can separate something out of the self that is objective. By identifying subjectivity, we assume we can control it.

When researchers tell us (or themselves), here are the subjective parts of me that were involved in the research process, shouldn’t they also be able
to state what parts of them were not subjective? Are there parts of us that are not subjective? If so, are the not-subjective parts objective? If that is the case, then are we able to be objective after all, after we thought we had done away with it? If so, must I then assume that we have a reliable and/or objective way of knowing our subjectivity? The idea seems to be that we can construct what we call "subjectivity" as something more or less separate from ourselves, something we can be in charge of by the sheer force of trying to restrain "it," account for "it," and keep "it" under our management. (p. 16)

Heshusius goes on to say that understanding Others requires that we reach out to them with our whole person. We cannot split our subjectivity so that we only see through our "objective" lenses. We see, we hear, we analyze with our whole selves and no amount of reflexivity can remove subjectivity.

Adler and Adler (1987) state that all research is reflexive and therefore influenced by the researchers' biases and beliefs. A researcher must abandon theoretical baggage before undertaking inquiry to avoid theory becoming self-fulfilling prophecy. Yet how can reflexivity manage subjectivity so that we can see without the influence of theory? What lenses can we use to view the world that are devoid of theory? New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus (1991) defines theory as "supposition put forward to explain something; speculation; exposition of general principles as distinct from practice and execution; general idea; notion" (p. 392). Is it possible for a researcher to exist without ideas, notions, speculations for why things happen? Even in the most relaxed of non research situations, theories remain imbedded in our subconscious.

Some time ago I happened to be walking with a two-year-old experiencing the beginning of his first fall season as a walking, talking person. We saw a red
leaf on the side walk and he became upset. He picked up the leaf and looked around frantically. I was confused and wondered what was wrong. Within moments he spotted what he was looking for, ran off the path and placed the fallen leaf back into the foliage of a red bush. Relieved, he said to the bush, "there you go."

My two-year-old friend and I had very different theories for why and how that leaf got on the sidewalk. The two-year-old, knowing leaves belong on trees and bushes, thought the plant had lost it. He was understandably distressed. While I did not explicitly think about gravity and the cycle of seasons when I saw the leaf, my understanding of these theories prevented me from finding anything distressing in a fallen leaf. The point is that neither I nor my two-year-old friend could look at the leaf without some theory about how and why it was there. I believe that no amount of reflexivity could make it possible for me to see a fallen leaf devoid of the theories ingrained in me. But focusing on the actions, movement and wonder of my two-year-old companion made it possible for me to see how he interpreted a fallen leaf and participate in his wonder at the changing season and joy at returning a lost leaf.

This example is admittedly simple. But I think that simple observation and sharing of perspectives is what Heshusius (1994) is encouraging us to use. Reflexivity is important. Awareness of the beliefs I hold about why leaves fall from trees is important. But exclusive focus on my subjectivity might seduce me into thinking I could be objective and prevent me from participating with my two-year-old friend as we ran off the path, searched for other lost leaves, and returned them to the security of their leafy homes. What we need, as Heshusius argues, is a "participatory subjectivity" in which we consciously reach out with
our whole being to interact and learn through the synthesis of ourselves with
the Other.

Within this framework, insider status does not endanger research because
there is no attempt to "tame subjectivity" (Peshkin, 1988) so that it will not
interfere with getting it right. Knowing self is no more of a guide than removing
self if subjectivity is constrained by distance. Many would say that if we cannot
use the removal of self to guide research, we can at least control subjectivity
through distance. Heshusius (1994) argues that we can never distance
subjectivity because we are subjectivity. Knowing is not the result of appropriate
distance, it is the result of physical, mental, and spiritual participation. The
participatory mode is a state in which the researcher temporarily abandons
consciousness of the self to embrace consciousness of the other. The researcher
self is not lost, but is put aside as the researcher surrenders separateness and
authority for unity. Participatory consciousness allows researchers to gain more
complex understandings as their participation opens the door to concepts and
meanings that are not spoken or explicable by the people who hold them
(Heshusius, 1994).

However, we must be cautious about claiming too much for self-
reflection in ethnography, as Lawless (1993) argues against the exclusive use of
reflection in ethnography. Reflexive ethnography places the researcher in the
ethnographic spotlight. Lawless sees reflexive ethnography as becoming self
indulgent while reciprocal ethnography seeks dialog and negotiation between
researcher and participant. Neither Lawless nor Heshusius (1994) argue against
reflection in research. The ethnographer can no more be removed from the
ethnography than can those studied. Reflexivity is vital to positioning the
An insider's status does not provide the "authentic" perspective for which we might hope. Narayan (1993) talks about how as a child she understood how to act in her culture, but she could not explain the culture. She knew how to behave appropriately but in many instances she did not know why or at least was ignorant of how to analyze the social structure. She contends that reflecting on India through a social scientist's lens helped her come to new and deeper understandings of her culture. While members of cultures are able to interact within the culture, they may not analyze in such a way as to be able to theorize or deconstruct elements of the society. A native perspective of the culture is a vital asset, but it is not sufficient to create "better" work. Cultural perspective must be paired with deep, rigorous analysis to which insiders hold neither exclusive rights nor exclusive responsibility.

Obliviousness to the importance of methodological training has lead some social scientists to conclude that outsiders are better able to understand culture than are natives. Dauber (1995) discusses Malinowski's claim that the anthropologist knows more than the native, arguing that this knowledge is the result of methodological tools and analysis rather than superior intellect. Dauber calls fieldnotes, charts, and maps the "ethnographer's magic" stating that these are the means through which anthropologists cover the distance between themselves and those they study. Rigorous analysis and theory provide interpretive lenses for understanding culture, but these lenses may be used by both insiders and outsiders. The anthropological process is not necessarily better done by insiders; it is just different.
In some ways, the study of one's own society involves an inverse process from the study of an alien one. Instead of learning conceptual categories and then, through fieldwork, finding the contexts in which to apply them, those of us who study societies in which we have preexisting experience absorb analytic categories that rename and reframe what is already known. The reframing essentially involves locating vivid particulars within larger cultural patterns, sociological relations, and historical shifts. (Narayan, 1993, p. 678)

Bartunek and Louis (1996) relate the story of Lloyd Ryan, a Canadian educational administrator who had been raised in an isolated ocean-side community studied by several social scientists. As an adult Ryan attended the university and became acquainted with anthropological and sociological pictures painted of life in his community as noble and unselfish. This viewpoint did not speak true to Ryan’s experiences; however, he did not know why until he overheard a conversation between two men who were natives of the community. The men were talking about rebuilding a family’s house that had just burned down. One man said that they had to help rebuild the house because it might be his house burning next. This was the key for Ryan because it pointed out that in a community where few homes are insured, the community acts as insurance company, not out of selfless benevolence but out of self preservation. If the home had not been rebuilt the family would have had to move which would have meant fewer customers, fewer children to justify the government sponsored schools, fewer people to justify the nurse and clinic in town. What researchers saw as the townspeople’s selfless act was really self preservation. This viewpoint spoke more truly to what Ryan perceived his experiences in the town to be.
This story highlights interesting aspects about the relationship of insiders and outsiders to what is being studied. In relation to anthropologists, Ryan is an insider because he has been raised in this community. However, in relation to the community, Ryan is an outsider because of his university education and having learned the "language" of the outside world. His insider status allows him to see inconsistencies between the anthropologist's portrayal of the community and his sense of the community, but his outsider status makes it more difficult for him to understand the inconsistencies. In Ryan's case, insider and outsider status fluctuated with his relationship to the community.

**Benefits of Insider Research**

Many researchers have benefited from their insider status (Bartunek, 1984; Beck, 1994; Krizek, 1992; Mama, 1995; Narayan, 1993; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984; Riches, 1987; Stephenson & Greer, 1981); however, these researchers also acknowledge that the benefits of being an insider are insufficient without analytical tools. Regardless of relationships to the research, there are limits to what a researcher can see based upon her perspective. All understandings are subjective relative to our perspective.

To acknowledge particular and personal locations is to admit the limits of one's purview from these positions. It is also to undermine the notion of objectivity, because from particular locations all understanding becomes subjectively based and forged through interactions within fields of power relations. (Narayan, 1993, p. 679)

The challenge is in comprehending the meaning research and participant relationships hold. Admitting the multiple selves of insiders and outsiders informs research and expands the boundaries of interpretation.
Insiders bring many advantages to their research. In my own case of researching with Mormon women, I am able to work on a level of intimacy with my respondents that it would take a non-Mormon several years to achieve. Religion is private; it exposes us. My respondents trust me to not think them stupid when they talk about their religious feelings because they know I share their basic religious beliefs. I also have a comprehensive understanding of LDS culture, lingo, and history which permits discussion without the interruptions of stopping to explain definitions, titles, and relationships. A non-Mormon researcher would be challenged to develop a similar familiarity with the nuances of Mormon culture. While I do not think it would be impossible for a non-LDS researcher to develop this type of rapport, the difficulty and the time involved in doing so would be daunting. Adler and Adler (1987) conclude that some types of data or settings may be impossible to study without being a committed member because the vocabulary or world view is so unique to the group that understanding and communication cannot take place without membership. Beck (1994) and Riches (1987) experienced these advantages of being an LDS woman studying LDS women. In fact, Beck insists that her status as an elite insider, the descendent of a well known and respected LDS family, gave her the trust of high level church officials which members of the church without influential family ties would not receive.

Many researchers who have studied their cultures identify similar advantages to being an insider. Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) discusses the advantages of having a knowledge of mundane, daily routines and being able to be a part of the society from the beginning of the research project. This allowed her to observe people living in ordinary ways rather than being given the red carpet treatment of a visitor. Ohnuki-Tierney identifies her ability to understand the
emotional nuances behind behavior as her greatest advantage. Understanding the emotional significance of behavior is intuitive. It is difficult for outside researchers to comprehend and write about what is unspoken. Adler and Adler (1987) talk about idexicality as the concept that all things are contextual; nothing can be understood without considering the social context. Social context is complex, multilayered and inaccessible to researchers who do not become participants to the fullest degree in the setting they study. As outsiders, researchers can only approximate member's interpretations and understandings of daily life. Perhaps one explanation for this is what Stephenson and Greer (1981) call "economy." An insider requires less time to become acclimated to a culture and learn the nuances of it and may consequently more readily understand meaning behind what people do and say. In many cases, an insider will be able to research a culture in greater depth because less time is spent getting acquainted with new surroundings.

Narayan (1993) identifies many of these advantages in her experience working within cultures with which she identifies. However, she moves further in problematizing insider relationships and the deception researcher's may experience as they think they are more inside the culture than is really true. While I am convinced that the research I am doing with Mormon women could not be done as easily by someone who does not have insider status in LDS culture, it would not be impossible. An outsider to Mormonism would need to invest a great deal of time studying LDS doctrine. An outsider would have to spend time at Mormon religious services and social activities. An outsider would need to become known and trusted by Mormons to be trusted with Mormon women's stories. But this could be done. Furthermore, my status as an insider is not complete. Although I identify myself as a Mormon woman, the
very fact that I am researching a topic that is taken for granted by most LDS women distances me from them. Subjectivity is made up of more than gender and religious backgrounds. While I share being a woman and being LDS with my respondents, I may not share other aspects of their subjectivity such as age and motherhood. My insider status as Mormon woman can deceptively mask the peculiarities of individual experience that make outsiders of us all.

This does not mean that there is no common ground. The kinship Mormon women hold is real. I feel a sisterhood with my respondents and this sisterhood makes possible shared understandings between us that enrich my research and strengthen our trust. This is one of the greatest benefits of researching as an insider. Working with other Mormon women to understand the experience of learning to be female within Mormon culture has been a stunning experience. Narayan (1993) talks about how much she learned about her culture by studying it. In a similar way, learning about Mormon womanhood has been a joy. Certainly this process also brings pain, frustration, and despair, but the overwhelming consequence has been better understanding of LDS womanhood and myself.

Problems of Insider Research

The place of the self in research and the benefits of being an insider are many, but concerns about insider research remain. Stephenson and Greer (1981) summarize several potential problems that exist for researchers studying their own cultures. These potential problems include difficulty in recognizing patterns, neglecting to report the ordinary because the culture is so familiar, being biased in selecting participants, separating the roles of being a member of the culture and an observer of the culture, and the problem of maintaining positive relationships with the group at the study's conclusion. These concerns
can be lumped into the problem of distancing. Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) states that creating enough distance between the personal self and the culture is vital if insider researchers are going to make important contributions.

Part of the problem with distancing is that insiders may have different motivations for doing research than outsiders. Bartunek and Louis (1996) write about the different approaches of insiders and outsiders:

Relative to outsider researchers, insiders typically see the setting under study as a source of greater and more enduring consequences in terms of economic security, social affiliation, self-esteem, challenge, and fulfillment. In contrast, outsiders typically experience the setting under study as would visitors; they are there temporarily, usually for a known period of time. Their more personally consequential settings are elsewhere. (p. 2)

Bartunek and Louis go on to say that outsider researchers, typically members of academia, are motivated by the rewards of academia, meaning publications and scholarship. While this may be a superficial treatment of the motivations of many compassionate outside researchers, the fact remains that a researcher who is both an insider and a social scientist is in the unique position of straddling both worlds. She is both insider by virtue of her group membership and outsider by virtue of her research training and intentions. Such a researcher is also in the unenviable position of wanting to maintain membership in the community being studied.

As Wolf (1992) explains, the insider who wishes to remain inside the culture can not walk away and publish with no concern for how what is written will be received at "home." I want to maintain my status as a member of the LDS church. The ethical implications are weighty. An insider may have the
tendency to portray everything positively to prevent any negative exposure for the group. This is a tendency I have discovered in my work and one that I continue to guard against. This process involves constant reflection on what my research intentions are and how those intentions influence my interpretations and writing. The process is difficult. I feel the danger of succumbing to "Pollyannaism" about my religion. However this concern is not unique to insider research. The temptation to present a protective and rosy picture is seductive. For one thing it is easy, a sure way to avoid conflict. Researchers who develop close relationships with participants experience similar temptations to portray the people and culture they care deeply about in unrealistically positive light. Lawless (1993) and Peshkin (1986) in their studies of religious people and settings acknowledge the temptation to portray groups positively because the researcher "likes" or feels indebted to group members.

Perspectives considered typically outsider oriented may also influence research. When I wrote my first case study of an LDS woman, I spent months agonizing over how to write about women's experiences within Mormonism in an honest and non degrading way. I wrote several drafts before I was comfortable with the outcome as both a researcher and a Mormon. Finding this level of comfort was not just a matter of finding the right words; it was a matter of turning my soul inside out and picking apart my assumptions as a Mormon and a researcher. I initially did this because I did not want my feelings as believing and practicing Mormon to compromise my research. However, I also found aspects of my assumptions as a researcher that were compromising my study of religious experience.

A not so obvious ethical concern was my researcher's responsibility to portray my participants in such a way as to not use or exploit them. There is a
tendency when dealing with religious beliefs to hide behind the wall of science, armed with theory in one hand and methodology in the other. We dissect belief systems down to primitive thoughts and behavior that squirm on the pavement beneath us, sufficiently deformed to prevent any mistake that these might be like our own irrational thoughts. Goldstein (1995) writes that “Implicitly, and often through a kind of ethnographic sleight of hand, we secularize the study of religious groups, thus making them safe” (p. 25). Sufficiently sanitized of belief, religion loses its character and what gets published in the scholarly journal bears little resemblance to what the religious group thought they believed. There are of course many scholars who successfully and respectfully write about religious groups (Lawless, 1988, 1993; Peshkin, 1986) but the tendency to scoff at the inexplicable and unconventional remains.

My point is not to diverge into a discussion of religious ethnography but to demonstrate that the problems faced by insiders in telling the “truth” about their culture may also be shared by outsiders. The self-examination I underwent as an insider made me aware of biases that were unique to my both my inside status and outside status. Stephenson and Greer (1981) note that the problems associated with insider research are not beyond solution. These problems are faced by all researchers, insiders and outsiders alike. However, the degree to which issues such as distancing are a problem will vary for insiders and outsiders.

**Researcher Background**

How can an insider researcher go about overcoming these problems? With all forms of qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the interpretive instrument; consequently, it is common for researchers to disclose something about themselves to their readers, to acknowledge the interpretive lenses they
use to understand the world. As an insider I must reveal my biases, who I am, and what I believe as these beliefs will influence my interpretations. Human subjectivity has been demonstrated to be so multidimensional and ever changing that any individual can never completely disclose or even know all her bias (Heshusius, 1994; Mama, 1995). However, we can do our best to disclose those experiences and beliefs that most directly mediate our relationships with those we study. As Heshusius, Lawless (1993), Mama, and other researchers have demonstrated, reflexive thinking is only part of the ethnographic process. Reflexivity coupled with respect for subjectivity and participatory orientations to research, can take us a long way towards understanding with Others.

In my research of Mormon women, it is important to know that I conducted this study from an LDS and female perspective. I am an active and lifelong member of the LDS church. I believe the principles of Mormonism are true. I am a woman. I do not identify myself with what I perceive to by stereotypical views of Mormon women as housewives, full-time homemakers, and mothers. I do not believe the members or leaders of the LDS church are infallible. These beliefs situate my interpretations. I come to this topic from the standpoint of one who is sympathetic to Mormon beliefs and a native of Mormon culture.

I never considered doing a dissertation about Mormon women until I happened to read a few research articles written about Mormon women. I was appalled by the inaccuracies that I perceived and the characterization of Mormon women as an antiquated group that I did not think really existed. My indignation seduced me to fix the problem by writing a different story. I naively thought that my insider status gave me exclusive access to a world that outsiders were inadequately prepared to understand. I was wrong and in my error guilty of the
same "sin" I saw in the work of Others. I believed that other researchers had gathered the experience of Mormon femininity into a neat package and tidily shaped it into a monolithic bundle that represented the totality of Mormon womanhood. Initially, I wanted to reshape the bundle.

Nearly two years and hundreds of pages later, I recognize my error. But the process of this recognition has enriched both me and my research. Reflexive thinking has helped me explore my subjectivity so that I am more aware of who, what, and why I am. Studying Mormonism with the intent to do research has given me different perspectives on my religion and the women in it. Speaking, sharing, listening, and struggling with Mormon women has blessed me with a look at their lives and convinced me that there is incredible diversity in unity. My subjectivity has not been "tamed" (Peshkin, 1988 as cited in Heshusius, 1994). My biases have not been removed. But my scope of vision has been expanded, and this growth has increased the possibilities I see for how LDS women interpret their lives. I hope this expansion has also increased the "truth" with which I am able to tell Mormon women’s stories.

Conclusion

Researcher status is a fluid, changing thing. The degree to which we are an insider or outsider is tenuous, but if we accept the multiplicity of subjectivity, issues of being either an insider or an outsider fade in importance. What matters is not so much our status before we begin research, but our relationships during research. This does not mean that self awareness, introspection, and the "Strong Objectivity" of Harding (1991) are unimportant, but it does mean that the negotiations we make with those we research are vital to understanding ourselves and Others. Both insiders and outsiders bear this struggle. The question of being an insider or an outsider doing research is not one of choosing
a right or wrong viewpoint, but one of identifying perspective and encouraging interactions with Others so that we may expand that perspective.

The frustrations I felt as I wrote my poem about wanting to research something personally meaningful are largely gone. I am connected with my research. I have a stake in its conclusion, and I find joy in its creation. I do not think that my relationship to my research is very different from the relationship of other researchers who are passionate about what they do. I do think being an insider influences my interactions with the women I study. I do think being an insider influences which areas of research are most problematic for me, and I know being an insider is an important part of my subjectivity. But these influences do not make me a better or worse researcher. I alone hold the responsibility for the ethics and integrity of my research, and no orientation, inside or outside, can remove that.
CHAPTER 3. DECONSTRUCTION OF LDS FEMININITY

What would have been the effect upon religion if it had come to us through the minds of women? (Gilman, 1892/1993)

The construction of femininity within the LDS church is a history of contradictions. What is essentially female, what is woman, what is mother, daughter, sister? These are questions that have been answered differently throughout Mormon history, yet a common thread of patriarchy remains. A deconstruction of femininity within the LDS culture is problematic because many factors contribute to a religious group's understanding of gender roles. Minister (1991) contends that attitudes about gender roles are passed down through culture. Consequently, any religious group that does not entirely divorce itself from the outside world will hold attitudes that are based on the interaction between the group's religious beliefs and the cultural beliefs from which the group emerges and in which it resides.

Feminist theories deconstruct gender attitudes in the United States and Western civilization as they challenge men's domination of knowledge and the production of knowledge. Feminist claims state that subjects and theories have been constructed from a male perspective and therefore do not represent the female (Mama, 1995). Consequently, feminism provides an enlightening framework through which to view LDS constructions of femininity. Mormonism is based on knowledge and more specifically the acquisition, interpretation, and mastering of knowledge. This knowledge has been amassed within patriarchal societies. Therefore the acquisition and interpretations of that knowledge are influenced by masculine bias. Consequently women's place, or
lack thereof, within LDS practice is influenced by not only LDS doctrine, culture, and the personal biases of its members, but also by cultural patriarchy.

The Latter-day Saint faith is a patriarchal religion. The God of Mormonism is a male god and all religious structures from the organization of the church to the organization of families are structured along patriarchal lines. One of the basic tenets of Mormonism is that the Lord always has a living prophet guiding His church. Consequently, revelation from living or deceased prophets is very important to the operation of the church. Mormons believe these revelations come from God and therefore are not influenced by the cultural biases of American society. These revelations play an important role in defining LDS femininity and a cultural deconstruction of femininity would be incomplete without inclusion of the content of modern day LDS revelation. I will include modern Latter-day Saint revelations as they influence the deconstruction of LDS femininity. I include LDS perspectives because they directly influence LDS interpretations and beliefs and this dissertation is an attempt to better understand Mormon women's interpretations of gender roles from their perspectives. Consequently, this respect for the Latter-day Saint belief in modern day revelation is both appropriate and necessary to an understanding of LDS perspectives.

Latter-day Saint Historical Background

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded by a handful of men in upstate New York on April 6, 1830 with Joseph Smith as prophet and leader. The young church soon attracted notoriety for its claim that Joseph Smith had seen and talked with God and had translated an ancient record of the inhabitants of the American continent titled the Book of Mormon (it is from this book that the term "Mormon" or "Mormons" is derived). This notoriety soon
turned to fear and hatred. Throughout the next 20 years the small band of
Mormons increased to 60,000 members (Stark, 1984) and was driven across the
United States to escape persecution until they fled to the Salt Lake valley in what
is now the state of Utah.

For nearly fifty years after arriving in Utah, the Saints took an isolationist
stance and had limited contact and dealings with the Eastern United States. At
the same time they developed a strong "Zionist" philosophy believing that the
LDS communities of the west were a modern day Zion. The church maintained
a vigorous proselytizing missionary force, bringing converts to Utah mostly from
the eastern states and Europe. Consequently, early members of the church were
deeply influenced by contemporary American and European cultures and many
of their attitudes towards women were products of these cultures. However, all
members of the church were urged to "come to Zion." The combination of
isolation and homogeneity developed through Zionism resulted in the
establishment of a strong cultural center that influenced every aspect of early
church members' lives and thoughts.

**Patriarchal Family Structure**

The patriarchal organization of the family was deeply rooted in the
links the patriarchal family unit to the empowering of the state in which male
individuals are given charge over others, with the king being the ultimate
patriarch. Patriarchy thus made large governments possible as a single
individual could make commitments for a family or even group of extended
families. Patriarchy also led to the splitting of male and female roles. Trask
(1986) writes that women, as child bearers, were kept in the private sphere of the
home while men operated within the public sphere of government and the
community. However, the public sphere always dominates the private sphere as laws made in the public sphere regulate the private sphere. Consequently, men also exercised control over the private sphere of the home. Scolnicov (1994) further adds that confining women to the home makes men active agents as they become the decision makers and leaders. As the public dominates the private, men dominate women.

This cultural segregation between public and private roles became a feature of the LDS organizational structure because holding the priesthood was and still is a requirement for nearly all administrative and leadership positions within the church. Consequently, gender is of great importance to Latter-day Saints because it is this difference through which the hierarchy of church government is sustained (Cornwall, 1994). However, during the church’s early years, the number of members was small and the membership widely enough dispersed that more leadership positions had to be filled by women simply because there were not enough men. The offices of the priesthood had been outlined by Joseph Smith by the 1840s; however, the priesthood organizations were never entirely in place during the nineteenth century. The latter part of the 19th century brought greater segregation between men’s and women’s roles as church leaders began to emphasize the structure of the priesthood offices as a way to organize a growing body of people. Tasks women had previously performed became priesthood duties (Cornwall). Stabilization of church membership resulted in the loss of women’s influence in administrative and organizational decisions as men became available to hold nearly all major church positions (Armand Mauss, 1994). Men quickly gained authoritative roles within the church and became gatekeepers for all organizational positions.
Familial Responsibilities

Technological advancements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a tremendous influence on the patriarchal organization of the family. While the splitting of gender roles into public and private spheres did not encourage equality between men and women, the split did create a relatively equitable distribution of work. Women's domestic responsibilities were necessary to the survival and well-being of all family members, but technological advances made many of women's domestic contributions obsolete. Women became increasingly associated with the frivolous, silly, and decorative (Nicholson, 1994). The reasons for women to remain in the private sphere of the home decreased and the focus of women's place in the home shifted from economic contributor and domestic maintainer, to child rearer (Scolnicov, 1994). This emphasis on women as child bearers and nurturers resonated well with LDS teachings as women had been encouraged almost since the church's beginnings to bear and rear as many children as possible. The reasons for this were simple as Mormon doctrine teaches that all people are spirit children of God and consequently providing physical bodies and caring for children is a great service and blessing. In addition, increasing membership was an important goal of the LDS church. Some of this goal was accomplished through proselyting efforts, but much of the early church's growth can be attributed to the birth of children (Beck, 1994).

The importance of bearing children within the LDS faith is difficult to overestimate. Undoubtedly the most notorious practice ever undertaken by the Mormon faith was the practice of polygamy or plural marriage. When the concept of plural marriage was first introduced to church membership it was emphasized that the practice would help the Saints raise up a "numerous
posterity." Subsequent discussions of polygamy maintained a focus on the child bearing merits of the system. Accepted guidelines for polygamy required anyone entering into a plural marriage to receive permission from church leaders. A natural consequence of this was that with few exceptions only those men and women most devoted to the LDS faith participated in polygamy (Allen & Leonard, 1992). The posterity generated by this practice was not only numerous but generally faithful due to the strong LDS devotion of the polygamous families (Beck, 1994).

Priesthood also played a powerful role in defining the LDS Family. The institutional, or public, role of the priesthood was previously discussed as the governing body of the church. But priesthood also has a familial role in the patriarchal order. LDS revelations define the family as the unit by which individuals achieve the highest level of salvation and the order through which the celestial kingdom, or what Latter-day Saints believe to be the highest degree of heaven, will be organized. Cornwall (1994) cites Rex E. Cooper’s (1990) work demonstrating how during the period of the church in which the Saints lived in Nauvoo, Illinois, the familial role of the priesthood was established. LDS revelations indicated that the celestial kingdom would be organized into kingdoms by families. These kingdoms would be ruled by patriarchs and made up of wives and posterity. Beginning with Adam, each patriarch would stand at the head of his kingdom stretching down through the ages to the end of the world. Consequently the way a man could increase his kingdom was by having many wives and children. Polygamy provided a literal way to enlarge one’s spiritual wealth and power. Kinship became the central means through which the gospel was organized. Women were thought to rule beside their husbands, but the language of the priesthood objectified women and established their
deference to virtuous husbands. The intent of this order was for righteous dominion but the implication of woman as lesser, as property for the increase of men’s power, remains (Cornwall, 1994).

Motherhood was also linked with priesthood power as the female equivalent of priesthood and has always been one of the church’s most vocally proclaimed ideals. Church members reasoned that women did not need an ordination to the priesthood because motherhood was grounded in nature. Woman’s priesthood-like responsibility was entirely fitted to the private sphere of the home while men’s encompassed both the public and the private spheres. Men presided over the home as patriarch, with the relationship between father, child, and mother established by divine law. Conversely women’s relationship to children was established by nature (Cornwall, 1994). Again the public ruled the private.

Early LDS interpretations of motherhood were broad in that they encompassed barren women who contributed to the community’s well being. Motherhood thus included all women. However, in the twentieth century the focus on motherhood turned toward the actual bearing and rearing of children. The emphasis on motherhood as the greatest joy and obligation of all women was not altered, but all women could no longer claim success as “mothers” (Cornwall, 1994; Evans, 1985 ). This change linking motherhood to the act of childbearing prepared the way for LDS women and men to embrace broader cultural notions confining women within the home. It is not surprising that as national sentiment pressuring women to stay in their homes for the good of their children increased, this ideal would flourish in LDS society.

The pressure to bear many children has altered little throughout Mormon history. LDS leaders continue to admonish members that they should have as
many children as they are able to support. The interpretation of this advice has augmented to include a couple's emotional, mental, physical, and economic well-being as factors that should be considered before having children. However, this alteration is a relatively recent addition to general church discourse on family planning. When birth control became popular, church officials responded vehemently to what they considered a threat to the family. While church leaders never forbade the use of birth control, members were in no uncertain terms admonished to avoid it. As birth control became more accepted throughout all of American society, debate about it gradually decreased until it ceased being an issue from the pulpit.

The assault against birth control was leaders' reaction to a perceived threat against established childbearing patterns. While rhetoric about having large families has altered, child bearing remains a central focus of LDS women's lives. Members are encouraged to sacrifice in order to support large families and this sacrifice often includes economic stability and women's education and careers. In Beck's (1994) research on contemporary LDS women, she found many women who had experienced incredible trauma and feelings of worthlessness at their inability to bear children, or mother large families. Seamons' (1993) research on contemporary LDS women with doctoral degrees suggests that rearing children remains one of the most important aspects for even highly educated LDS women's sense of achievement. Bearing children remains a vital part of LDS women's role expectations.

**Victorian Influences**

Many ideas about women's roles within Latter-day Saint communities have roots in Victorian America. Walkerdine (1994) argues that scientific thought from the nineteenth century onward delegated the human mind and
body to the status of all natural creatures. Consequently, human nature became the object of a scientific community that was to the core patriarchal. This community relegated the female mind to the emotional and irrational producing women as subversive to knowledge and unfit for the public sphere (Jaggar, 1989). The only place women could claim was the home where they served as nurturers to children and men in a role devalued by society. The Victorian idea linking women to nature was given as a reason for gender differences that denied women formal priesthood authority (Cornwall, 1994). Women's trade became the maintenance of relationships while the male was defined by separation. Social development as defined by patriarchal society required a series of relationship separations that females were socialized to maintain. Women's failure to separate was seen as a failure to develop (Gilligan, 1994), effectively legitimizing the assumptions that barred women from the public sphere.

Mauss (1994) and Beck (1994) discuss how Victorian era notions of women's temperament and roles became enshrined within LDS doctrine. Beck in particular describes how Latter-day Saints tend to idolize the 1800s as the time period in which the church was restored. However, it appears that this idolization is based on misconceptions about the lives of pre-twentieth century Mormon women. Consequently, some characteristics of that time period that have nothing to do with church doctrine are accepted by church membership as revealed truth. In addition to the notions of women's domestic and childbearing roles, women were also perceived as decorative and frivolous. These attitudes towards females were represented in twentieth century LDS media as church materials support perceptions of women in traditional and decorative roles (Beck). Stereotypical notions of women as decorative became canonized in LDS
society so that programs for LDS young women were designed to create the decorative, domestic wife of traditional patriarchy.

Before the turn of the century, the MIA activities for both young men and young women centered on coed lectures about things such as theology, history, science, and literature. In 1913, the Young Men's organization officially adopted the Boy Scouting program which focused on virtues, physical skills and education (Church Educational System, 1989). However, the Young Women's organization did not adopt a similar program. The result was that as the MIA's emphasis became increasingly recreational and social, the Young Women's group was left with social training as its major emphasis. Armand Mauss (1994) suggests the social orientation of the MIA was another result of the Mormon movement towards assimilation with mainstream American culture. He notes that in the 1930's the MIA became what was almost an extension education program of the church with lessons in arts, drama, forensics, and social and ethical issues of the day. The nineteen thirties, prior to World War II, seem to mark a turning point for LDS females as Evans (1985) notes that women's church publications began to abandon the pluralistic orientation that they had held for the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century. For example, Evans cites an article in the Young Women's Journal in which the author unabashedly heralds the rising women's liberation movement stating that...

The divine ferment is at work, my brother, and no matter how conservative or stereotypical you may be, the women-folk of your household are either quietly or surreptitiously reaching out tentative hands to touch some form of organized activity outside your own home, or they are deliberately stifling and stultifying themselves in silent submission to your will. (p. 371-372)
Compare the tone of the above statement with a 1965 article from *The Improvement Era*, a descendent of the *Young Women's Journal*, in which girls about to turn twelve were told that they could handle "stressful situations—praying in public, having their picture taken or meeting a new boy—by counting to ten" (as cited in Evans, 1985, p. 261-262). Girls were advised to handle their problems through such means as reading and studying manners manuals, learning good games, studying fashion magazines, and baking treats. The article concluded by admonishing girls to exploit their best assets, namely their eyes and smiles. Virtually everything the girls were advised to do in the 1965 article reinforces women's image as domestic, physical object, nonintellectual, and social being. A successful LDS female was essentially social and decorative—a view of femininity that restricted rather than expanded girls' possibilities.

**Contradictions in Femininity**

The history of women in the Church has been one of continual contradiction. The LDS church has always been a patriarchal religion, but what that means for the lives of women within the church has not always been the same. Madsen's (1987) work on the lives of early LDS women demonstrates that many women held roles of responsibility and leadership within the early church. Women were to direct and remain in charge of the Relief Society when it was founded in 1842. Early church women received and acted upon personal revelation regarding their families and other activities such as raising money to build LDS temples. Emma Smith, wife of the prophet Joseph Smith was the subject of section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants (1981) in which she was given the calling of expounding scriptures and exhorting the Saints in an era in which few women even spoke in church. Women were told they were necessary to the restoration of the gospel and through the blessings received in the temple
were promised eternal blessings equal to those of men. Journals of LDS women in the mid to late 1800s show women of the time preaching the gospel, helping with the construction of the temple not only by spinning, mending, and cooking, but also through masonry work, driving oxen teams to haul rock, providing temple furnishings and supplementing family incomes through merchandising goods and services (Evans, 1985). An early theme of the Relief Society was expansion of women’s roles beyond the domestic (Derr, Cannon & Beecher, 1992). In the early church women had equal access to the exercise of spiritual gifts, and the extreme patriarchy of Mormon society had the ironic effect of removing men from domestic responsibilities so that many women were forced to be far more independent than they would have been in non-Mormon nineteenth century society (Beck, 1994).

Yet paradox was always present. Women could preach to the world, but always under the direction of priesthood leaders. Writings in early church newspapers were addressed to the brethren, and when the word “Saints” was used with the implication that it applied only to males. Women participated in this paradox as the female Relief Society approved a document that defined women as defenseless beings and the “softer sex” (Evans, 1985). Beck (1994) contends that the paradox of women in the LDS church became inevitable when the church embraced the modernist philosophy popular at its formation but did not apply it to women because, as contemporary psychology argued, women were irrational beings, incapable of independence.

**The Place of Relief Society**

An examination of the women’s auxiliary unit of the church provides insight into the types of paradoxes LDS women have experienced in their dealings with the institutional church. The Relief Society was first organized in
1842 (Derr et al., 1992) by a group of Nauvoo women who wanted to help with the building of the Nauvoo temple. The women wrote a constitution and bylaws and gave the document to Joseph Smith. He praised their efforts but told them he had something else in mind and subsequently organized them after the "order of the priesthood." The women were excited about their new organization and the institutional role it gave them to help the poor, uplift women, and inspire the men to good works. Joseph Smith also gave the women's organization a degree of autonomy that it has never known since its formation. However, in organizing the women, Joseph Smith changed the purpose, membership, officers, and constitution of the original organization.

LDS cultural traditions and meeting schedules define Relief Society membership as the female counterpart to priesthood, but Relief Society has always been governed by the priesthood (Cornwall, 1994).

The two organizations are complimentary but definitely not equal. As a companion organization to the priesthood Relief Society also demonstrates its lesser importance to the church structure. The organization of the priesthood was the result of a detailed revelation through the Prophet, no specific revelation mandated the Relief Society organization or specified its offices and duties (Cornwall, 1994). The priesthood bears a connection with the formation of the church as established by Jesus Christ through His twelve apostles. Relief Society has no Old or New Testament ties. The Relief society is an auxiliary unit of the church and as such is not a necessary part of church operations. This is evidenced by the fact that it was disbanded only two years after its formation due to Emma Smith's (wife of Prophet Joseph Smith) opposition to polygamy (Derr et al., 1992). Joseph Smith's successor, Brigham Young did not reinstitute Relief Society for 25 years (Cornwall). The Church has never dissolved priesthood
authority as to do so would incapacitate all Church practices. The Relief Society is obviously not the necessary organization to the LDS church that are the priesthood quorums. Contemporary Latter-day Saints are taught that men and women are equal, but women are always governed by men. While some Latter-day Saints may not interpret this as sexism, it does take leaps of faith and alternative perspectives to get around this wall of gendered discrimination.

**The Institutionalization of the Church**

LDS women have always lived under the shadow of patriarchy, but the conditions of the early Mormon church made it impractical for women to be dependent. Pioneering life was difficult and the demands of settling the Utah territory rested equally on the shoulders of men and women. Women became educated and enterprising, and were active in politics, the suffrage movement, and the establishment of communities. These conditions created an environment in the early church that until the turn of the century was progressive and in many ways liberating for women’s roles.

Cornwall (1994) discusses how the institutionalization of religious organizations usually serves to disenfranchise women and this type of disenfranchisement appears to have begun in the LDS church around the first part of the 20th century. Cornwall suggests that as institutions become increasingly bureaucratic, women lose influence because they are kept out of the bureaucratic command chain. As was previously mentioned, the priesthood offices designed to run the affairs of the church were known to Joseph Smith by the 1840’s but were never fully in place during the 19th century. As the church grew in numbers and Mormon settlements continued to spread across what is now Utah, Idaho, Arizona and even into Mexico, it became impossible for the affairs of these remote congregations to be run from Salt Lake City. During the
latter part of the 19th century church leaders attempted to resolve this issue by giving new emphasis to the structure of the priesthood offices as they related to church hierarchy.

The Latter-day Saints were literally setting up a bureaucracy to organize a fast growing and widely dispersed body of people. The result was the redesign and reinforcement of leadership hierarchy as it extended from the Prophet and his councilors down to the local Bishops of congregations. This was no easy task as church leaders continued to refine priesthood leadership structures throughout the beginning of the 20th century. The stated goal was that the priesthood would take care of every need within the church structure. A literal interpretation of this would mean that women were not part of ideal church structure. Yet during this time period the Relief Society was encouraged to operate under the direction of priesthood authorities within the institutional church. Women were admonished to watch over each other, teach each other, be united, and do good wherever the gospel was preached. The double standard is evident. Women were absent from the ideal church organization, but expected to contribute to that organization's development. However, all change takes time and many LDS women remained undaunted in their perspectives of the broad scope of women's sphere (Cornwall, 1994).

**Twentieth Century Development of Women's Roles**

Evans (1985) analysis of woman's image in Mormon discourse reveals that prior to World War II, Mormon women's magazines contained article topics such as: support of women's rights to choose and have careers outside the home; complaints about men who viewed their wives as slaves; biographies of amazing women doing things such as mountain climbing, hunting, and exploring; articles about women financially supporting their husband and children. In
addition the magazines called women by their Christian and surnames. This is critical because after World War II, women were called by their husband's first and last names. The liberal aspects of the magazine's content practically vanished and readers were explicitly told that they should stay home and be mothers. Evans comments that "women's image was more complex from 1872 to the mid-1930s than it has been ever since" (p. 439).

Armand Mauss' (1994) work may provide some insight into how attitudes toward women's roles could have developed among church members in the decades following the settlement of Utah. Mauss' writings about the Mormon struggle for assimilation partially highlight the constant tensions between assimilation and repression among LDS people. Mauss argues that new religious movements are caught between two options: assimilation or repression by the existing society. The extreme of both results in the death of the organization by either being totally absorbed into society or being destroyed by society. These two extremes may be placed on a continuum with complete assimilation on one end and complete separation (and consequent persecution) on the other end.

Mormonism must exist on a continuum, holding a delicate balance between assimilation and separateness. If the movement asserts its separateness and differences, it moves toward the dangerous end of disrepute with the society. As it moves toward assimilation and switches direction, it must deal with the threat of losing its identity as it compromises its beliefs to accommodate society. Church history supports this theory as the early Saints inspired incredible hate and animosity between themselves and American society. The journey to Utah, and from each settlement the church had established before that time, was literally a flight from death. On the 27th of October, 1838, Governor Boggs of Missouri issued an extermination order against the Saints stating, "The
Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from
the state, if necessary for the public good" (as cited in Church Educational System,
1989 p. 201).

During this pioneer period the church was obviously on the separateness
end of the continuum, and as Mauss’ theory suggests, the dominant society was
seeking to destroy them. By 1890 the church was on the verge of destruction by
the United States government and society, mostly because of the stiff opposition
to the Church’s practice of polygamy. Mormon polygamists were hiding out
from the law. Members of the church were denied voting rights unless they
renounced polygamy. The government ordered the church disenfranchised and
began confiscating church properties. And the U.S. government decided that
Latter-day Saint temples (holy houses of worship open only to worthy church
members) would be confiscated as well. On September 24th, 1890, then church
Prophet, Wilford Woodruff issued a document called the Manifesto. President
Woodruff said that after much fasting and prayer to the Lord about the dire
condition of the Saints, the Lord had revealed to him that if the church
continued to practice polygamy, the temples would be taken from the church, the
property of the Saints would be taken, and many members of the church would
be imprisoned. The Manifesto declared that the church was no longer teaching
polygamy, no person was allowed to enter into a plural marriage, and that the
Latter-day Saints intended to obey the laws of the land, which forbade plural
marriages (Church Educational System, 1989). The Saints made rapid progress in
adjusting to non Mormon society. In a relatively short period of time, Mormons
overcame their poor public reputation and were regarded as honest, moral
citizens. In Mauss’ (1994) words, "Mormons became models of patriotic, law-
abiding citizenship, sometimes seeming to 'out-American' all other Americans"
(p. 22), and Latter-day Saints are still counseled to be loyal citizens of the lands in which they live (Nelson, 1996).

The Manifesto of 1890 and Utah's achievement of statehood marked a period of great change within the church. The church had shifted its place on the continuum out of necessity, moving closer to assimilation with American society. Mauss (1994) notes that throughout the stages of Mormon migration and settlement, women in the church did lose influence. Cornwall's (1994) research supports Mauss' claims as Cornwall describes how the institutionalization and increased bureaucracy of the church worked to increase the subordination of LDS women. A contributing factor may be increased contact between LDS society and an American society that had remained sexist. The circumstances of pioneer life that encouraged LDS women's independence had never been present in the lives of most United States citizens. Beck (1994) speculates that the writings of pioneer women that were kept and disseminated in church publications were purposefully chosen to maintain stereotypes of femininity. Mauss notes that the LDS church made many accommodations towards mainstreaming by using more Protestant hymns, toning down the peculiarity and militancy of LDS hymns, using the Bible more, and bringing Mormon theories on deity more in line with mainstream Protestant theories. By the 1950s Mormons were no longer peculiar from the rest of American society in economics, politics, culture, theology, or mythology.

However by the second half of this century church leaders became concerned that Mormons had assimilated too much and began instituting programs such as church education courses for adolescents and young adults (seminary and institute) to fight against increasing assimilation. According to Mauss (1994), the fear that Mormons had compromised too much led to
resistance towards compromising at all. Issues surrounding civil rights that arose in the 1950s and 60s were displaced by the reassertion that the gospel is unchanging and the prophet is always right. While other women in the United States were beginning to enjoy greater rights, LDS women rapidly lost autonomy (Cornwall, 1994). Societal changes that altered or attacked traditional gender roles and family structures were seen as particularly threatening to the LDS status quo. Topics of patriarchy, motherhood, and the family dramatically increased as themes for church talks and publications (Iannaccone and Miles, 1990).

Church programs were streamlined to direct all church activities through the priesthood and depending on one’s interpretation, even personal activity was under the guidance of priesthood “pipeline” of control. The following quotation from a 1960s priesthood manual cited in Cornwall (1994) describes how this pipeline works.

Priesthood correlation involves the carrying out of priesthood or church activities by individual members of families presided over by the parents, who are presided over by priesthood leaders, who in turn are presided over by priesthood leaders, who in turn are presided over by bishops. The bishops are presided over by stake presidents, who are presided over by the General Authorities of the church. These...constitute what we might call the pipeline of priesthood correlation. All priesthood activities should properly recognize this and be funneled through this line of authority as it is revealed from our Father in Heaven. This line of authority should govern and correlate in such a way that the resources of the church may be brought through this power to serve the individual members of the church. Thus, we might become one as we have been advised....
Auxiliary officers and other members of the church in the various areas of life activity who are not officially in this line of authority, should, when called upon by the priesthood officers, sustain priesthood and church activity. (Priesthood Correlation Manual of Instruction for Priesthood Home Teaching, 1964:2-3)

Additional changes included the streamlining of the organization so that auxiliaries lost autonomy through fewer responsibilities, curtailed organizational control, and minimal contact with local auxiliary leaders. Repercussions of these changes included the loss of the Relief Society’s magazine and the Society’s responsibility for adoption and foster care programs and the Primary’s (church auxiliary organization headed by women for children under the age of 12) loss of Primary Children’s Hospital, a change that led to the dissolution of the all-woman hospital board and replaced it with a board composed primarily of men. Additional layers of priesthood hierarchy were also added (Cornwall, 1994).

While these changes did help the organization of the church to run more smoothly, there was the unintended and detrimental consequence of increasing the devaluation of women in the LDS church. Cornwall (1994) contends that because women could not hold the priesthood and so could only hold minimal roles in church administration, the changes implied that the contributions women did make in congregations and their family units were of secondary importance to the work of men. In addition, the changes increased the need for priesthood leaders on all levels. Men worthy to hold the priesthood became a scarce resource both for the institutional and familial aspects of the church. As Cornwall suggests, the question becomes, “whether the familial aspects are valued as much as institutional aspects are. In the modern rational and
bureaucratic world, the familial is less valued” (p. 259). The unintended consequence was that men as the scarce resource were more valued, and women, especially divorced, single, and women married to non-member husbands, became perceived as liabilities rather than resources to the church.

This is a prime example of how cultural and religious values interact within individuals. The teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not suggest that either the private sphere or women are inferior to public concerns; however, the broader culture does suggest this hierarchy and these values influence how Latter-day Saints perceive gender role divisions. These perceptions create paradox within church practices, policies, and individual members. Paradox increased as the church maintained its emphasis on education and self-sufficiency while societal demands on women changed. Beck (1994) notes that since the early years of the church, LDS women have on average been more highly educated than non-LDS women, largely due to Latter-day Saint’s emphasis on education. Women then face the contradiction of being told to gain higher education and career ability but not to use it. Paradox such as this confused and frustrated many of the LDS women Beck studied, and this paradox is compounded by the ambiguity that surrounds women’s roles.

Iannaccone and Miles (1990) state that although the church resisted changes in women’s roles in the 60s and 70s, the church has been moving towards accommodation of women’s changing life patterns. Yet the church’s accommodation of changing women’s roles has not been what it seems. Iannaccone and Miles analyzed the content of *Ensign* articles between 1950 and 1986. *Ensign* is an official publication of the church distributed monthly. The *Ensign* is translated into several different languages and contains doctrinally oriented articles by church leaders, inspirational stories, and additional
information or types of articles that are deemed of interest to adult members. Church officials approve the contents of the *Ensign* before it is published and church members are encouraged to view the *Ensign* as scripture. Consequently, *Ensign* articles present an accurate description of church sentiment. Iannaccone and Miles examined all articles that dealt with women's issues and rated the articles on 19 categories meant to distinguish support of changing women's roles or advocacy of traditional roles. After plotting the scores they found that while there was an upward trend towards accommodation of changing women's roles, this trend was overlaid by tremendous year to year variation. "It suggests either that the Church has not changed its position on women very much (so the observed variation is just random 'noise') or that the Church's statements about women have been diverse and inconsistent" (Iannaccone & Miles, p. 1238). I believe Iannaccone and Miles' findings speak to both conclusions.

Paradox is compounded as church members hear contradictory advise from leaders and see women not treated as intellectual or spiritual equals to men. Iannaccone and Miles (1990) discuss how Latter-day Saints become polarized by conflicting statements by Church leaders. They cite high ranking Church official James A. Faust encouraging women to gain marketable skills, praising efforts to gain equality for women in the workforce and hoping for the day when women will be treated as equals to men in the workplace. Six months later then Prophet President Benson stated that mother's calling was in the home and God never intended married women to compete with men in the workforce.

These statements present paradox; however, they also demonstrate how the LDS church has been able to resolve some tensions surrounding women's roles while maintaining doctrinal patriarchy. The Church does this by allowing women to make certain concessions. The statements by Presidents Faust and
Benson may be reconciled with each other when we note the qualification of "married" women. President Faust uses the more generic term women and talks about the equal treatment of women in the workforce and gaining marketable skills. He does not encourage women to enter the workforce but only to develop skills so that gainful employment is possible. When this statement is looked at within the context of LDS discourse President Faust's comments fit traditional women's roles if we understand that women will only enter the workforce if they are unmarried. President Benson's remarks that the Lord never intended married women to compete in the workforce with men are then in harmony with President Faust's as President Benson only condemns the participation of married women in the workforce rather than all women. Iannaccone & Miles (1990) conclude that:

Church leaders have not abandoned their traditional ideal of the nonworking mother caring fulltime for her family. Exceptions to the ideal are always justified in terms of it. Only her husband, children, and God can release a woman from her obligations to them... Continuing to express a traditional value protects organizational integrity; allowing deviations from the ideal gives the individual member a means of reconciling the conflict between the religious ideals and the behaviors rewarded by society. Although on a symbolic level the conflict between church and society persists, on a practical level members increasingly can do what they have to do without rejecting the Church. (pp. 1245-1246)

This stance gives women the option of making non-traditional choices but at the expense of living with the contradictions that remain between religious ideals and personal behavior. Fully embracing traditional roles or living with paradox are the only options.
Cornwall (1994) argues that ambiguity has always surrounded LDS conceptions of women's roles and ambiguity often leads to confusion. LDS understandings of the patriarchal order give clear descriptions of male roles but women's roles are less clear. The ideology of motherhood is problematic and the parameters of women's contribution are undefined. The Relief Society provided an institutional role for women, but it did little to clarify what role women might hold in the LDS conception of eternity. Certainly the concept of being ruled by, yet ruling with, one's husband is abstract. Consequently, the LDS woman is both silent and homeless within the hierarchy of eternity.

**Influence on Women's Self Worth**

Institutional silence and ambiguity can drive LDS women to confusion and despair. Mama (1995) writes that subjectivity is the process of moving through discursive positions. That is why subjectivity fluctuates and why LDS conceptions of femininity are so important to Mormon women's images of self and worth. The process of moving through discourse allows for contradictions as women move through and are challenged by competing discourses. These contradictions are increasingly evident in Mormon women's lives as they struggle with convincing rhetoric from the feminist movement and authoritative rhetoric within their church congregations. Contradictory experiences drive change (Mama) and this is perhaps the greatest reason that women's roles are so much on the minds of many LDS women. But change can be frustrating when the individual wanting change is not able to act. Heilbrun (1988) Cites the work of Jehlen (1984) talking about how women's selfhood depends on being able to act publicly--something Mormon women are often restricted from in their wards and branches. When LDS women do change their expectations and beliefs regarding women's roles, that change must largely
remain one of personal understanding rather than action because actions are regulated by the rules and customs of the institutional church. Consequently many LDS women find themselves "performing" as feminine (Walkerdine, 1994) for the benefit of other church members while believing, and in many ways acting, differently from traditional gender roles.

Conclusion

Many LDS women live behind a facade, obsessed with maintaining the appearance of conforming to gender stereotypes. Only by maintaining this appearance do they feel they can avoid criticism for their true beliefs. Beck (1994) argues that the majority of her respondents put up such facades with the certainty that no one else felt the way that they did or would understand. Mauss’ research (1994) is enlightening as he uses survey data to show that the stereotype of the stay-at-home LDS Mom is only a stereotype and that Mormon wives and mothers in North America work outside the home about as much as non-Mormon married women with children. Nevertheless LDS women are seduced into thinking they are alone in their beliefs. The paradox of trying to perform as feminine while living as something else fragments LDS women’s sense of self (Beck). A woman cannot be at peace without gathering the parts of her fragmented self and fashioning them into an articulate whole. It is this process of becoming whole that is explored through the lives of Eliza and Hannah.
CHAPTER 3. ELIZA PLAY

Set

Stage right is a small table. On the table is a pair of glasses, a hair band and a script. A little left of center is a chair with a basket beside it. The play script lies on the chair, and a quilt is folded in the basket. A cardigan sweater is slung over the back of the chair.

Pre show music is a mixture of children’s hymns

The last tune is I am a Child of God. The stage is entirely empty during preshow

Prologue

The researcher enters from stage right. She wears a jacket, glasses, and neutral pants and shirt or jumpsuit. She goes to the table and slowly, deliberately, removes the jacket and the glasses. She puts her hair back in the hair band and puts on the new glasses lying on the table. These actions should be done with great reverence and purpose. She picks up the script, examines it intently, looks over at the chair, and walks toward it. She puts the script on the chair, puts on the cardigan, and sits in the chair. She returns to examining the script, but this time in a different persona. Music fades.

Eliza looks up from the script and addresses the audience.

Monologue

This is what I wanted to show you. [picks up the quilt and displays it] The kids gave it to us for our anniversary a few years ago and I think it is just the neatest gift. You see each one of these patches represents an important event in our lives. This one down here at the bottom is when we got married, and it has a picture of the temple. And this one is going to graduate school where Shane
got his masters degree, and this was where Jared was born. And there’s one for Carrie too. I love to roll this out and look at it and remember all these things.

It is pretty isn’t it. Yes, its machine stitched. You know the funny part of it is I machine stitched it. The kids worked really hard on it but they spent so much time working on the patches that they didn’t have time to do the stitching. It really didn’t take very long though and I think its kind of neat that I got to help. You know I’ve never been very crafty but I think I did a pretty good job on this. Jenny is really clever though, and she’s so busy with the kids that she got this fabric that would be easy to do. You see its got all these lines on it so you just put the needle on a line and zoom you go.

They are such good memories. I think it is just the most perfect gift. I’m not sure when exactly they got the idea to do this. But I remember for several months before our anniversary, they kept asking us to tell them what we thought the most significant or happiest memories in our lives were so we knew that something was up. And Shane was so ornery about it that he refused to tell them anything or he would tell them some ridiculous thing that really wasn’t an important event at all. Somehow they got it together though, and I think its really fantastic.

Well...I really, really wanted to show it to you. When you talked to me about doing this research project I thought it would be more along the lines of what it was like to go to school in a Mormon community, but when we’ve been doing these interviews its gotten so that its more about me and I’ve been telling you all these woeful tales from my childhood, and I don’t want you to think that I’m just a sad, woeful person. Doing these interviews with you has been wrenching at times. The last time you came I was so depressed for the rest of that
day and night after talking about all those painful experiences in my life. It surprised me because I thought I was beyond the hurt—but I guess I’m not.

I think I’ve spent my whole life getting over those same problems, learning to feel lovable, valuable—needed—not being hurt anymore—reconciling how things should be with the way things are.

And I don’t know if the people who read what you write will understand what that means, not only when you’re a child, but when you are a Mormon child because we believe that the family is the basis for everything. And I’ve told you what my family was. But what are you without your family when its this eternal thing? And if you do everything just so you’ll be with your family forever. And that’s really how you succeed. So the family is this vital important thing that is supposed to be the most wonderful thing in your life, and here I was miserable. As a child I really was. And I know I’ve said this before but when you ask me about my life and how I came to be who I am, I just can’t help coming back to this.

I didn’t have a happy childhood. I didn’t feel lovable, and I didn’t feel loved. I thought my parents didn’t really love me. I thought I never measured up. My grandmother, my Mom finally told me, had told her when I was little that I was too smart, and if she would praise me, then I would get what grandma called ‘a big head.’ And be full of myself and so she must never do that to me. It would help me to not. And so Mom..., she just took that to heart. And she never told me I’d done a good job.”

And I never knew about that until long after I grew up so I spent my whole childhood, my whole adolescence trying to please my parents and no matter what I did it just wasn’t good enough—ever.
I remember every time I brought home my report card, it was the same thing. I'd come in and I'd give it to my mother. And she'd open it up and look at it, and if she saw all As but one B+ she would say, "Why you have a B+ and that really hurts me that you wouldn't work hard enough to get an A." And she'd go on and on about how dreadfully I'd hurt her, and I'd have to stand there and listen and know that I hadn't done well enough. And no matter what I did, it never would be good enough. And later when my sisters and I got money for the As on our report cards, my sisters would get $5 for each of their As and if I got all As it would be $1 for each A. And if I got a B, even one B, I'd only get fifty cents for my As. My mother said it was because it would break her. I mean my sisters got 2 As a year, and I got straight As almost always. But it didn't feel like it was really money; it felt like it was me.

I knew it was me. I knew it was, because my sisters were able to get all the approval that I never had. And I loved my sisters and they loved me, and the problem wasn't between us, but it was my parents. My parents didn't seem to love me.

I was different.

I was born into the middle of a three daughter family. We were all girls but I'm sure I couldn't have been more different from my sisters if I'd been a boy. They were everything anyone expected and I was nothing, nothing like what I thought I should be. My two sisters are the most social beings. They are just normal social, fun people and I was really intense about everything. And I really do think that my parents just didn't know. I don't...I think they thought I was being difficult on purpose because I asked questions all the time—at church, at home. I wanted to learn. And my Mom would tell me a lot, "you're just being
difficult." But I didn't ever know what she would mean by being difficult. I thought it was reasonable to ask questions when I didn't know the answers.

And you know, I know now that the problem wasn't that I asked questions, even though that wasn't considered very ladylike, it was that I asked questions that the adults around me didn't know the answers to. They simply couldn't answer my questions. And it would never have occurred to them to ask the questions, especially questions about the gospel. And I think there was this fear that if you asked questions that couldn't be answered than maybe you would find a hole in the gospel and then it wouldn't be true anymore. And so to ask those questions was dangerous.

I know you've asked me a lot about gender differences growing up and I never thought about my childhood that way, but you know asking questions was especially not normal for a girl. I never thought about being a girl and what that meant for how the people around me acted. But at the same time I clearly understood the expectations for me and I knew I couldn't live up to them. I still think it was more being different than it was being a girl because...I hope no one ever reads what you write! The boys in my Sunday School were really not very bright. So they didn't ask questions like that either. And Shane, he lived on the other side of the valley, and he frustrated all his teachers in his classes too because he asked the same kinds of questions. So I really don't know that it was so much being a girl. I know you're skeptical of that. You really should be because there were very definite ideas of what girls and boys were supposed to be like. I just could never totally fit that idea. But you know part of me didn't want to.
My sisters were naturally wonderful at being girls. They were social and light and crafty while I was brooding and inquisitive, but I was a girl and that’s not the way I was supposed to be.

But everything around me told me that I wasn’t supposed to be that way, and the Church really was a strong influence in that. Young Women’s back then was more a social kind of thing and they would have occasional why you should get married in the temple lessons or you need to gain a testimony, but it would be more like once a month and the other kinds of things would be social skills...learning how to talk with your parents and not argue. And the importance of friends and how to be a good friend. And we’d have lots of activities. And so it was very much like a social club. But socially, I was inept—a failure.

I knew the lessons academically. I could answer all the questions. I knew what they wanted, the answers that they wanted, but I somehow couldn’t live it. I couldn’t be the social person that they wanted me to be and I tried. I tried really hard to learn the skills that they were teaching. When they would talk about how to make friends I would listen to every one of the things that they said and diligently try to apply it to myself and try to learn and in the next several days I would try to do that with people.

But I think people perceive someone as something and its very difficult to have that person break out of that perception. And so I think those little fledgling attempts that I made were not successful because they weren’t reciprocated so much. And also I think I was inept at doing them. I simply had no confidence in myself and I was awkward and self-conscious and I imagine my attempts at making friends didn’t come out the way I intended them to.
But I knew I could live the gospel! I knew I could, because I knew the gospel was something beyond social talents and skills, even though that was what was emphasized in my classes.

You know your paper, the draft you gave me to read, talked about dualisms. That was a dualism, and it clanked inside me and grated so that I began to know that being a daughter of God, living my gospel, didn’t mean I had to be the social person my parents and teachers wanted me to be.

And I knew this because I studied the scriptures and learned everything I could learn and I tried really hard to keep the commandments, and I prayed. I prayed a lot, and it felt good inside. It felt right that reading the scriptures for myself, keeping the commandments, and praying to my Heavenly Father were the things that really mattered and I could succeed at this no matter how dismally I failed at the other.

If I’d never learned that, how could I have survived? As a girl, no one expected me to really read the scriptures, to really pray for understanding. I know it seems so amazing now that the attitude about women could have been that way, but it was. And because I was seeing past that, I grew.

I still wasn’t happy with myself. It’s taken most of my life to accomplish that. But the seeds to be happy, those were planted when I learned that I could choose out the essence of the gospel and live it, even if it conflicted with some of the things people were telling me. But that is so hard to learn.

You’re taught your whole life that the Church is true. And I really believe that; I know the gospel is true. But you think that if the Church is true, then everything about it, including the people and the leaders should be absolutely right, and that’s not the way it is. But no one taught me that. I just had to sort of figure that out on my own, and it was hard. It was scary. My parents had such a
simple unquestioning faith in everything. It really did not occur to them that things might not be just so.

But despite all the complexity I saw, feeling this assurance that I could live the gospel despite not fitting the ideal of what a woman should be, really substantiated for me that it was all right to be me...because my nature is so inquisitive. I was genuinely hungry to learn and I don't know that I could have been the kind of student I was at school without being an aggressive learner at church.

I don't know that I could have. It took me a long time to learn patience with people and I was very impatient as a child and a youth...I was irritated when the lessons were not substantive I wanted to learn and I was irritated when the other kids were making noise so the teacher couldn't go on and I was irritated when, when the questions weren't answered so that the teacher wouldn't go on. It makes me sound like I was irritated an awful lot doesn't it! but, I wanted to learn what we were supposed to learn now and I don't think I could have separated it out. I don't think I could have. I know that I made a lot of teachers uncomfortable, a lot of church teachers....Several came and talked to my parents and asked them to have me not ask questions. And so of course my parents responded the only way they knew how...the told me not to irritate them and not ask questions.

My parents really didn't know what else to do. My mom tells me now that she and dad never knew how to handle me. She says, "we never, we never could get a feeling of what was right. We always felt beyond what we knew what to do." So they would try to just smooth things over so that I would be more a part and so they would tell me to not ask questions. And I got, by the time I was
in 7th or 8th grade, I didn't ask my parents questions because they couldn't, I think it really was couldn't, answer them about church or about school.

In retrospect I think part of the problem might have been that my Church teachers were all women. They probably didn't know the answers to my questions because no one ever expected them to know answers or even to ask questions. There were definite roles for women and that just wasn't one of them.

Women weren't expected to know the gospel like men were. They were expected to get married and to have babies and to make wonderful mothers. Men were going to be the ones going on missions and being heads of families and church leaders so they had to know about the gospel. Women just had to live it. And its easy to be resentful of that when you feel like that is the only important thing you can do with your life and then you can't do it. Or maybe you don't want to do it. I really didn't fit into that category because I desperately wanted to do it. I wanted to be a wife and mother more than anything in the world. I just didn't think anyone would ever want me.

And again a lot of that had to do with not acting the way people, even the other kids expected me to. I caught on to things quickly, the teachers wouldn't call on me until nobody else could answer so by the time I was in third grade, I never raised my hand because they would always ask me if nobody else knew. And I, I thought seriously about not answering correctly to see if the kids would like me better, but decided that I would at least be true to myself and that if I knew the answer I had to give the answer. So I did. It was hard then, but I'm proud of that now because I kept my integrity. And again that was part of living the gospel.
Despite all the pain and loneliness of my adolescence, there were some good things. Seminary was, I found it to be really wonderful. We went to the seminary building which was right beside the school and I took old testament my sophomore year, new testament my junior year and church history my senior year, each taught by a different teacher. In the seminary building there were only church kinds of things. In the cabinets there'd be a display and it would be like, one time they had it on the holy land. One of the teachers, Mr. Nyman, had gone to visit the holy land and had brought things back and they were in the display cabinet. And there was a real effort to make it have a religious atmosphere. We started each seminary class with a, they called it a devotional. We sang a hymn and had a prayer and a spiritual thought and then started the lesson. And they were pretty intensive lessons and we had tests and grades so in many ways it felt very much like a normal class. Seminary was more substantive, to say the least, from my young women and Sunday school lessons. In seminary we received intensive teachings about the church and scriptures from a Mormon perspective whereas Sunday school was more stories from the scriptures and not much of the gospel per se. I really felt the spirit in seminary and I didn't always feel it in Sunday School or young women.

But seminary was supportive of who I was. And it's funny how seminary is a church thing and it again substantiated that it was o.k. to be me, but a lot of my problems with feeling like I couldn't be a good "woman" or "girl" or maybe even a good person, came from church kinds of things too, some official church things like the young women's lessons, but a lot of just the church culture that I grew up in. And so I guess that's another dualism and I don't know if was a dualism in the programs, I guess the research your doing suggests that it was, but in any case it was a dualism at least in my perception.
These dualisms really troubled me. But it was really in college when things came to a head. Because you see, even though I'd been dealing with all these things about how girls were supposed to act and my family life being unhappy and not being accepted, I had still never really questioned the church itself. I had a really strong testimony and all these other things I'd been dealing with had never caused me to question the truthfulness of the gospel.

I had a very real concern about evolution. As I studied it in high school I broached that subject with my parents once or twice. My Mother told me, she said, “It's all of the devil and you should just disregard it.” So I didn’t say anything more about it.

But when I went to college, I learned about evolution in a biology class. As far as I was concerned, evolution did not mean that man came from a monkey, evolution was the change in species and so I would tell my parents, “You can see evolution. You can see it around you.” Oh, they were terribly upset. So angry they wouldn’t talk to me so they arranged for me to talk to my bishop. So I went and I sat down with him, and he told me, just like my parents had, “You must stop believing this.” But I couldn’t end it there. I couldn’t stop thinking about it and my parents began to actually study the gospel and study the scriptures to find ways to prove to me that evolution was wrong. And I was amazed. I'd never seen my parents study anything before—really search the scriptures to find an answer to a question.

With all my parents were doing, with what my bishop said, with what I was learning in school, and what I thought was true, how could I come up with any type of cohesive thing in my mind?

I took a world civilizations class taught by a man who was a member of the church, but he wasn’t just a member, he was the high council representative
for our ward. And you know that is a pretty important position. I mean he had authority, and he was a representative of the Church. But when he walked into class, you wouldn’t have known it because he taught that class perfectly straightforward as if there was no way the church could possibly be true. Of course he didn’t say that, but he would lecture to us and say, “Judaism is an inbred religion in which the concept of God evolved and was invented to complement their societal beliefs regarding punishment and anger.” And he taught about Zoro Aster who had also told the story of the flood. And said, “this was very clearly before Judaism and so the tale can not possibly be true and the Jews borrowed this concept to put in their scriptures.” And he’d say about Christianity that, “it is an outgrowth of Judaism resulting from a movement away from aggression to increased mercy and stability.” So according to what he taught, my religion could not possibly be true because it was merely the result of societal changes and that was extremely upsetting to me. I mentioned my concern to my parents only once and my mother threw her hands up in the air, cried and went to bed. So I worked through it on my own.

I studied and read and studied and read and prayed and read Church books and tried to make things in my mind come together. And at the time they never did. So I decided that this would have to be a matter of faith for me so I prayed again to see if the Church was true, and I felt my prayer was answered very strongly that it was. So I just tried to disregard all the questionings I had and got a B in the class. It was one of only 4 Bs I had all the time I was at the university and I was probably very lucky to get it. I had so many negative feelings toward that class that I couldn’t remember the things the teacher would say. And I couldn’t write them down as facts on paper. I was truly upset by that class. But I
found I couldn’t just give up on my questions, and I suppose I didn’t really want to.

I studied a lot about evolution on my own then and I came across an article by Joseph Fielding Smith talking about theories of evolution. And that article said that if you did not believe that Adam was the first man then you did not believe in the fall and if you didn’t believe in the fall, you were rejecting the Savior and his sacrifice for us. So you stood in real condemnation. And that was really upsetting to me, really upsetting because I had developed this theory in my mind that perhaps the matter the world had been created from included dinosaur bones or whatever and there were people that lived here before Adam so that statement was very upsetting to me and I continued to be upset about evolution and the Church.

I was never so upset that I felt like I didn’t have a testimony or wanted to stop coming to church, but the whole time in my mind it was like this (fists grating against each other) all grating and upsetting because things didn’t fit. I was reading in the Pearl of Great Price one day about the creation of the earth, and it talks about how God created the plants and told them how to live and then watched until they obeyed. And it says that at every stage of the creation, “God, watched until they obeyed.” And for me that was the answer to all those questions I’d had. If it took time enough for God to have to watch for the plants to obey, for the animals to obey and seas to obey. Then to me that became the time that all those evolutionary things could have happened because it took that long for the elements to obey. This soothed every question in my mind, but I still didn’t dare to talk about it with my parents. But I’ve been able to deal with that too. I know I’m not over all the hurt I’ve felt from my parents. Doing this
project with you has made that obvious, but I can deal with that. Maybe I can’t get through it, but I can get past it.

I know now that I really have some wonderful blessings, and I’m happy. I’m content with myself. I can remember when the change happened and it was when Shane loved me. That made all the difference. It took several years for me to feel worthwhile. [...I for years and years after I married him I would dream that he would see the real me and couldn’t believe that he’d married me and would want a divorce. It took a long, long time to feel lovable so that I could accept that he loved me. And when I did, then that’s when I could relate to my Mom and Dad, and to other people probably. And I could accept that what they did was wrong because I was worthwhile. I was valuable. I was precious. Then I was able to see all the good things I had and say, “yes, I have these painful things but look at all my blessings.”

It wasn’t just that I needed to be loved because Shane had loved me for a long time. But I needed to believe I was lovable. And the expectations I’d been taught for what a Mormon girl ought to be did not make me feel lovable. So the problem wasn’t caused by me, but it had to be solved by me. And I wanted you to see something that represents all that. In a way I guess this quilt is a happy ending to the stories I’ve told you.
CHAPTER 5. ELIZA

Background

Eliza has been a devoted member of the LDS Church all her life. Her ancestors are among the pioneers that settled the Salt Lake Valley and she grew up in a small, working class agricultural community surrounded by extended family. Eliza's immediate family was poor, even for her community, and she recalls the shame of always having her name announced at school as one of the few people delinquent in lunch payments. Eliza is a mother, grandmother, wife, and former school teacher. Like her Mormon pioneer ancestors, she has endured many hardships, including immense insecurity, loneliness, sorrow, and chronic illness. Yet like the pioneers, Eliza has endured all these things and even triumphed over some. Happiness and peace have been the fruits of these labors. It is this journey that is her life.

But the journey has been filled with insecurity, fragmentation, and pain. Many of these difficulties have been caused or exacerbated by Eliza's struggles with gender roles and her inability to fit herself to the gender-role identity she perceived as necessary within the LDS church and society. This chapter provides an analysis of the gender role expectations created for and by Eliza and how she negotiated these expectations to create an identity that fits her talents while satisfying her sense of womanhood. This analysis will necessarily travel through the landscapes of Eliza's childhood, family life, LDS teachings, and societal gender roles. I begin with Eliza's childhood.

Intellectual Girl

I am a child of God,
And he has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.
Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with him someday. (Hymns, 1985 p. 301)

Families are undoubtedly the greatest influence in the lives of many children, but for Latter-day Saints the importance of family is magnified. The principle unit of the LDS Church is the family. President James E. Faust (1995), Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the church said in regards to the family: "We know that the gospel always has and always will operate through families. No other unit of society is an effective substitute for the ties of love and affection inherent in families" (p. 62). Statements such as this regarding the importance of family are common within the church. Children are taught that families are eternal organizations, that if they are righteous, they will live with their families for eternity. Reverence to the sacredness of the family is part of Latter-day Saint heritage, but for Eliza this reverence made a difficult childhood even more challenging as she had to reconcile what she perceived to be rejection by her family with her personal worth.

I didn't have a happy childhood. I didn't feel lovable, and I didn't feel loved. I thought my parents didn't really love me. I thought I never measured up. My grandmother, my Mom finally told me, had told her when I was little that I was too smart, and if she would praise me, then I would get what grandma called 'a big head.' And be full of myself and so she must never do that to me. It would help me to not. And so Mom..., she just took that to heart. And she never told me I'd done a good job.
[My mother] would go to PTA meetings and they would say, "well, I don’t know why you’re here, you don’t have any problems with your child" so then she wouldn’t go. She always faithfully went to my older and younger sisters but she wouldn’t go to mine. And so that set me apart, too, and so I, I just, no matter what I did I never felt like it was quite good enough. If I got all A’s but one B+ [my mother] would talk about the B+ and how that hurt her badly and so no matter how well I did, I didn’t ever feel that I’d done well enough.

Eliza describes a childhood made unhappy by the withholding of her parents’ love. On the surface this rejection seems ironic because it stemmed from the grandmother and parents recognizing Eliza as a child of exceptional abilities. We may assume that Eliza’s relatives did want to sour her potential by permitting her to become arrogant. However, I believe this narrative holds more complex meaning. By being too smart Eliza truly did not measure up to her parents’ or grandmother’s expectations. She was odd. She was “other,” and she was isolated from her parents’ affection. This isolation was magnified by her parents’ involvement with and approval of her younger sisters. Eliza often talked about her sisters as “normal,” social women with talents that fit within traditional female gender roles. Eliza’s feeling that no matter how well she did it would not be enough may have been accurate. Perhaps as Eliza worked to do well in school, she failed in her parents’ eyes only because she did not do well at being a girl.

The children’s song, "I Am a Child of God," exemplifies the ideal Mormon family of “parents kind and dear” teaching their children about the gospel. But what if family life is not happy? Eliza’s words are that she, "did not feel lovable.” She did not feel worthy of love. Failure to be loved, a failure Eliza saw as her own, provides little hope for the success of an LDS girl within the
most important social organization on earth or in heaven. Eliza went on to have difficulties developing friendships. She perceived herself as "inept" in social relationships and therefore a complete failure at a very important skill. Eliza’s grandmother had been right when she said Eliza was smart, but grandmother could not have predicted the far reaching effects lack of praise would have for Eliza.

Eliza immediately excelled in school, but she also failed to feel accepted by the other children. The lack of connection she felt at home followed her to school and served to make her feel "set apart" from the mainstream of family and social life. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule’s (1986) work in *Women’s Ways of Knowing* discusses the difference between individuals who have a separate self and those who have a connected self. Eliza’s separate way of relating to the world, through ideas and academics, provided her with greater rewards than her failed attempts at connectedness. She did not feel loved by her family or valued by friends, yet she yearned for human connections from which to see the world. Noddings (1994) writes that "in a basic and crucial sense, each of us is a relationally defined entity and not a totally autonomous agent. Our goodness and our wickedness are both, at least in part, induced, supported, enhanced, or diminished by the interventions and influence of those with whom we are related" (p. 176).

Noddings does not explicitly address the interaction of gender in the above statement, but Belenky et al. (1986) suggest that women may have a greater need for connected knowing than men. Regardless of the accuracy of this statement, LDS teaching placed greater emphasis on social skills for women than for men. Eliza learned that as a woman much of her success depended on personal relationships. She was faced with the task of reconciling what she perceived as
her social failure with the expectations of her religion, and her self-confidence was understandably low.

Ironically, this forced separateness may have contributed to Eliza's exceptional academic performance. Gilligan's (1994) research suggests that as females, girls do not have to psychologically separate themselves from their mothers so that separation is not key in their development. However, when we measure maturity and adolescent development, and I would suggest school performance, by separation, girls are at a disadvantage. But the expectations of female gender roles also puts nonsocial girls at a disadvantage because the criteria from which they were judged were largely social.

Eliza's forced separation may have equipped her to better compete in the masculine oriented world of academics, but it also pushed her to the periphery of human relationships. She was neither fully male nor female in terms of her social behavior, and this made her a stranger in all camps. Academics is the only area in which Eliza acknowledges any childhood success and she could not even relish in that. Success brought little comfort as she repeatedly mentioned not feeling "good enough." Eliza's narratives describe a girl who remained top of her class throughout college, a girl who knew she was smart, yet despite these achievements, Eliza always knew that her performance "was not good enough." Walkerdine (1994) examines this phenomenon in depth as she describes an obviously successful woman who "feels that she is hopeless, consistently panics about her performance and appears to have little confidence in herself" (p. 57). Walkerdine could have been describing Eliza, but she is describing women who "perform" their femininity. By "performance," Walkerdine means that women downplay their own successes to fit themselves more closely to society's image of women as passive. Eliza did not consider herself a success. She was unable to
succeed at the performance of the perceived feminine role, a role Eliza defined socially. Consequently, academic success was incapable of compensating for the failure of Eliza's social relationships. Eliza recalls always scoring 4 to 6 grades above her grade level on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, being in the top of her graduating class, and receiving honors and leadership positions. Yet, no amount of success could convince her that she could succeed in college. Her school principal literally filled out an entrance and scholarship application for her because Eliza was reluctant to try herself. Even after being accepted and receiving a full scholarship, Eliza attended college only because her parents insisted. Her parents' insistence that she go to college when they had provided so little support of her academic endeavors seems odd. It does indicate that they were not opposed to higher education for females. In fact, nothing in Eliza's narrative indicates that parents, church, or community expressed any opposition to female education, and Eliza believes education was admired and encouraged. However, seeking higher education was not a defining characteristic of LDS womanhood—social skills, relationships, and communication were. Consequently, academic achievement contributed little to the perceived value and success of women, and because Eliza did not possess the characteristics deemed appropriate for females, college may have been considered the best back-up for feminine failure.

**Social Femininity**

There were only girls in my family. My two sisters are the most social beings. They are just normal, social, fun people, and I was really intense about everything. And I really do think that my parents just didn't know.... They thought I was being difficult on purpose, and mom would tell me a lot, "you're just being difficult." But I didn't ever know
what she would mean by being difficult. I thought it was reasonable to ask
questions when I didn’t know the answers.

Being “normal” was being socially oriented so Eliza felt very abnormal. Asking
questions, wanting to know the answers—these were unwelcome traits in
females. Eliza insisted that this attitude was not gender based because there were
only girls in her family; however, Walkerdine (1994) convincingly argues that
because our notions about truth and knowledge have historically been
constructed in a male dominated society, “ideas about reason and reasoning
cannot be understood historically outside of considerations about gender” (p. 59).

While gender attitudes may not have been maliciously held by Eliza’s parents,
hers was certainly important in her parents’ formulation of what was
appropriate behavior for their daughter. Eliza did not behave like most Mormon
girls. Her questioning, intellectual nature made her difficult, and the
explanation of why is apparent in Eliza’s narrative of the church education
program for young women.

Emphasis on social skills was an important, and at times dominating, part
of the church program for Young Women and Young Men. The Mutual
Improvement Association (MIA) was the church auxiliary unit for young adults,
and Eliza describes it as an almost exclusively social organization.

MIA back then seemed more a social kind of thing and they would
have occasional why you should get married in the temple [holy house of
worship] lessons or you need to gain a testimony [of the truthfulness of
the church], but it would be more like once a month and the other kinds
of things would be social skills....Learning how to talk with your parents
and not argue. And the importance of friends and how to be a good
friend. And we'd have a lot of activities....And so it was, it was very much like a social club.

With such a strong emphasis on social skills by a church organization, it is understandable that many church members would come to associate cooperative social skills, or social skills designed to avoid conflict, with feminine success. And also understandable that Eliza would feel awkward, set apart, and self-conscious by an inquisitive nature that was decidedly nonsocial and very much intellectual.

I considered that I knew them [social skills] academically because I could answer all the questions. I knew what they wanted, the answers that they wanted but that I somehow couldn't live it. I knew that I could live the gospel, but I knew that I couldn't be the social person that they wanted me to be. And I'd tried, I tried really hard to learn the skills that they were teaching. You know when they would talk about how to make friends, I would listen to every one of the things that they said and try to apply it to myself and try to learn. And in the next several days, I would try to do that to the people, but I think people perceive someone as something and it's very difficult to have that person break out of that perception. And so I think those little fledgling attempts that I made were not successful because they weren't reciprocated so much. And also I think I was inept at doing them.

Eliza's insecurity, despite her academic gifts, is predictable when one considers the perceived importance of social skills at which Eliza considered herself "inept, and a failure." Yet, it is important to notice that Eliza says that she knew she could live the gospel. In spite of social failure, Eliza could live the gospel. Her education included social skills, but her success as a Latter-day Saint
woman depended on gospel principles distinct from these skills. Eliza was again demonstrating her ability to prioritize principles as she reconciled the dualisms between her life and the life she felt she was expected to lead, particularly, the dualisms evident between the perceived expectations of her church leaders and family, what she understood to be principles of the gospel—namely integrity and personal understanding of scriptures and the church.

**Set Apart**

Relying on personal scripture study and gospel principles became increasingly important for Eliza. She felt estranged from family and the social workings of the community, but Eliza credits her faith in the gospel with bringing her through these times. This may seem ironic except that Eliza was already demonstrating her ability to reconcile the complexities of scripture study, church lessons, and role expectations. Just as she was able to separate teachings about social relationships from her ability to live the gospel, Eliza was able to reconcile the complexities of being, in her words, "set apart" within a society that emphasized unity. Being set apart has dual meaning within LDS society. As a people, Latter-day Saints have dedicated themselves to being a peculiar people, believing in the admonition in Matthew 5:14-16 to, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Being "in the world but not of it" is an LDS creed. However, Latter-day Saints are also a people of incredible solidarity within their own ranks.

While Mormons strive to remain distinct from the dominant society, they struggle just as greatly to be one amongst themselves (Okazaki, 1996). The Church teaches oneness among God's people but Eliza felt constantly separated out in her family and at school. The irony of this situation is one that underscores the life of many people who try to resolve dualisms in philosophy
and practice. Learning to stand alone was part of her LDS education and ultimately made Eliza stronger. Other LDS women have also written about this irony of separateness. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's (1994) piece, "Border Crossings," addresses this theme as she writes about the perceived dichotomy of being a Mormon and a feminist as she reflects that "I am grateful for a religious education that taught me how to be different, though I had no idea it would sometimes make me feel like a stranger among saints" (p. 6). Indeed separateness and oneness are not easy to reconcile. The children in Eliza's elementary school were all LDS. If the gospel principle of acceptance of all in Christ had been obeyed, Eliza would have been befriended. If Eliza's parents had been able to raise her with affection, she would have felt loved and accepted. Both groups fell short on both counts. Eliza was different. And her difference challenged her and those around her as her intelligence continued to set her apart.

I caught on to things quickly, the teachers wouldn't call on me until nobody else could answer so by the time I was in third grade I never raised my hand because they would always ask me if nobody else knew. But I didn't need to raise my hand ever because they knew to ask me. And I, I thought seriously about not answering correctly to see if the kids would like me better, but decided that, it was a conscious decision, that, that would not be good for my internal integrity and so I decided that I would at least be true to myself and that if I knew the answer I had to put the answer; so I did.

Eliza felt that personal integrity in always doing and giving her best was more important than the acceptance of her peers. This demonstrates how Eliza chose to deal with the imperfections and dualisms around her. The ability to
discern among dualisms has been absolutely vital to Eliza in her development as an LDS woman. She chose personal integrity over social acceptance, a prioritizing of principles since both were part of her LDS education. Eliza emphasized this choice as an important one in developing her moral character and determining the direction of her life. She became the active agent in making decisions for herself, despite her inability to control the circumstances surrounding her.

Intelligence at Church

Latter-day Saints are taught that men and women are different and have different roles to fulfill. Woman's role is dominated by motherhood, and as mothers, women have the greatest responsibility for the rearing and nurturing of children. This distinction in roles led some people to believe that it was less important for women to study the principles of the gospel. Of course it was important for women to understand the basic things that they should or should not do, but scripture study and learning the gospel in an academic sense was not necessary. Women who were interested might pursue gospel study through the scriptures, seminary, or church books, but this study would hold little consequence other than any personal gratification they might gain. Eliza perceives that attitudes like this were common in the community in which she grew up and consequently her thirst to understand spiritual things, as well as secular things, was surprising for the people around her. Her Sunday School teachers always expected that the boys would answer the scriptural questions, and looked to the boys for answers when those questions were given. I asked Eliza if she thought that she could have been the kind of student she was at school and not tried to learn and excel at church also. Her response was:
I don't know that I could have. It took me a long time to learn patience with people and I was very impatient as a child and a youth.... I was irritated when the lessons were not substantive I wanted to learn and I was irritated when the other kids were making noise so the teacher couldn't go on and I was irritated when, when the questions weren't answered so that the teacher wouldn't go on. I wanted to learn what we were supposed to learn now and I don't think I could have separated it out. I don't think I could have. I know that I made a lot of teachers uncomfortable, a lot of church teachers.... Several came and talked to my parents and asked them to have me not ask questions.

[My parents] would tell me to not irritate them [church teachers] and not ask questions. My mom tells me now that she and dad never knew how to handle me. She said, "we never, we never could get a feeling of what was right. We always felt beyond what we knew what to do." So they would try to just smooth things over so that I would be more a part and so they would tell me to not ask questions. And I got, by the time I was in 7th or 8th grade, I didn't ask my parents questions either because they couldn't. I think it really was couldn't, answer them about church or about the school.

Eliza believes that the frustration of her teachers was probably because they were all women and had not been expected to gain a deep understanding of the gospel. Her teachers literally did not know the answers to her questions. But receiving answers to questions was not the most important thing. As this narrative demonstrates, the main concern of Eliza's parents was removing the conflict so their daughter would fit into the mold imagined for LDS girls.
The idea that women did not need an academic understanding of the gospel is contradictory to much of early church history. The themes of assimilation and retrenchment of the Latter-day Saints with United States culture in Armand Mauss' (1994) work provide insight into how attitudes toward women's education developed and changed among church members in the decades following the settlement of Utah (See Chapter 3: Deconstruction).

Both Eliza and the teachers in her Sunday school class, were raised during a time when the attitudes of American society relegated women's sphere to the domestic, the decorative, and the frivolous. This condition was exacerbated by a church that sought to arm itself against gender role changes that might threaten traditional family structures. Within the intersection of these cultures women had no need for in-depth gospel understanding because as irrational creatures, they were dependent on the men around them.

Intellect and Motherhood

Eliza recalls that "women weren't expected to know the gospel like men were," but Eliza yearned to understand the church and seminary helped satisfy this yearning. The LDS Seminary program was established in 1912 to ensure that Latter-day Saint youth would have the opportunity to receive daily religious training (Church Educational System, 1989). Eliza's participation in the seminary program proved to be invaluable as she was intensively taught gospel doctrine and principles. "Seminary taught boys and girls the same. Girls were expected to learn as much as boys. Seminary was, I found it really wonderful."

Seminary helped satisfy Eliza's spiritual needs, but also provided the backdrop for an important incident that would prove influential in her life. Half of the students who attended Eliza's high school went to that school for 8-12 grades. However, students from Eliza's side of the valley only attended the high
school for grades 9-12. This situation limited the number of electives students could take who were only at the high school for three years. These students still had to complete the same graduation requirements, but only had three years in which to do it. Eliza was forced to choose between seminary and marching club, a prestigious group. She chose to take marching club, but her mother disagreed.

My Mom wanted me to take shorthand so I could use it in a job, and I decided to take marching club instead of seminary. But my Mom made me take seminary so I couldn't take marching club and that was hard. I was sad, but it was the right decision.... I know it was the right decision because marching club wouldn't have done what I wanted it to do. Seminary gave me a good foundation in church. I didn't have to feel guilty forever for not finishing it. I learned a lot and I could tell my kids that they had to go to seminary.

Eliza is grateful to her mother for making her take seminary. The course not only had lasting worth, but it helped Eliza learn about the importance of keeping her religion a number one priority—a lesson which she still values. However, this narrative gives some additional insights into Eliza's education. The first is her mother's insistence that Eliza take shorthand. Although Eliza made it clear that the expectation was that girls would marry and stay home with their children, the likelihood of this situation was already diminishing in Eliza's community. Many families, including Eliza's, found it necessary for the wives and mothers to work outside the home. These women were unskilled for any occupation other than mothering and homemaking, consequently, the jobs they could take were those of waitress or factory worker. Eliza describes this part of her life as a time when "you felt like you were standing on quicksand...but there was also the perception that times were just hard now and we'd go back to how
things should be.” How things should be meant that women stayed in the home, had children, and raised their families. But a struggling economy was eating away at this ideal and Eliza’s mother wanted her to have skills on which she could fall back. Secretarial training would provide the necessary, but hopefully unneeded, job skills. Additionally, Eliza did not fit many of the stereotypical female gender role patterns. Consequently, Eliza’s parents may have perceived her marriage prospects to be somewhat limited.

The second and greatest insight Eliza’s narrative provides is the assumption that she would be a mother. Eliza equates one of the positive outcomes of this event being that she could tell her kids to go to seminary without being hypocritical. Attending seminary would help her be a mother. Despite academic success, feelings of familial rejection, and the cooperative social skills encouraged for LDS women, Eliza still aligned herself with the Latter-day Saint goal of motherhood. This is evidence of both her devotion to the gospel and her inculturation into LDS conceptions of femininity. Despair, rejection, and failure had not squelched her desire to participate in the ultimate patriarchal female roles—wife and mother. Chodorow’s extensive study of mothering in western culture (1978) details the way in which mothering is reproduced across generations. Chodorow determines that mothering is neither instinctive nor learned so much as it is psychological and this psychology is passed from mother to child. Chodorow states that:

the sexual and familial division of labor in which women mother and are more involved in interpersonal, affective relationships than men produces in daughters and sons a division of psychological capacities which leads them to reproduce this sexual and familial division of labor.

(p. 7)
Eliza's desire to mother is evidence of the strong psychology of motherhood. It seems that almost nothing could have squelched this drive as Eliza continued to desire motherhood despite the icy relationship with her parents and her feelings of failure and incompetence in fulfilling traditional women's roles.

Rather than reject the motherhood goal in her own life, Eliza found ways to incorporate her intellectual talents as assets to motherhood. The desire to participate in marriage and motherhood did not deter Eliza's drive to learn but came to define it. The first benefit Eliza attributes to seminary is the good foundation it provides in the church. Seminary would help her truly know her gospel, a trait that unlike motherhood was not encouraged during Eliza's youth. In this way Eliza merged the culturally conflicting ideas of LDS woman as wife and mother and LDS woman as scholar. Seminary was an activity that allowed her to do this as it joined Eliza's intellectual aspirations with traditional LDS women's roles.

Ideas of motherhood surfaced within nearly every story and recollection Eliza told about her life. I asked Eliza why she thought so many church classes focused on social skills and functions.

I'm thinking probably because they thought they were preparing us for what our life was. I don't, the boys back in the church then were still boy scouts. Young men was boy scouts back then. And always the boy scouts learned occupational kinds of things and the girls did not. And I think that it was very much not expected for girls to have a career. And so their need to be comfortable in life, would be a social need—how to interact with other people, and to have the skills you needed to make friends, and to get along with your husband, and to get along with your husband's coworkers—and that kind of thing. And so I'm guessing, because it was
never stated, but I would think the church has always tried to prepare us for the life that we would lead.

And for women, LDS culture held that this would be a life centered around cooperative social skills and the home. Emphasis on home and family has been constant throughout the history of the church. Past church president2, David O. McKay, said in the 60's that, "No other success can compensate for failure in the home" (as cited in Evans, 1964). This phrase has become a watchword within LDS society as it admonishes Mormons that they should have no greater priority than their families. However, the LDS focus on the family has put the role of women as wives and mothers in the "spiritual spotlight" because women's nurturing role is more greatly emphasized than men's. While husbands and fathers are considered heads of families, their leadership and work responsibilities often remove them from the home. Consequently women often bear an inordinate responsibility for the raising of children and creation of the home environment. In the October 1964 General Conference, Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve Apostles3, opened his address with this story.

Somewhere I have read or heard of this remark by a woman who was observing a clean and manly and admirable young man. 'I would give twenty years of my life,' she said, 'to have a son like that.' The mother of the boy, standing nearby, overheard the comment and replied: 'That is what I have given—twenty years of my life.' (p. 134)

The ramifications of this story for women are obvious, families and children would require the dedication and sacrifice of most of one's lifetime, and

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2The president of the church is a title often used for the contemporary church prophet. Latter-day Saints believe the president of the church is a prophet in the most literal sense and as such has access to direct revelation from God concerning the gospel.

3The Council of the Twelve Apostles is second only to the prophet in church hierarchy.
LDS women expected this. While the story implies that the raising of "good" children is a mother's success, it also implies that child rearing failures may be the mother's responsibility as well. What of the mother who does not sacrifice twenty years of her life to raise a child? What of the woman who never marries or is unable to be a mother due to physical disability? How does a woman claim success as a Latter-day Saint without fulfilling the obligations of motherhood? Latter-day Saint girls and women are reminded of their role as mothers all their lives. I asked Eliza what knowledge and skills she had felt were necessary for her to be adequately prepared to fulfill her role as an LDS woman?

I would need to know how to read, how to write, how to do math, something about history because I always felt that if you didn't know past mistakes you might repeat them, but if you did know about past mistakes you had a chance to change them. I thought that English was important—was important just because, as far as I was concerned, vocabulary and understanding influenced how people perceived you. And as a result, you needed to know enough that you could be a well perceived person, but more importantly, teach your children to be well perceived. When I was growing up, my whole goal in life was to graduate from high school and get married and have many children. That's what I wanted to do and I didn't ever think about a career or going on to college. I wanted to graduate from high school and then get married and then have children and so education always to me was how I could be a good wife, and how I could be a good mother, how I could teach my children what they needed to know to get along and so when I would look at things, like obviously I wasn't going to get married by the time I got to high school. I could see I wasn't going to get married ever in my life because I didn't even date and
so I wanted to take short hand and typing so that I would have some capability of a career, but that had never even occurred to me while I was in junior high that I would need that.

Eliza wanted to be a wife and mother, but her earlier narratives indicate that this did not exclude academic learning. In fact, while Eliza's Mormon upbringing explicitly taught that her greatest role was to be a wife and mother, Eliza's personal drive to do well in school, her hunger for knowledge, and her precociousness in learning paint the picture of a woman determined to expand and shape the scope of her role within the parameters of what she values. Education was important, but there was very little room in her aspirations for education without motherhood. Basic education in math, history, English, and literature were useful, but they were useful for being a mother. Ironically Eliza did not appear to be following the gender role expectations advocated by her church, parents, and community; however, she was constantly working towards these goals. She simply held different ideas about what skills and behaviors would bring success as a wife and mother--ideas that fit her particular talents and interests. In this way Eliza refashioned the traits and knowledge necessary to fulfill gender roles so that they were attainable and more closely aligned to her values.

The influence of all the training Eliza received in cooperative social skills is evidenced by the emphasis she places on being well perceived. According to Eliza, one needed to be able to represent herself well in society, teach her children, and live the gospel in order to be an educated LDS woman. Eliza's emphasis on being well perceived is ironic because it points to the development of social skills as a way to please others and keep up appearances. The painful experiences of Eliza's childhood are bursting with instances of not being well
perceived by family and not fitting the expectations of church culture. Rather than rejecting the perceptions of others, Eliza emphasizes being able to satisfy other’s perceptions. In this way she does not abandon the source of her childhood pain, not being able to live up to other’s expectations, but instead determines as an adult to satisfy expectations and teach her children to satisfy expectations.

Eliza doesn’t elaborate on testimony in her list of important things for a Latter-day Saint woman to have, but its necessity is implied by her devotion to gospel teachings, specifically motherhood. Without some degree of testimony, being educated as an LDS woman is useless because it prepares a woman for something she does not want to be. This last point is vital to understanding how Eliza perceives herself and her life. Eliza’s statement that she did not want to be anything but a wife and mother may seem contradictory to her earlier narratives and evidence a lack of ambition or drive. I think it is neither. Eliza believes that motherhood is the most important job she can fulfill. She does not believe that this reflects a deficiency in the feminine character, but rather the elevated importance of raising children. Motherhood is not the bearing of children, but the raising, and Eliza considers it a partnership with God. While Eliza has felt devalued by some leaders and practices in the church, she does not feel devalued by gospel principles or God. This may be the culmination of Eliza’s efforts to reconcile conflicts between church and community culture and herself. She has found a place of self-respect and peace. Casey’s (1993) work with religious women describes how some nuns also came to this type of reconciliation when they were able to join their individual, activist beliefs with their religious beliefs. The result is an individual harmony that brings a feeling of completeness to women besieged by self-conflict. Reconciliation of the incongruities between
religious teachings and the realities of life experience and personal beliefs creates peace within the Self. Eliza does not end all self fragmentation. Her emphasis on other's perceptions is evidence of that, but she does heal her wounds. Like the religious women studied by Casey and the women studied by Bloom (1996), Eliza finds a personal melody in the harmony of contradictions.

**Spiritual Independence**

It was not until college that Eliza was confronted with an incident that dramatically challenged her beliefs. This experience was pivotal in developing Eliza's personal and spiritual independence.

I had different expectations for myself than my parents did as far as gospel learning was concerned. My, my questions often bothered my parents as I would read. And as I took seminary and questions came up I would ask them and often they felt that I was not questioning to learn but questioning... because I didn't believe the gospel. And so soon I stopped asking my parents the questions, and they didn't seem to know the answers anyway. My parents had a simple, I think simple faith. The church is true and if any doctrinal questions came up or any concerns about this issue or that issue, they simply disregarded it. It couldn't be true because the gospel doesn't teach that.

Eliza's parents were not supportive of her attempts to reconcile beliefs within herself. They, and apparently many others in the community, relied on what Belenky et al. (1986), term "Received Knowledge," that is the unquestioning belief of authority. While the church does not strive to develop Received Knowledge learning among its membership, there are many things about Mormonism that contribute to this world view. Perhaps the most dramatic is that the LDS church teaches that church authorities receive
revelation from God. Casey (1993) notes that the power of religious hierarchy is cut when leaders are not perceived as intermediaries with the Lord. LDS Church leaders are perceived as having such authority. Members are advised to receive their own confirmation to revelation, and taught that they can do so. However, such a view on authority makes it easy to relinquish personal responsibility in favor of blind obedience.

Questioning could be dangerous. And while Eliza's parents wanted an education for their daughter, they were also afraid of the damage such questioning might bring. Her inquisitiveness, which had always frustrated her parents, grew to alarm them as they feared that Eliza's questions were evidence of unbelief rather than a desire to understand. The questioning that had been a childhood annoyance served to further separate Eliza from her family.

Eliza's parents were genuinely concerned. Latter-day Saints believe their church to be the only entirely true church on the earth. For a child to fall away from the church is for a child to reject the blessings of the true gospel. The irony of the situation is that the gospel was restored through the questioning of Joseph Smith and a basic teaching of the gospel is that each person must gain her own testimony of its truthfulness. The gospel is founded upon questioning and seeking answers, but still Eliza's parents feared that perhaps her questions would not lead to the right answers.

Nevertheless the questions kept coming. As Eliza learned more about philosophy and science, she found that some of the things she learned at school were not consistent with what she had been taught at church. The confidence that comes with developing the ability to reconcile and adapt beliefs made it possible for Eliza to bring herself through what was perhaps her greatest challenge in reconciling her secular learning with her religious beliefs.
I had a very real concern about evolution. As I studied it in high school, I broached that subject once or twice with my parents, and they said it was all of the devil and I should disregard it. And when I went to college I, I learned about evolution in required classes of biology and science, and as far as I was concerned, evolution did not mean that man came from a monkey. Evolution was the change in species and so I would talk about, "but you can see evolution, you can see it around you," and my parents were just incredibly upset. They got so angry they wouldn't talk to me about [it] and they had the bishop [ward clergy] talk to me. And they told me I just had to stop believing this and they, this was the first time I really saw them study the principles to discover answers to questions as they tried to prove that I shouldn't believe in [evolution]. And I, I worried about bringing a cohesive thing in my mind between the gospel and the things I was learning at college, and it was very difficult.

This incident was the first time Eliza experienced conflict between her school learning and gospel teaching. However the complexity of the incident was compounded by her parents' and clergy's intervention in her learning process. If left to her own understanding, Eliza may well have been able to reconcile conflicts between theories of evolution and creationism. This is evident in her statement that she did not believe evolution meant that humans evolved from monkeys but that it meant change in species. Unfortunately, this resolution was complicated by parents and church leaders as they insisted that evolution and LDS doctrine were contradictory. This was based on their interpretations, not Eliza's, but Eliza was not confident enough in her ability to make independent interpretations and decisions to disregard the dictates of authority figures. Eliza was torn between her desire to create her own knowledge and her learned need
to depend on authorities (Belenky et al., 1986). The issue became so disconcerting for Eliza that she chose to ignore it, hoping that she could either stop thinking about it or perhaps someday understand it.

But this compromise would be short lived. As Eliza progressed through college, she was confronted with a situation that not only forced her to reconfront dualisms between LDS teachings and evolution, but shook the foundations of her belief in the church and its leadership as sources of truth.

I took [a class] called world civilizations and it was taught by the man who was assigned to our ward as a high councilor [representative of local church authorities].... And this particular man then was the teacher of this class and he taught it perfectly straightforwardly as absolute truth that Judaism was no more than a fundamental kind of inbred religion where the ancient Jews invented God to, to go along with their feelings of punishment and anger. And, and taught about Zoro Aster who also had the story of the flood and that this was very clearly before Judaism and so that that couldn't possibly have been a truth but that the Jews had borrowed this, this concept. And it was upsetting to me to hear this man that I perceived as the the voice of the Stake President [presiding church authority within a localized geographic area] teaching that my religion couldn't possibly be true⁴.... And I mentioned my concern only once and my mother threw her hands [up in the air] and cried and went to bed. So I, I worked through all of that on my own.

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⁴ Latter-day Saints believe their religion to be the restoration of the gospel as it was taught during Christ's ministry among the Israelites. Consequently, church members hold a strong connection between their religion and Judaism as they believe the Old Testament to be the account of Christ's dealings with His covenant people—the Israelites. Latter-day Saints believe themselves to be the Lord's modern day covenant people, even declaring membership in the 12 tribes of Israel through either lineage or adoption.
The feeling of being "set apart" may never have been greater for Eliza than it was at this time in her life. She could not turn to family or church leaders, but she also could not find an answer within herself. She was confronted with the greatest dualism she had ever faced—the apparent inconsistencies between not only her church beliefs and what she was learning at school, but also the fact that these inconsistencies were being explicitly taught by a leader. Eliza could not rely on the "Received Knowledge" that had sustained her parents, but she could rely on her intellect which she had developed in dealing with the incongruities between her life experiences and prescribed gender roles. Eliza's narrative of how she reconciled these incongruities relates how the intellectualism and scripture study that had separated, and alienated her from so much of LDS culture, ultimately bound her to that culture.

I studied and read, and studied and read, and prayed and read church books. And tried to, tried to make things in my mind come together and at the time they never did. And so I decided it had to be a matter of faith, and so I prayed again to see if the church was true and, and the answer came that it was.... I studied a lot about evolution on my own then, and I came to, it was a small article by Joseph Fielding Smith, and it talked about theories of evolution. And if you did not believe that Adam was the first man, then you didn't believe in the fall. And if you didn't believe in the fall, you were rejecting the Savior and his sacrifice for us. And so you stood then in real condemnation. And that was really upsetting to me, really upsetting to me because I had developed the theory, in my mind, that perhaps the matter the world had been created from, included dinosaur bones or whatever and that, that's how I would resolve this. And that there were peoples who lived here, who were before Adam.
And so that statement was very upsetting to me, and I would continue to be upset about evolution and the church. I never was upset enough to not go to church or to not have a testimony, but there it was like this (fists hitting each other) in my mind, all grating and upsetting. And I read in the Pearl of Great Price. And it talks about and the God created the plants and told them how to live and then watched until they obeyed. And it says that at every stage of creation, the Gods then watched until they obeyed. And for me that was the answer to every question I had. If it took time enough for the Gods to watch while the plants obeyed, while the seas obeyed, while the animals obeyed, then that to me became the time that all of these things could happen until they were as the Gods wanted them to be. And it just soothed every question in my mind. And these are things that I never dared talk about in [my] ward or to my parents.

Despite the fears of her parents and at least some church leaders, Eliza emerged from her questioning with a stronger testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel, and this experience proved to be important to her development as a Latter-day Saint woman. While seeking for answers to questions was not a frequent teaching in Eliza’s childhood, it is a frequent topic of current church conference talks and literature. An entire article in the Ensign (monthly publication of the church) was devoted recently to how to discern answers to prayers (Barton, 1996). President James E. Faust said at the April, 1996 General Conference that “Member, men and women, may receive inspiration by the gift of the Holy Ghost for their personal lives and for their areas of responsibility” (p. 6).
Personal revelation in the development of testimony has always been part of the gospel, but it wasn't until several years after Eliza's experience that it would be emphasized for women.

I remember I was, I'd probably been married six or seven years when someone of the general authorities started talking about women you need to have your own testimonies. You cannot slide into heaven on your husband's coattails. It is not enough for your husband to go on a mission and learn the scriptures. And you just say well I go to the temple with him; I'm faithful. You need to know the gospel and this was, this was a very new thought. I know that sounds ludicrous now but back then women weren't expected to know the scriptures. We would bare our testimonies but it was our testimonies that we were happy and we loved our husbands and our children and we were grateful for the blessings that we got from Heavenly Father. And there was very much we, we just weren't expected to know the gospel. It was, it was a surprising thing to have things change so that women were expected to know as much as men. And welcome, a welcome change and a frightening change. It was welcome because I knew more, and frightening because I knew now I was expected to know more. And I didn't know as much as I thought I should.

Eliza was ahead of her time in her efforts to seek answers to her questions and gain a personal testimony, and this change made individual responsibility for testimony explicit. However, change is never made without a price and Latter-day Saint women, including Eliza, had to adapt to this change. The alteration of personal beliefs is only one component in the system of cultural change. Mormonism is so intricately tied with the individual that personal change must confront cultural change and this is usually where problems arise.
Ulrich (1994) explores the shock fellow Saints often express at her feminism and fellow feminists express at her Mormonism. Within both cultures, feminism and Mormonism, individuals may hold stereotypical views of the other that hinder change and acceptance between the two cultures. While Ulrich may reconcile feminism and Mormonism, feminists and Mormons are largely unreconciled with each other. For Ulrich there is the sense of being "a woman without a country" (p. 7), a feeling that I think Eliza must have shared as she reconciled her intellect and religion without the two cultures entirely reconciling themselves.

**Conclusion**

The world has changed dramatically between Eliza's childhood and adulthood and those changes have helped shape Eliza's evolving sense of what it means to be educated as an LDS woman. LDS womanhood is evolving. Even the statement "LDS womanhood" implies a commonness among Mormon women that may not exist. Perhaps no point is more clear from Eliza's narratives than that individual relationships to religion, God, and consequently gender-role identity, are personal and intimate. Eliza continues to construct her perception of self and womanhood within her religious beliefs. Each role—lonely child, apprehensive wife, mother, and elect lady—brings deeper definition and refinement to that perception. And deeper security in her value as an LDS woman.

Eliza's journey has meant the overcoming of early feelings of inadequacy, educating her mind and spirit, and integrating her knowledge and talents with her eternal role of motherhood. It has meant intense study and prayer to reconcile her faith with her world. It has meant healing, forgiving herself and
others. It has meant constant, often painful growth. Eliza is still being educated as an LDS woman, but she is at peace with who and what she is.
CHAPTER 6. HANNAH PLAY

Set

The setting is an office. Hannah sits behind a desk working. She is a professional but she could be a professional of a thousand different fields as long as it is one that invites solitude and introspection. The theater is definitely Hannah’s space and the audience must sense that they are guests in her world.

Action

She looks up, perhaps over the top of her glasses.

Looks long and intently, piercingly

Monologue

I can see you’re waiting for something to happen.

I know what that’s like. You’d really be better off going out and doing whatever you need to do to make it happen for yourself. [laughs] I’m sorry, I don’t mean to be rude. I’ve just been thinking lately, about all the time I’ve lost agonizing over things I never should have had to worry about, and it’s hard not to feel bitter about that. I know that I’m ultimately responsible for all the choices I’ve made, but sometimes the external pressures have been so strong that they push me into thinking there’s no other way. And that what I want and what I need don’t matter.

My husband and I are having a really interesting discussion right now about retirement. My husband is significantly older than I am and he’s going to
be ready to retire long before me. I also started my career late, and I’m just now reaching the peak. And no way do I want to retire

[Pause]

But he does.

[Thinking pause]

So this is a great big issue.

He says, interestingly enough, “you’re asking me to keep working when I’m ready to quit. You’re asking me to make a big sacrifice because you’re not ready to quit your job.”

And I said to him, “yes, but I made big sacrifices for you early on.”

He says “you didn’t make any sacrifices for my career.”

[laughs]

He doesn’t, after all these years and all I’ve been through and we’ve been through together, he doesn’t recognize the kinds of sacrifices I’m telling him about.

And so in spite of all the seeming “liberation” of our thinking, of his thinking, my wants and my needs don’t matter

A sacrifice is giving up something for another person. And I am amazed that he does not realize all I gave up for him....How could I be born a woman, be LDS, want a career and not sacrifice?

I was bred to sacrifice, and sacrifice everything to marriage and appearances.
It was so important to get married. [laughs] My mother’s goal for me was to get me married as a virgin [laughs] that was really her goal for me. [laughs again] And that’s what I learned in church too. And anything else that seemed to deflect me from that I didn’t pursue because that seemed to be wrong.

And you can probably imagine the kinds of things that would seem to deflect me from getting married: appearing to be smarter than the boys, being interested in things that wouldn’t lead to marriage. For example, during high school I was selected to attend a special statewide science convention, and I went to it. But I got a lot of flack from boys about this, that I shouldn’t have gone, that it was not appropriate for a girl to do it, and by doing this boys wouldn’t like me as much.

And I was susceptible to those kind of pressures because you know if boys didn’t like me, then I probably wouldn’t date and I probably wouldn’t get married. I would not fulfill my destiny. So I was sacrificing even then. But it wasn’t for something I wanted, only something I thought I had to have.

When I married, I expected that I would sacrifice and I expected that my ambitions couldn’t be fulfilled. I was so conditioned to this that I didn’t make a big deal of the sacrifices at the time. I kept them inside me, but I felt them intensely. I went to the school that was where we lived, not the school I would have preferred to attend. I got the degree that I could get at that school, not the degree I would have preferred to have. I took the job that was available. Not the job I would have sought for myself. So every step of my adult life has been taken with some level of sacrifice.
Now my husband will recognize some of this when I talk to him about it. But the issue is still there, that I should sacrifice for him but he shouldn’t have to sacrifice for me.

And I am angry that the issue is still there.

I was in my mid twenties before I came to the realization that being a woman didn’t have to be the worst thing that ever happened to me. Now isn’t that an issue?

Thirty years ago I never would have had the confidence to disagree with my husband and stand by my opinion the way I do now. Isn’t that an issue?

I am confident that I am right about this and that is incredible. Incredible that I can say that despite all these “issues.”

You see I was raised to believe that a woman deferred to her husband—she had very limited options in life. Ideally she would be a wife, mother, and full-time homemaker. And real life circumstances might make her depart from that somewhat, but it was still the ideal. And as an ideal it was not only what you were supposed to do, but it was supposed to be what you wanted—what would make you happy.

But it wasn’t true. I was miserable being a full-time homemaker.

My family was very religious. I was raised a Latter-day Saint and the church was an integral part of our family life. My parents taught me to keep the
commandments in a very strict way, just really adhere to every rule in the church. And I thought those rules defined what a woman’s role could be in the family, the church, and society.

[Looks intently at the audience]

I don’t think so any more.

It has taken me years to say that without apology—with conviction because I was taught otherwise.

But when I became a full-time housewife and found myself miserable because of it, what was I supposed to do? Here I was doing what I’d been told would make me happy and knowing that something was wrong. I was in turmoil. And I didn’t know how to fix it; I just knew it had to be fixed. And I wondered if there was something wrong with me, if in some way I was not being righteous.

My father would tell a lot of stories illustrating principles. One for example is you never, ever turn down a church calling no matter what you must always accept any calling that comes to you in the church. And he had a fund of stories to tell as to why this was so important. I especially remember him telling the story of his own father, who he said turned down a mission call, and then a few years later became ill and died. And so “see Hannah that’s why you must always accept any call that comes in the church.” I heard that story many times.

And I knew that God had made me a woman and was taught that He had a particular role for women to play. So how could I turn down my calling as a woman by doing things that were supposed to be for men? I probably didn’t ever
think about those two things together—my Dad's stories about accepting all
callings and being a woman—but it was all part of that mindset that no matter
what, you did your duty and you were accountable to God for that.

So here I was doing my duty...and developing a severe case of depression.
I literally could not go on that way. Something had to change. But I didn't know
what.

I'd never been happy with what I was told a woman's role was, but I wasn't
able to question it and think there might be anything different.

So I know what it's like to wait for something and feel powerless in your
waiting, like a blade of grass before it's cut. You can't run. You can't cry out. So
you just wait until the mower comes by and slices you.

I couldn't question the truth of what I was taught. I couldn't run from it,
and I couldn't cry out so I just waited. I grew up. I married young. Got a
bachelor's degree in teaching so I'd have "something to fall back on," as my
parents put it...had a few children. I did what I thought I was supposed to and
then I waited...waited for the happiness to come.

[Waits]

But it didn't. It didn't

I took stock of where I was going at that point, and something incredible
happened. Maybe it was the broader society or maybe it was my own maturity,
but I could see that those things I'd been told were not true. Being a woman
didn't have to restrict me. I could study other things. If I wanted to I could be a
scientist. I didn't have to be a high school teacher.
Now I thought this, but I wasn’t able to act on it all at once. Who knows when you’re relying on memory, maybe I didn’t even think it all at once but my thoughts grew and I couldn’t bury them.

That doesn’t mean I didn’t stop waiting. Waiting often demands a lot of doing and I did a lot of thinking and studying.

You see part of me wondered if I was sinning. That probably sounds silly to you, but it was a very real fear because women’s roles are a strong part of what the LDS church teaches.

And differences between men’s and women’s roles are taught at a very young age. When I was a child we were separated into sex segregated classes for primary, the children’s group. They had names for each of the three class levels. And the first year you were a lark, second year bluebird and the third year seagull and there was a motto that went with each one of these.

[laughs]

For the lark, your motto for that year was “greet each day with a song” and for the bluebird year the motto was “make others happy” and then for the final year “serve gladly.” Greet each day with a song, make others happy, serve gladly. We repeated that motto and I stitched a cross stitch sampler of that. Every girl in primary in the whole church was supposed to do this. So we made this little cross stitch thing. Its supposed to be hung on the wall to remind you that as a girl, as a female, this is what you did, greet each day with a song, make others happy, serve gladly. I can’t think of a better way to socialize the future serving class, which is what we were being socialized to be. I just love those mottoes.
When I think of that, think back to it and how it, you know, our purpose was to create a happy world for others. And part of that of course I think is good, but I also think that can go awry. Which is what I think it has done in some cases in the socialization process.

I think the boys are not being taught to be cheerful and to serve others. The girls were being taught to do that, that was our destiny to make a pleasant life for our future husbands and I think that’s going awry unless everyone is learning to do that for each other. It isn’t just the responsibility of one class of people dependent on their biology, its a responsibility of all of us.

But again it was kind of the dear, empty headed role that females were being socialized to. There was nothing about learn all that you learn, or be all that you can be. It was just be cheerful and make people happy [laughs at the irony] I love it.

So you can imagine with this kind of indoctrination I might be very fearful of making a great sin in taking this step to reconceptualize my possibilities as a woman?

It still amazes me that I had the courage to do it, but I really didn’t have much choice. Despite my fears, I knew I had to change. I realized that I was being limited, my growth was being stopped at a certain level. And I wasn’t going to be able to progress any further unless I made some different choices, different than I had been taught.

And I had been taught that our Heavenly Father wants us to be happy and that we are on this earth to grow and progress. My experience was not coinciding
with what I was told my experience should be. And I could not believe that I was put here to be depressed, miserable, and to commit psychological suicide so that I could follow some prescribed path for how all women ought to behave just because they are women.

So I went back to school. I started making my own decisions and found that most of the time I was right. I started to become the person that had always been in me—the person that I wanted to be.

And with that independence came growth, often painful growth.

I’m still gaining that confidence to make the right decision without having someone else, especially a priesthood leader, tell me what my decision should be. That’s tough to overcome, but I think it is important for me to take that step.

[dramatic beat]

When the ERA was being debated in this state, the church got very involved. And the church leaders decided, the local ones, perhaps with direction from Salt Lake City, I don’t know exactly but in any case we were told how to vote on that issue. We were told to vote “no” so that this state would not ratify the amendment. That was extremely upsetting to me because I saw it as a good amendment, a good issue, and I wanted to vote “yes”. My conscience told me to vote “yes” but my church leaders told me to vote “no.”

And going into that voting booth was agony.
I did what the church leaders told me to do. I voted no.

But when I walked out of that voting booth I said never again are they going to tell me to do something that goes against my conscience.

That was a real turning point for me.

And it was painful seeing that conflict between my conscience and an external directive. It was painful to do something that I felt was wrong. But that was a turning point for me because until I walked out of that booth, I had not made the break to respect my conscience—to be fully responsible, and accountable for myself.

And I was convinced that my eternal salvation depended on that vote. [laughs] You know I was convinced that if I didn’t do it I was damned, I’d never go to the temple again, you know I was on the road to apostasy everything.

But when I was forced to go against what I truly felt was right, those things became less important than my personal integrity.

[laughs] And I don’t know a better way to put it into words, but I changed.

I gained wisdom. I decided that church leaders can ask you to do wrong things and that I can still choose to do right things.

The trade-off is that I now have to take responsibility for ALL my own choices. I cannot blindly follow—comfortable that I do not have to think for myself.

But I would not trade this independence. I would never go back to the misery I felt in the sheltered, smothered, safe life I led before.
[Pause]

I'm still lonely. I still tread lightly—wary that if I push too hard or step too far that I won't be able to even pretend to stay within the mainstream group.

But I am free. My soul is my own and I am at last wholly myself.

Like a dancer in the dark, I twirl and I spin, and I perfect my moves but no one sees me perform. And when I step into the light, they see me still and quiet, and no one knows that I dance.

I think I'm like that because no one, or at least very few people, know how I feel or what I really believe. And if they knew, they would reject me. So I keep dancing in the dark, and I make myself keep hoping that someday I can step into the light and some will want to dance my dance with me.
Background

Hannah is an introspective, quiet woman. She enjoys solitude, which she fills with thought. This pattern of reflection was established when Hannah was very young. Her childhood was spent outdoors in a rural area isolated from other children. She roamed the woods, wandered the beach, and filled her time with imagination, reflection, and being herself. Hannah’s life has crossed many landscapes since childhood, but the reflection, imagination, and appreciation for solitude have remained.

This chapter is an in-depth analysis of how Hannah’s experiences have influenced her actions and perceptions of women’s roles within the LDS church. Specifically I will address the process undertaken by Hannah through which she developed the intellectual independence to arrive at her conception of gender roles. Like most human development this process was neither systematic nor complete. Hannah continues to develop her sense of womanhood and personhood within the LDS faith.

Introduction

As I listened to Hannah and her stories, I sunk deeply into the texts of her life. An image that kept reoccurring in my mind was that of a woman struggling to climb the shear face of a great mountain. I believe this image provides a visual metaphor for the developments of Hannah’s gender-role identity. As the climber begins her ascent, she clings to the wall of rock, not seeing the full shape or form of the mountain she is scaling. She searches for crevices in the rock where she may anchor her hands and feet. This takes her back and forth on the rock’s surface, and while her general direction is up, she sometimes moves down
the rock to find a steadier way to reach the top. Often she struggles for hand holds and her grip on the rock is precarious. At other times she climbs swiftly, confidently—with ease. Her journey up the rock enlarges her understanding of its form, but it is only after she completes the climb and looks over the edge that she can fully comprehend where she is in relation to where she started.

The rock in this metaphor is women’s gender roles. A woman’s understanding of these roles is part of her subjectivity, and as such, is nonunitary. Hannah has not yet completed her climb. She is still creating her understanding of women’s roles. The fluid nature of this journey makes it difficult to categorize its parts. However, Hannah’s process of constructing gender roles may be discussed within three phases: learned constructions of femininity, resistance, and reconstruction of femininity. These phases overlap but they provide a structure for understanding Hannah’s interactions with gender-role identity. This chapter will explore Hannah’s interpretations of LDS womanhood.

Learned Constructions of Femininity: Developing Gender Role Identity

Gender is a problematic term because it carries many meanings. Feminist scholars adopted the term as a way to distinguish between cultural and biological characteristics of femininity and masculinity (Hawkesworth, 1997), but the cultural and biological have become so intermeshed within western thought that few people think of gender as anything less than absolute. Gender, like biological sex, is considered to be something that is natural rather than constructed and gender roles as the appropriate behavior stemming from biological determinism. Davies (1989) work in exploring children’s understanding of gender roles demonstrates that children come to understand the male/female dualism as a system that defines masculinity and femininity in opposition to one another.
Gender is then learned through the interaction of experiences which include family, community, religion, and the myriad of attitudes and institutions that create culture. Children perceive the necessity of aligning themselves with their gender and come to understand that masculinity and femininity are largely defined by behavior. Much of childhood is spent exploring these boundaries and behaviors as children attempt to define themselves within a society that largely perceives identity as unchanging. Hannah's upbringing reinforced these conceptions as she was both explicitly and implicitly taught that gender roles are unalterable and a matter of appearance. Far from being unproblematic, the female role Hannah learned was complex and contradictory.

**Gender Roles**

Hannah's first memories of gender distinctions are as a young child in Sunday School. LDS children's primary classes are coed up until the age of ten at which time the classes are separated by gender. Hannah was the only girl in her age group so before the age of 10 she attended primary classes in which her classmates were all boys. In primary she noticed no differences between how boys and girls were treated. However, in Sunday school which included a larger age range and therefore other girls, she noticed great differences.

There was very much a distinction. The boys dominated and the boys made fun of the girls all the time and for some reason we let them do that. We accepted that we were maybe inferior or somehow not the same as the boys were. I guess I felt like the boys knew that they had a secure place in the church and that they were in a position of power so that they could tease girls who were somewhat inferior or at least they were allowed to do so without any check by adults on it. Boys could do it and they were allowed to do it. [Teachers] laughed it off; they said, 'well that's how boys
are,' and they didn’t punish the boys for it. Girls were expected to exhibit a higher standard of behavior than boys were.

This narrative demonstrates two things about gender socialization in Hannah’s LDS background. The most obvious is that the boys took and were encouraged to take the dominant position in the classes. This passive acquiescence to the male as dominant was given by both girls and teachers, indicating that despite the fact that Hannah does not remember being purposefully socialized as a girl before this time, she probably was. Bloom and Munro (1995) discuss the ways in which patriarchy makes women doubt themselves in the presence of men, effectively disempowering otherwise intelligent, capable women. Patriarchal structures similarly disempowered Hannah as she felt insecure in her worth within the church. Despite the fact that Hannah insists that she always had confidence in her intellectual abilities, she became victim to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.

Even as a young child Hannah recognized the power that patriarchy gives adolescent boys. Boys could anticipate gaining the symbol of power within the church structure—the priesthood. Theirs was a future of manhood, importance, and authority while girls had a future of service. Motherhood made women important to the aims in the church but they were unimportant to the church structure (Wallace, 1986). It should be noted that the priesthood within the LDS church predominantly operates within a service capacity. Men do not receive financial rewards or “perks” for their priesthood service which is often tedious and time consuming. However, the Church leadership and authority rest with the priesthood. Consequently, there is an implied and practiced power associated with holding the priesthood that is understood by church members (See Chapter 3: Deconstruction). Hannah shared this understanding, and within the context
of these power imbalances, accepting harassment from boys seemed the only viable option.

Secondly, gender was measured largely by the appearance or behavior of individuals. Hannah states that the teachers understood the boys’ teasing and dominance to be acceptable behavior. Conversely, Hannah states that girls were expected to exhibit a higher and consequently different standard of behavior. This behavior is passive acceptance of male dominance. The implication is that dominance by girls would not have been tolerated. The dynamics of Hannah’s Sunday School foreshadowed the power relationships she would live as an adult. Of course the “teasing” would manifest itself in less infantile forms but the dominance of men over women would remain. It is ironic that female passivity was regarded as a “higher standard of behavior.” Perhaps, the girls’ non-reaction was a more noble, mature response, but it constructed a framework that bound girls to subservience. Walkerdine (1994) writes about how girls are socialized to “perform” a feminine role that requires better behavior. Good behavior is then attributed as the girl’s cause for success rather than superior ability, an act that undermines girls’ intelligence and talents. Similarly, requiring young girls to take a passive role in their interactions with boys teaches girls to be submissive. Submission then comes to be thought of as a natural female quality rather than a learned behavior. Girls’ success may be attributed to obedience rather than ability and accounted for in such a way that it is not a threat to male superiority. Girls like Hannah could achieve some success without threatening the legitimacy of patriarchy.

By the time Hannah reached adolescence the dualism between gender roles with male as dominant and female as submissive was thoroughly
ingrained in the minds of Hannah and her peers. Hannah recalls an experience in the ninth grade where she consistently got the top grade in her algebra class.

The boys were angry at me because I was showing them up so a couple of them took me aside and they explained to me that girls were not supposed to do better than boys on exams and that if I did continue to get better grades, no one would ever want to date me. Well that was exactly the right kind of a threat to make against someone who had been socialized [at] church and home that my goal was to be married and if, you know, no one would want to date me, then of course I was never going to end up married. So it was the perfect threat. I pondered that for a while and then I made the conscious decision not to get the highest grade on every exam thereafter. And I, honestly, I could manipulate what I was doing as I took the exam and I would choose three or four questions to miss so that I could be sure that some boy would also be able to get an equal or higher grade than me. But I wasn't willing to go so far that I would sacrifice getting an A, but I would take a low A instead of a high A.

This experience demonstrates several things. First, traditional and subservient roles for women were so ingrained in Hannah that she was not only willing, but felt it was necessary, to "dumb down" her academic performance to better fit these norms. Preserving the fiction of femininity, that is, behaving as if she were less capable than able boys, was of greater importance than the reality of her academic talents. Second, school reinforced the gender roles Hannah was learning at church and at home. Oppressive gender roles were pervasive throughout all of society and the gender-role identity conflict Hannah experienced was not only the product of her religious teachings but of the interaction among countless experiences and attitudes. Hannah did not grow up
in a predominantly LDS community. Religiously she was very much a minority and her experiences at school showed that the community and the church held similar beliefs about gender roles. Third, traditional roles for women were thoroughly ingrained in Hannah’s peers. Hannah, the boys in her class, and presumably other girls were active supporters of the maintenance of rigid gender roles. Davies (1989) found that children perceived gender roles as moral and actively tormented peers into expressing gender appropriate behavior. Davies writes of young children who believed that “people who behaved outside of their assigned gender were to be censured, and punished, no matter how painful that might be for them as individuals, and no matter how much, privately, they might enjoy ‘incorrect’ activities” (p. 51-52). And finally, successfully fulfilling women’s roles included marriage. This last point is crucial because women’s roles revolved around the care of family and home. Fulfilling these roles required specific skills and girls were trained in these skills at early ages. The mottoes for young adolescent LDS girls are indicative of the roles these girls were eventually expected to fill.

The three years for the girl were: the first year you were a lark, second year bluebird and the third year seagull. And there was a motto that went with each one of these. For the lark, your motto for that year was “greet each day with a song.” And for the bluebird year the motto was “make others happy.” And then for the final year, “serve gladly.” Greet each day with a song, make others happy, serve gladly. We repeated that motto and I stitched a cross stitch sampler of that. Every girl in primary in the whole church was supposed to do this. So we made this little cross stitch thing. Its supposed to be hung on the wall to remind you that as a girl, as a
female, this is what you did: greet each day with a song, make others happy, serve gladly.

Women's role was a role of service and self sacrifice. There was no mention of be happy but of make others happy, and it was understood that happiness would be achieved through service. Just as in her early Sunday School class, Hannah was taught a "higher" role or standard of behavior that included sacrifice of personal desires to the comfort of others. Hannah adds:

I can't think of a better way to socialize the future serving class, which is what we were being socialized to be.... You know our purpose was to create a happy world for others and part of that of course I think is good. But I also think that can go awry, which is what I think it has done in some cases in the socialization process.

Hannah acknowledges that it is important to teach children to be humble and serve, but feels it has gone awry in that it has contributed to a subservient, almost caste system within the church in which women are perceived as inferior. And this inferior status has a powerful effect on the self. Consequently, Hannah emerged from adolescence with a view of femininity as: generally passive, service oriented, inferior to masculinity, based on behavior rather than ability or desire, submissive, and domestic.

**Splitting the female self**

Latter-day Saint scriptures state that "men are, that they might have joy" (The Book of Mormon, p. 59) and this scripture is interpreted to apply to all humankind. The general purpose of women's roles as serving others and even to some extent passivity is good. After all, we do not want a world in which selfishness and untamed aggression reign. Surely the world is a better place when parents are willing to forego a full night's sleep to care for a sick child and
drivers will calmly continue down the road without stopping to confront another driver who has cut them off. But passivity and service are general qualities that have endless expressions. Appropriate restraint and commitment to service may be demonstrated in any occupation or circumstance. However, Hannah had learned that her female gender did not just prescribe passive restraint and a service oriented life, but it required that these traits be practiced in an exclusively domestic capacity—as full-time housewife and mother. Only the economics of survival, as opposed to desire or ambition, could justify any alteration of this role.

Hannah was told that as a woman she would have a particular role to play. Her talents and ambitions largely did not suit that role. She was told that living within traditional gender role guidelines would make her happy. She was miserable. She knew she was smart. She knew she was talented. However, she thought these abilities would have to be buried. The incongruities between the traditional role for which she believed she was made and the nontraditional role that fit her desires and talents were great. Paradox that had been so often present during LDS Church's history (Wallace, 1986) was presenting itself in Hannah's life; however, she was unable at this time to reconcile these differences in such a way that she could be happy and confident in her interpretation of femininity.

Krieger (1991) writes about how the female identity is generally less self-assured than male identity because women can take nothing about the underpinnings of their lives for granted. In many cases women are the underpinnings. "Women learn to lose themselves to others more often than men do. They are familiar with the work of keeping others afloat" (Krieger, 1991 p. 45); in Hannah's case, however, she felt herself sinking with no one to buoy her up. While serving others is valuable, Hannah perceived that boys were not
being taught the same types of skills. This left no one to care for the intellectual and emotional well-being of women, as girls were taught to be caregivers of others, and not caregivers of selves. Hannah adds, "There was nothing about 'learn all that you can learn,' or 'be all that you can be.' It was just be cheerful and make people happy."

We all become adept at living with contradictions. Our world and our lives are full of things that do not fit, but sometimes the contradictions are so glaring that we cannot forever suppress our need to confront paradox and change it. This was the case with Hannah. By the time she was in her mid-twenties she had married and borne two children, but she was not a happy person. As a young adult Hannah had followed her father's advice and buried her desire to become a scientist. Instead she became a teacher, a wife, a mother of two children, and a seriously depressed woman.

Resistance

The segmentation of this chapter, learned constructions of femininity, resistance, and reconstruction, may suggest that these categories are discrete within Hannah's life experience. This is not the case. Like the rock climber discussed at the chapter's beginning, Hannah has frequently crossed between the categories of resistance and reconstruction and continues to move within and between these categories. However, general patterns of resistance and reconstruction have emerged. The remaining two sections of this chapter will highlight these patterns, yet the process of resistance and reconstruction is fluid, often happening simultaneously and unconsciously.

Hannah attributes the depression she experienced in her twenties to not being permitted to be herself. Hannah wanted to become a scientist. She wanted to have a career, but she was being forced into the narrow role of full-time
housewife. In Hannah’s words, she felt like she was “committing psychological suicide” by denying the part of herself that yearned for intellectual expression and the opportunity to build and share knowledge with the world. Hannah’s agony was compounded by the fact that spiritually, she believed God wanted her to be happy. Yet by following the course prescribed by religious authorities, she was miserable. Like the tragic heroine of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s novelette, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1993) Hannah was trapped within a place and time that would not allow her self expression. While Gilman’s character is driven to madness, Hannah sunk into deep depression because she could not be herself. She felt denied the possibility of building knowledge and realizing her dreams. Bloom (1996) reminds us that oppressive patriarchy subverts women’s sense of self as “women’s subjectivity—is... thought to be continually fragmenting from daily experiences living with the pervasive hierarchical, patriarchal structuring of sexual difference through which women learn to internalize negative and conflicting ideas about what it means to live as a woman” (p. 178). Throughout adolescence Hannah internalized the notions of female as inexplicably inferior to male. She recalls feeling it was deeply unfair for God to create two classes of people, but remained unable to reconcile the contradiction between God as author of prejudice and God as loving parent for all humanity. Hannah’s conception of women’s roles and status was negative as the narrow role prescribed for women prevented Hannah from fulfilling her career aspirations. She was unable to be happy in an exclusively traditional female role, and she was confused by a religious faith that brought her peace and joy yet seemed to prescribe her misery with inflexible notions of women’s roles.
Making Changes Independently

Beck (1994) studies the intense gender conflict experienced by LDS women who feel pulled by both traditional and feminist roles. The reasons for this pull may vary from financial need to personal fulfillment, but in either case, the woman experiences conflict in trying to determine what actions she should take to resolve this dilemma in a way that meets her needs. Beck calls this dilemma a "double bind" in which women experience contradictory demands that hold some sort of punishment for the violation of those of demands. The "punishment" may be psychological or social, but the woman is in a no-win situation. Living with contradictory expectations is stressful and causes many women to experience a split in their selfhood as they try to satisfy one set of demands at the expense of the other. Hannah describes her early twenties as a time of extreme pain as she maintained a traditional homemaker role that starved her need for education and career. Beck maintains that women in this "double bind" often resolve it by neither abandoning nor compromising between feminist and traditional ideals, but by reevaluating gender roles as they relate to their life experiences and intuitive beliefs. The women then create independent conceptions of appropriate gender role behavior and use these ideas to guide their actions. This essential paradigm shift allows women to hold beliefs that are both feminist and traditional without aligning themselves with either world view. This new stance is not just a placing of themselves at some midpoint on a dualistic continuum of traditionalism and feminism, but is rather the creation of a new continuum as these women define gender roles and expectations on internal rather than external criteria or behaviors. Beck calls these women "internally defined."
Bloom and Munro’s (1995) work with women administrators explores how subjectivity is non-unitary as the sense of Self is constantly changing. One result of this constant flux is that people hold multiple and contradictory beliefs and perform multiple and contradictory actions. Bloom and Munro discuss the ways in which the women they studied demonstrated liberated, rebellious behavior while at the same time accommodating sexist systems. Hannah found herself living within the parameters of a sexist gender role system which she could not fully accept. However, she had a testimony that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was true. Personally justifying conflicting ideas can be a schizophrenic-like task. It is little wonder that Hannah felt her selfhood was in mortal danger.

**The Pain of Change**

Shifting mental paradigms creates trauma. Hannah describes the period of her life leading to and following her decision to pursue a career as excruciating. Her pain prior to making the decision resulted from her unhappiness in an exclusively traditional feminine role. Following the decision, she was tormented by self-doubt about the “righteousness” of her decision and fear that she was perhaps damaging her family and her own eternal salvation. Beck (1994) theorizes that stress over role conflict and this double bind may be more intense for Mormon women than for non-Mormon women because Mormon women believe that their eternal salvation depends on making the right choices in mortality. Consequently, an LDS woman may feel that all of eternity hangs on making the correct choice. Hannah shared this fear and for years it haunted her as she second guessed the wisdom of her choice to pursue a non-traditional female role. She did not waiver from her decision because she knew she could
not be happy in a traditional female role, but her pain was increased by the criticism and alienation she felt from other Church members, especially women.

Heilbrun (1988) writes that throughout history women have been forbidden anger, the desire for power, and control over their own lives and have taken refuge in depression or madness. Virginia Woolf and Charlotte Perkins Gilman are only two women whose lives ended in madness and/or suicide. Hannah’s refuge was depression. She felt unable to fulfill her need to learn and share knowledge, to have a career and contribute to humankind’s understanding of the world. She was denied the fullness of life experience. Pipher (1994) discusses Alice Miller’s (1990) work in The Drama of the Gifted Child and how Miller describes the ways in which the selves of children are split into a false and true self. The false self is the socially accepted self while the true self is the real person complete with all her interests, desires, and ambitions. After an extended period of repression, the true self withers, perhaps even dying, causing great trauma for the child.

Pipher’s (1994) work focuses on contemporary adolescent girls and how the culturally imposed splitting of the self leads to destructive lives; however, the concept of splitting the self is applicable to the experiences of young girls well before the 1980s and 90s. Pipher writes that, “Whatever the outward form of the depression, the inward form is the grieving for the lost self, the authentic girl who has disappeared with adolescence. There’s been a death in the family” (p. 150). Hannah grieved for the person she wanted to become but was denied due to the culturally placed limits on her gender. Pipher discusses the pain such splitting causes and how this splitting of the self stems from a loss of authenticity. “Authenticity is an ‘owning’ of all experience, including emotions and thoughts that are not socially acceptable. Because self-esteem is based on the
acceptance of all thoughts and feelings as one's own, girls lose confidence as they 'disown' themselves. They suffer enormous losses when they stop expressing certain thoughts and feelings” (p. 38). Hannah suffered this type of loss when she stopped expressing the intelligence that demonstrated that she was just as smart or smarter than any boy in her school. However, unlike many of the girls and women Pipher worked with, Hannah never forgot her true potential. She made the effort to appear stereotypically feminine, but inside herself she remembered that she was intelligent, capable, and that the things she was being taught about women's roles did not seem right. Hannah's self was split, but she was still aware of what she was repressing.

The circumstances of LDS women may make them especially vulnerable to feelings of inadequacy and a split sense of self. Beck (1994) describes an experience she had serving as a panelist at an LDS women's conference. The panel focused on balancing career and family and, coincidentally, closely followed an address given by Mormon prophet, Ezra Taft Benson. President Benson's address affirmed the traditional role of women and criticized women in the workplace. The intimate, congenial discussion Beck anticipated turned into a desperate debate in which women trying to be independent, career minded, successful wives and mothers, and devoted Mormons, described themselves as 'torn in two,' 'ripped in half,' and 'split in pieces.' These phrases are similar to those Hannah uses to describes her loss of self as she was constrained by culture to repress her ambitions. She recalls feeling in her mid-twenties that she was literally faced with self destruction unless she acted on her felt need to be her true self—the true self that was always in her, the true self that had to be. In Hannah's eyes the further education and career that had been a
dream was becoming a necessity of survival, but it was a necessity that according to everything she had been taught was beyond the scope of a woman.

**Confronting Contradiction**

Hannah recognized the conflict between the traditional role she was told should make her content and the true desires of her heart. By her mid-twenties she could no longer ignore these contradictions. Hannah says of a traditional woman’s gender role:

> It didn’t match reality. It didn’t match the reality of my life and because it didn’t match the reality of my life I decided it wasn’t really a universal commandment. I never felt that that’s really what Heavenly Father wanted for me even though that’s what other people said... but I had personal revelation for myself.”

Iannaccone and Miles (1990) state that within the LDS faith only husband, children, and God can release women from traditional gender role behavior. Hannah’s statement that traditional behaviors were not what Heavenly Father wanted for her and that she knew this as a result of personal revelation give Hannah the “out” that Iannaccone and Miles identify. She is able to deviate from the LDS norm with the sanctity of God. Thus while Hannah takes responsibility for her decision, she is justified by God.

Hannah continued to actively seek divine guidance and affirmation for her decisions. She prayed for guidance in making her decisions and depended on personal revelation to guide or temper her actions.

Another thing that gave me strength in following the path was that... in prayer, I found a peace about it. I didn’t ever hear a voice or have any really dramatic spiritual experience, but I felt peace like it was all right. [And that peace has] gotten stronger.
Hannah's reliance on a patriarchal God to excuse her from traditional gender roles seems to subvert the feminist qualities of her actions. On the one hand, Hannah actively abandons domestic ties to full-time homemaking and childrearing that are imposed by patriarchal structures; however, she does so by appealing to the ultimate of patriarchal symbols, a male God. The means seem to contradict the end. Bloom and Munro (1995) discuss the ways in which women's narratives may reveal both rebellion and acceptance of patriarchal structures. Bloom and Munro suggest that these seeming contradictions are a natural phenomenon of nonunitary subjectivity. That is, conceptions of self constantly change as individuals interact within societies. Inconsistencies in behavior do not reveal flaws in women's reasoning so much as they reveal the complexity of the human soul.

Hannah's appeal to God for guidance in deviating from traditional women's roles demonstrates the complexity of Self and of religion. Within Hannah's life experiences, appealing to God for affirmation regarding gender-role identity is necessary if she is to remain a part of the LDS faith. To neglect input from God in making major life choices is to disregard God as real, as omnipotent, and as interested in the individual. The God of Mormonism possesses all these characteristics, and it is God whom Hannah credits with providing her greatest strength. If Hannah were no longer to believe in this God, she would no longer believe in the LDS faith. There would be no religious gender role conflict for her to resolve because she could discount the religion as false. Bloom and Munro (1995) note that while the women they worked with demonstrated both rebellion and acceptance of patriarchal structures, they resisted these structures by redefining their conceptions of power. Hannah resists in a similar way. To fully rebel against LDS patriarchal structures would
completely remove Hannah from the Mormon church. However, redefining patriarchal power within the Church allows Hannah to resist what she considers the oppressive aspects of LDS patriarchy while remaining part of the group. She does this by *redefining* women's relationship with God rather than *rejecting* God. Hannah states that:

I think [being able to find peace in living a nontraditional women's role is] partly understanding God better and getting more of a personal relationship instead of having it filtered through an authority. You know instead of it being filtered through a mediator, going directly to our Heavenly Father and getting answers. But I had to develop the courage to do that. I had to develop the confidence that I was worthy of an answer. I was really raised up in a situation where only men got answers to prayer, or, or men got better answers or their prayers were more worthwhile and that women were the passive recipients of all knowledge as it was filtered through men from God.

This narrative reveals Hannah's reliance on the LDS doctrines of belief in God and Jesus Christ and personal revelation. However, Hannah has reinterpreted these concepts so that women possess the right and power to personal revelation from deity. Consequently Hannah is able to escape the trap of LDS domesticity without relinquishing her ties to the LDS faith. This escape demands both the abandoning and the rebuilding of gender roles within the Latter-day Saint religion. At this point it is important to note that the LDS church places great importance on personal revelation as a means to guide one's life. However, interpretations of how personal revelation may be used vary. Hannah grew up in a situation where she was taught that women do not have
equal access to personal revelation. This interpretation varies widely within the 
LDS community.

**Reconstruction of Femininity**

Hannah took a risk and decided to go back to school and pursue a career. For the first time Harmah deeply examined womanhood and decided that it did not prescribe an exclusively domestic role. She made the shift to becoming an internally defined woman (Beck, 1994) who had created her own criteria for feminine success. But how was Hannah, a young woman from a traditional background, living a traditional life, able to make this type of paradigm shift? Women's careers were not supported by LDS culture or practice and the fact that Hannah made this choice demonstrates the emotional suffering she felt in being limited to a traditional role. LDS history abounds with contradictions that Latter-day Saints have had to resolve in their lives and perhaps this inherited acceptance of paradox is one reason Hannah was able to live with these contradictions for so long, and certainly a reason the decision making process was so difficult. It was ultimately a personal paradigm shift that allowed Hannah to make and act on her decision.

Hannah came to believe first that she was capable of reasoning out what she should do for her life, second that as a woman she was worthy of receiving personal revelation, and third that her personal revelation could outweigh the advice and admonitions of church leaders. While Hannah's actions would indicate that this paradigm shift came about suddenly, it really developed over several years. Bloom (1996) discusses the work of Sartre in which he explains that lives are cyclical. Individual acts of resistance create precedents for later resistance. A story from Hannah's high school years was such an event. As a class assignment, Hannah visited several churches and attended their religious
services. At one church, members of the congregation and the minister noticed Hannah and her friends as visitors. The church members and clergy began arguing over who should receive credit for the arrival of visitors. The argument became heated and Hannah was afraid. She remembers thinking, “I wish that I were a boy that had the priesthood because I could use the priesthood right now to stop these evil things that are happening here.” Almost immediately Hannah thought to herself, “wait a minute, you can pray to Heavenly Father, you don’t need to have the priesthood in order to ask for help in this scary situation.”

Although this act was private and simple, it was also a form of resistance. Hannah’s first response was helplessness. She felt powerless without a male priesthood holder to take care of her. However, when she concluded that she could receive divine help without a man serving as a mediator, she was able to take control of the situation and help herself. While young Hannah did not label this a feminist act, her refusal to remain passive in this scary situation had feminist implications. This proved to be an important step in developing spiritual independence and responsibility. Hannah gained confidence that she could receive help from God. Without this confidence, Hannah would not have been able to trust her feelings enough to take the action of going back to school and pursuing a career.

I knew that if I didn’t follow that route, I... would be destroyed as a person. That’s pretty strong; that’s really strong. I think I used the term psychological suicide before. That’s really, really what it would have been and I knew that for sure for me.... I knew I had to do it to survive. I would have been crippled. I would not have been a healthy human being if I hadn’t done this. And I felt quite certain that I wasn’t placed here on earth to be an emotional cripple through my own actions.
Hannah describes it as a time of incredible anguish and even bitterness, a time when she thought she was doing the right thing but did not yet have the assurance in her decision that brings confidence and peace. I asked Hannah how, at this time in her life when she was beginning to develop her internal identity of femininity, she would have responded to a question about what the role of women in the LDS church was.

I would have angrily told you that I’d been told all my life it’s to be a mother, but I think a woman can do more than that. A woman can also have a job and a family, can do both. I would have said that with a lot of guilt because I was beginning to believe that. And I wanted to believe it. But I felt it was going against everything that I had always been taught and everything that had been authoritatively taught to me. And who was I, a twenty-five year old female for heaven sakes, to know better.... I thought I was going against the prophet; I was going against what all of the leaders of the church had always said is that there is one role for a woman and it is not having a career. [But] There was just something within me that had, had to be used, had to be expressed, which just kept pushing me that direction. It was something that couldn’t be denied. It couldn’t be suppressed so I didn’t know where I was going to end up necessarily but just something from within kept pushing me, making me go that direction.

In making this paradigmatic shift, Hannah was beginning to rely more on her definitions of womanhood than on those of her church leaders. Her repetition of the fact that something within her kept pushing her in that direction is a reference to the personal drive she felt and the self-confidence that was inspiring that drive. Hannah’s sense of gender-role identity was not only
based on intuition, but also resulted from personal scripture study, prayer, and study of the words of church leaders. The confidence Hannah had developed in her ability to reason and make logical, correct decisions was necessary for her to be able to take this action. Hannah still experienced extreme personal conflict. On one level she thought she might be going against the prophet, but she also found strength for her choice in prophetic council about the purpose of life and eternity. There was a great deal of criticism for the choices she was making, but this criticism seemed to come mostly from local leaders and church members who did not necessarily have authority to speak for what Hannah should do with her life. Self-confidence helped maintain her through this initial attempt to act responsibly upon her beliefs and actions.

Pipher (1994) talks about how adult women may have to confront the gender roles and biases they are taught and experience from adolescence through adulthood. These women experience extreme sadness and anger.

Often there are tears, angry outbursts, sadness for what has been lost. So much time has been wasted pretending to be who others wanted. But also there's a new energy that comes from making connections, from choosing awareness over denial and from the telling of secrets.

We work now, twenty years behind schedule. We reestablish each woman as the subject of her life, not as the object of others' lives. We answer Freud's patronizing question 'What do women want?' Each woman wants something different and particular and yet each woman wants the same thing—to be who she truly is, to become who she can become" (p. 26).

This is precisely what Hannah wanted, to be allowed to be the person she wanted to become. However, achieving this required Hannah to accept the privilege and
responsibility of intellectual autonomy. Hannah could not make the leap to independence with one step but had to have successes and personal religious experiences that validated her beliefs and the choices she would make based upon those beliefs. Only by being true to these internal beliefs could she be an emotionally healthy and productive person—the kind of person God wanted her to be.

Hannah is adamant that her decision to pursue a non-traditional female role is not the result of changing personhood so much as it is the result of claiming personhood. This choice of words indicates how fragmented Hannah's sense of selfhood had become. Through her adolescent years of socialization she had not developed a firm conception of who she was, so much as she developed a firm conception of other's expectations of who she should be. The phrase, "it was always in me," was frequent in her narratives. However, freeing her true self was a personal, conscious, and laborious process. Hannah studied and reasoned the decision out, trusting in the integrity of her intellect because she had developed confidence in these strengths. She saw conflicts in the church's advocacy of gender roles and attributed these contradictions to cultural traditions that had become so enshrined in LDS practice as to be accepted by most church members as doctrine (see Chapter 3: Deconstruction, for a discussion of some of these LDS beliefs and practices).

Conclusion

Through the life long process of learning gender roles, resisting those roles, and consequently reinventing femininity, Hannah has been able to
develop independence and confidence. Like the rock climber discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Hannah believes she is making progress towards her goals and that she better understands what it means to be a woman in the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, the price she has paid is high. In exchange for personal peace and understanding, Hannah has forfeited the ability to feel as though she truly belongs to the group of saints. Her climb is lonely. She perceives that the structure and cultural practices of the Church isolate her and paralyze discussions of gender roles within the LDS community.

I feel an outsider in many ways. I feel like there are things I cannot share with others in the community. Actually I think there are a lot of people that I could [share] these things with but the structure is such that you cannot share things because you’re immediately judged by someone else in the community.... Only certain things are allowed to be said. Only certain roles are acceptable. I never talk about my work at church and nobody wants to know about it. Its easier to pretend that this person who doesn’t quite fit the model isn’t doing these other things. You know we don’t have to deal with it so in that sense I don’t, I don’t belong in that I don’t fit the one pattern that can belong unqualifiedly, and that is the woman who does crafts and wears a lace collar.

In her work with contemporary LDS women, Beck (1994) found that most internally defined women who believed in the appropriateness of non-traditional gender role behaviors felt isolated, as though no one else shared their beliefs. They were afraid, and in many cases unable, to discuss their beliefs with
other church women because of fear of being judged negatively and
misunderstood. Ironically, almost all women felt they were alone in their non-
traditional role beliefs. Challenges to gender-role norms in the LDS church were
considered so taboo that perhaps thousands of women felt isolated when in
reality their beliefs were closely aligned with their neighbor's. Hannah
experiences a similar isolation in which the structure and culture of the Church
make it difficult for her to find allies in other women and solace in acceptance.

I believe this is the saddest part of Hannah's tale because the gospel of
Jesus Christ is a gospel of eternal love and companionship with humankind.
The development of sisterhood that is supposed to be such an integral part of the
Church suffers when rigid parameters are placed on gendered behaviors and
interactions by church membership. It is in the dogmatism of maintaining
narrow interpretations of role behaviors that the church membership fails in
succeeding at the task those roles are supposed to uphold—the strengthening of
individuals and families in their quest to become more like Christ. It is fitting
that even this final point is contradictory because Hannah does concede some
level of acceptance. She has contributed much to the LDS community and in
those contributions has achieved a begrudging acceptance by others. Sadly, the
sense of community and fellowship that the LDS church strives to create has
been largely absent. It was her trust in God, Self, and support of her husband that
made it possible for Hannah to conceive and create a life for herself that brought
happiness. Ironically this life was not within the options she perceived from her
family and church leaders. Rather than drawing on the organization of the
church for strength, she had to create her own conception of what it meant to be a woman in the gospel.

I think I’ve had to come at that all by myself. I don’t think I ever learned that in church or from others. I think that has come by meditation, by reading the scriptures. Perhaps each one of us has to create our own faith in a sense and I think that’s how I’ve come to it.

Hannah is working toward the goals the LDS church is ultimately designed to support. She is striving to become more like Christ. She is working to perfect herself and her family and she is trying to develop a Christ like love for others. She is scaling the mountain the Church would have her climb, but has only been able to do this by seeking her own path. Perhaps clearing one’s own trail holds some merit, but is it the way in which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would truly want to support women?
CHAPTER 8. ARTS-BASED INQUIRY

Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping. If not, you will of course throw the whole of it into the wastepaper basket and forget all about it. (Woolf, 1929, p. 3)

Virginia Woolf wrote these words well before postmodernism hit the shore of educational research, but her thoughts reflect much of what postmodernism has forced us to confront in our thinking about inquiry and knowledge. When we question the foundations of absolute Truths, institutions, and values, and demystify reality so that we see we have created it, then the nature of inquiry itself also falls into question. Art-based research, or research that uses artistic formats and/or techniques, is one branch of this question.

Barone and Eisner (1997) define arts-based research as “the presence of certain aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry and its writing” (p. 73). This definition holds two parts: the representation of research, or what Barone and Eisner refer to as its writing, and the nature of research or inquiry. Preceding the analysis chapters on Eliza and Hannah, I have included a narrative interpretation of their life stories in the form of two one woman shows. The inclusion of the plays was justified as a format through which emotive aspects of the research could be expressed and a non-researcher audience could be reached. The plays have served both these functions and have provided an excellent format for the representation of this research. However, an additional benefit of the artistic process has been its use as a methodological tool, or its influence on my research process. I will first discuss the background of arts-based research then focus on arts-based research as representation and finally arts-based research as methodology.
Background

In his 1993 presidential address to the American Educational Research Association, Elliot Eisner (1993) discussed the changing forms of understanding in educational research and the consequences for education these new understandings may hold. Many of these potential changes focus on research and teaching within colleges of education. Eisner noted:

As the relevance of different forms of representation for understanding schooling grows, schools of education will be pressed to develop programs that help students learn how to use them. Film, for example, will need to be regarded not only as a way of showing pictures but as a way of understanding some aspects of schooling, teaching, and learning, that cannot be understood as well in any other way. Furthermore, the artistic features of film are not merely ornamental but essential to the display of particular messages. Thus, the refinement of both artistic and scientific sensibilities...is relevant for enlarging human understanding. (p. 9)

Eisner challenged educational researchers and practitioners to engage in inquiry that would bypass comfort zones by redefining how we think about mind, understanding, and meaning.

Eisner's challenge is not without precedent. The last several years have seen the questioning of science, foundations, and "Truth" in all its forms and across many disciplines. Research within the postmodern, feminist, multicultural, and critical theory perspectives questions the preeminence of the scientific method's way of "knowing" the world and the existence of absolute truth. Conceptions of knowledge as created rather than found resonate with the possibility of art having a place in research (Eisner, 1985). If a constant does exist, it seems to be that there are no constants.
Change inevitably touches all individuals, institutions, and rites, including the academy. Issues of arts-based research have been approached from a variety of perspectives. Visweswaran (1994) provides a lengthy description of the ways in which anthropologists of previous generations have experimented with narrative texts. She identifies this as experimental ethnography and argues that anthropologists should pay serious attention to experimental ethnography and the benefits it may bring to research. These benefits relate to issues of communicating more emotive aspects of research and expanding the opportunities for multiple perspectives.

The use of narrative in social science research is becoming increasingly common. While Visweswaran (1994) focuses on experimental ethnography as narrative, experimental formats may take other artistic forms. Sociologists such as Richardson (1993, 1992), Richardson and Lockridge (1991), and McCall and Becker (1990) have experimented with poetry and theater as alternative formats for presenting research at least since 1987, and McCall and Becker have challenged colleagues to experiment with performance as a means to present research.

Since the beginnings of alternative formats in contemporary research, the use of experimental formats has grown as has the number of alternative format supporters. Alternative formats have been sympathetically written about by numerous scholars (Barone, 1995; Behar, 1995; Eisner, 1993; Emihovich, 1995; Hernández, 1995; Visweswaran, 1994) with the implication being that alternative formats have much to offer. However, not everyone, even those who experiment with alternative formats, is convinced. Wolf, (1992) in her widely read book A Thrice Told Tale, includes a fictional account yet argues that fiction is no substitute for well written ethnography. Wolf goes on to warn social
scientists against blurring the boundaries that lie between fiction and research. Emihovich (1995) describes the experience of sitting in a lecture hall while folklorist and ethnographer, Peggy Sanday\(^5\), told her personal story of a near gang rape experience. Her confessional tale horrified the audience while moving them differently than could have any other technique.

While Emihovich (1995) praises alternative formats, she advises her readers that only the established and tenured can get away with this type of expression. But why the double talk? Why does Wolf’s fictional account of an experience in Taiwan need rhetoric about how fiction is not ethnography? Why the audience’s discomfort in hearing Sanday describe a personal experience with gang rape, particularly when gang rape was the invited topic of her address? Why, if alternative formats make a legitimate contribution to research, do we maintain the attitude that those creating alternative formats are getting away with something? These examples represent the confusion within the research community about the relationship between alternative formats and research and how these formats should be used and evaluated. While many educational researchers believe arts-based inquiry holds potential, few are able to articulate the form and function in educational research that art may take.

Researchers have sought to incorporate the arts into inquiry for a variety of reasons and means. Advocates argue that art provides an avenue for diversity in research as it provides multiple ways of communicating and viewing the world (Barone & Eisner, 1997, Paley & Jipson, 1997, & Findley and Knowles, 1995). This expansion of possibilities extends to the ways in which we envision research itself as Findley and Knowles state: arts-based research “extends the answer to the question ‘what is research?’” (p. 140) and provides additional

\(^5\) See also Sanday. 1990 and Sanday. 1996
avenues for communicating the emotions, desires, and drives of the people about whom research is done.

One way in which art is able to do this is by providing the opportunity for vicarious experiences (Eisner, 1985). In this way individuals may be able to understand viewpoints or experiences that they would otherwise never have. Consequently, the presentation of research is beginning to change. The American Educational Research Association now has a special interest group devoted to arts-based research, and has also held several winter institutes devoted to the topic. Interest in arts-based research is growing. Confusion and skepticism, even among advocates and practitioners of arts-based research, remains as we struggle to comprehend the intersection of art and research and what might be created between them.

**Forms of Arts-based Research**

Arts-based inquiry is a newcomer to educational research. Although Eisner has been advocating the use of art in educational research for many years, the research community has been slow to accept this possibility and even slower to create research that experiments with arts-based forms (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995). I believe much of this hesitancy has been due to the educational research community's inability to comprehend how art might influence educational inquiry and its practice. While individuals well versed and experienced in artistic formats are present within the educational research community, it seems likely that their numbers are small. Consequently, few researchers may be inclined or prepared to experiment with artistic formats. The result is that the field of arts-based research remains undefined and uncharted. On one hand this lack of rigid definitions and patterns is a strength of arts-based inquiry that I do not want to threaten; however, considering categories emergent
from this research may illuminate our understanding of what arts-based research is and may become as it increases our ability to make meaning out of research practice. In much the same way that qualitative research techniques such as coding and thematic analysis expand and shape researchers' understandings of data, an examination of arts-based research categories may enhance our ability to think about and analyze research practice. I have observed that arts-based inquiry is being used within the educational community in at least two distinct ways. The first, and most common, is as a mode of presenting research and the second is the use of arts-based research as methodology. I will discuss these two categories in the spirit of expanding the possibilities for how we think about and use arts-based inquiry.

**Representation**

Most arts-based inquiry does not explicitly integrate art into research practice, but rather uses art forms in the research presentation. The processes of conducting "straight" qualitative research and arts-based research differ little until the final stages in which the research is written up so that its findings may be communicated. At this final stage "straight" research takes more traditional forms and arts-based research takes artistic forms such as narrative, poetry, drama, painting, dance, etc. Used this way, arts-based research is a form of presentation rather than a new genre of inquiry. "Performance Science" (McCall and Becker, 1990) as practiced in sociology is one example of arts-based representation.

Performance Science is the name given to alternative formats by sociologists who have begun to experiment with poetry, straight theater, reader's theater and other artistic expressions. Performance Science embraces personal interpretation while depriviledging the text and provides a medium through
which emotional and contextual understanding may be conveyed (McCall and Becker, 1990). In addition to emotion and context, the arts foster communication that is more intuitive, often non verbal, and helps people better understand themselves and others (Coles, 1989). This is the purpose of the one-act plays contained in this dissertation. They are meant to better acquaint the reader/audience with the context of Eliza and Hannah’s lives and the emotional impact of their experiences with gender role conflict. However, the plays may be performed in isolation from the analysis chapter. This may be a point of concern for some researchers, but I think this concern is misguided. If the plays are successful at portraying the context and emotion of Hannah and Eliza’s lives, they will be successful at this regardless of the lack of accompanying analysis. Audiences will interpret the play using the tools they bring to any work—namely life experiences. The plays are not meant to replace theoretical analysis, but rather to do what theoretical analysis does not—portray the emotion and context surrounding another’s life. Similarly, Richardson (1995b) uses ethnographic drama to “show how openness and reflexivity look and feel rather than simply talk about it” (p. 200). Artistic formats other than theater may be used for the same purpose. Kiesinger (1998) describes her process of creating narratives that give readers access to the emotions of lived experience. In this way Kiesinger hopes to provide an avenue for her readers to “try-on” or engage with another’s emotions. Arts-based formats give researchers ways to communicate with their audiences that conventional formats lack.

Performance Science advocates (McCall and Becker, 1990) have argued that artistic formats may blur the boundaries between author and audience as audiences are encouraged to reinterpret research data. Yet McCall and Becker acknowledge that a great deal of interpretation goes into the writing and
presenting of Performance Science. It is still the author whose voice speaks most loudly and with the greatest authority and any implication that all interpretations are equally welcome and equally valid is false. Yet, the analysis presented through the selective and interpretive processes of creating arts-based research is minimal (McCall & Becker, 1990). Audiences may be at greater liberty for some level of self-interpretation.

However, this egalitarianism is deceptive. The formats of art may support hegemony as do the formats of inquiry because approaches to both inquiry and art arise from male and western perspectives (Byars, 1988). We are naive if we believe that arts-based representations in and of themselves free us from the biases of monolithic research. Art, like science, may be used to repress, deceive, and destroy, but it may also reveal, expand, and liberate. The multiplicity of viewpoints available through the arts can build a banquet of human possibility, but arts-based inquiry must be inclusive of diverse formats and cultural arts traditions

**Arts-based Representations as Companion Pieces to Conventional Analysis**

Many researchers have resolved the dilemma between conventional analysis and artistic representations by including art formats as companion pieces to more traditional qualitative analyses. To a certain extent many qualitative studies fit this description as researchers use narrative and stories to support theoretical points. While these researchers may not consider what they are doing to be arts-based, these formats do represent an artistic departure from conventional formats, particularly those that evolve from a positivistic paradigm.
**Arts-based Representation that Stands Alone**

As a companion or context piece to traditional ethnographic analysis, narrative and other arts-based formats may be more easily acceptable to the academic establishment. Within this dissertation, the chapters containing the scripts for the one woman shows on Eliza and Hannah do not stand alone but provide context for the proceeding analysis. However, my intent in writing one woman shows rather than narratives is to have these plays performed, in which case they are represented independent of formal analysis. This presentation format is important for several reasons including: making the information accessible to the general public, allowing the data to be reinterpreted, presenting artistically oriented information through artistic media, and exploring alternative presentations as a viable means for presenting data and subjective "truth." However, the performance of this arts-based representation problematizes the relationship between formal analysis and art as context.

**Criticisms of Arts-based Representations**

There is much confusion surrounding the appropriate use of arts-based representations in research. I believe one reason for this uncertainty is the interpretive qualities associated with arts-based inquiry. The notion of including the arts, an unabashedly subjective discipline, in research, with all its tradition and orthodoxy, is radical. Opponents fear that arts-based approaches may provide a biased interpretation of research that "fools" audiences into thinking it is true. Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) and Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) expose the futility of this argument as the educational research community is coming to realize the multilayered nature of interpretation that exists in all types and formats of research. Arts-based research may be no more or less interpretive that a social science report. However, a second reason deals with subjectivity.
Krieger (1991) articulates the need to admit the self into social science research, noting that allowing researchers greater representations of the self will enrich inquiry. Much of what Krieger argues applies to artistic formats as well. Krieger discusses the ways in which admitting the self into research may produce different types of compositions and themes that are truthful to how things are perceived by individuals. These differences in compositions and themes are important to arts-based researchers because they enlarge the possible formats through which both researchers' and participants' interpretations may be communicated. Arts-based research has this aim, and if seeing things from multiple perspectives is important, then arts-based research holds promise for educational inquiry.

**Methodology**

If arts-based research is capable of expanding the modes of communication in research, perhaps it is also capable of expanding the interpretive frameworks available to researchers. In this way arts-based inquiry becomes a methodological tool. Methodology refers to the ways in which researchers think about their work and the philosophical underpinnings of inquiry. These ideas influence how we come to know what we know. I believe artistic formats hold promise as methodological structures through which interpretive analysis may be enhanced. Relationships between research, or understanding things, and art have been recognized for years. Eisner's (1998) writings about educational criticism are the most obvious examples. Greene (1995, 1988) has written extensively about art's potential to help students realize individuality, freedom, social consciousness, and respectful empathy for the "other." She reminds us that purposeful interactions with art can make us see and think about things we may never have seen or thought about in our own experiences (Green, 1995).
Greene’s work focuses on fine artworks by “great artists,” and she holds reservations about the viability of arts-based formats in research, particularly calling research “art.” Nevertheless, the benefits of art’s multiple perspectives, as identified by Greene, may expand the tools researchers have to better understand the people and phenomena they study. In this way researchers may benefit from a sort of aesthetic education that expands their abilities to see, hear, and think. Ernst, Miletta, and Reilly (1998), former students of Greene, provide an example of this as Reilly discusses the way in which she uses the aesthetic in qualitative research to discover what she calls ‘framed moments’ in her classroom and the subtle changes that emerge from these moments. In this way art and the aesthetic do influence understanding.

Similarities between artists or art processes and qualitative inquiry or its processes have been noted by many researchers (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995; Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995; Eisner, 1998). These researchers find parallels between the observations and interpretations made by artists and those made through qualitative inquiry. Bogdan and Biklen and Eisner advise qualitative researchers that there is much to be learned from artists. Reinharz (1992) in fact discusses the way in which drama is a research method, that while not provided by academic disciplines, is none-the-less created by the researcher. Reinharz did not mean the literal construction of dramatic works such as plays. However, the process through which I experimented with artistic formats while writing this dissertation is one example of how artistic formats may provide methodological guidance.

When negotiating the contents of this dissertation with my committee, I suggested that a major component of the research would be the writing of one-woman shows, based on the research. The plays would then be performed for
general audiences. The inclusion of the plays was justified as a format through which emotive aspects of the research could be expressed and a non-researcher audience could be reached. However, the artistic component would only be a mode for representing the research, not a research component. I collected, coded, and analyzed the data through standard qualitative methodologies.

After writing the analysis of my first respondent, Eliza, I began writing the one-woman play based on her experiences. Through the play-writing process, I began to see gaps in my analysis that had not been apparent in the traditional research article format. These gaps presented themselves as I began to shape my analysis into a "character" whose expressions and dialogue would communicate the research issues. Traditional journal article formats require the researcher to select and explore themes that emerge from the research data. However, writing a play requires the creation of a character who must exist both within and without themes. While selectivity must be used in the presentation and analysis of qualitative work the nonunitary and multifaceted nature of subjectivity make all aspects of an individual interdependent. Thus while the process of creating a character did not necessarily change the themes of my analysis, it did help me see greater complexity in Eliza and my process of understanding her life. Play writing played a similar role in analysis as I wove together interpretations made through art and more traditional qualitative techniques. Like Kiesinger (1998), I immersed myself in Eliza's narratives, literally acting as I wrote to recreate her voice in conveying her experience. The art form became not just a mode of presentation but also a vehicle for interpretation. Kiesinger describes a similar process in her creation of narratives. She calls her narrative technique immersion and links it to reflexivity. Kiesinger provides this description.
This immersion process involved the following: several rereadings of transcribed material, several listenings to interview tapes, and careful consideration of all major turning points or epiphanies accounted for. I also spent several sessions imagining how Abbie must have felt during turning points and thinking about what Abbie would do, say, or how she would act in a particular situation based on my experience with her and what she had told me. (p. 87)

Kiesinger's description is remarkably similar to playwriting. She essentially recreates and enacts her respondent through an educated imagination just as a playwright might create and imaginatively enact a character.

Other researchers who engage in arts-based research have had similar experiences. During informal discussions of process in arts-based research at the 1998 American Educational Research Association's Winter Institute on Arts-based Approaches to Educational Research, Tom Barone, Jean Konzal, and Oma Morey all commented on how the process of creating art from research had influenced their interpretive actions. Tom Barone perhaps summarized the phenomenon best when he said, "The moment I decide to tell a story, that is when I see the world in a different way" (Tempe, Arizona, February 7, 1998).

In the script for a dance performance given at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting in 1995, Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) talks about ideas that are reflectively addressed and how that is what educational research is about. Ideas reflectively addressed also speaks to methodology—how we think and formulate thoughts—how we get ideas. Arts-based research is more than just a different way to present the same ideas. It is also a way of thinking and therefore creating different ideas. Tierney (1995) makes a case for arts-based research as a way of expanding our possibilities for the presentation of material;
however, he concludes with the acknowledgment that arts-based research provides “different ways to learn about those whom we study and those whom we teach” (p. 382). The presentation is tied to what and how we learn. An artistic presentation allows artistic learning and therefore the researcher must allow for artistic knowing in methodological sorts of ways. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) argue that while the process they undertook to develop a readers theater script was different from many qualitative data analysis techniques, it was similar to the “thick description” approach advocated by Clifford Geertz. They note that through this process they discovered:

much to our surprise—that at least in this case the processes of data analysis and readers theater script construction were really not very different from each other. Even in the process of staging the script—something that clearly is not done with social science reports—we can find some rather obvious analogs for procedures employed and techniques used in writing a social science research report. (p. 409)

As the boundaries of inquiry expand to admit arts-based representations we must also expand the boundaries of our thinking about arts-based research itself. Art may influence research beyond the representation.

Richardson (1995a) argues that the format of research implies meaning as researchers make judgments about what to include, what to exclude, and how to communicate findings. The process of making these judgments is an interpretive act. Richardson states, “we choose how we write. Those choices have poetic, rhetorical, ethical, and political implications” (216). For example, writing a play or poem in response to research may enable the researcher to portray a different aspect of the data. However, the process of writing that play or poem also creates space for the researcher to differently understand the data and
consequently enrich their interpretation. How we choose to speak inevitably influences not only what we say but also what we know. Amheim (1985) argues that intuition is just as valuable to fieldwork and analysis as is intellect. Both intellect and intuition are used in daily living and intuition is especially well suited to helping us understand the non-linguistic. Creating artwork provides a way to express and consequently analyze the intuitive aspects of research as art provides a way to communicate the unspeakable. Expanding the boundaries of research methodologies may help researchers develop different understandings of the non-linear, non-linguistic, and emotive aspects of human experience.

Arts-based research methodology does not pull down the boundaries separating authors and audiences but rather pulls the focus of artistic formats to the world of the author. The author is both creator and audience of the artistic methods she uses to interpret information. Until the research is presented as an artistic product or presentation format, the art process has been private, an experience only of the author.

If the process of creating art enhances interpretation, it does not immediately follow that the resulting interpretation must be presented in an artistic format. I suspect that many artistically oriented researchers have used arts-based ways of knowing and interpreting in research that was ultimately presented in a non arts-based format. Art as research methodology differs in this way from the ways we have currently been thinking about arts-based research because it does not require an obviously arts-related presentation. As Eisner (1998) has suggested concerning his educational criticism, researchers may benefit by employing artistic ways of thinking as methods for analysis.
Conclusion

Artistic formats have the potential to expand the ways in which researchers and audiences understand the world. As we examine how art may increase our ability to portray research results, we must not limit the scope of art's influence to only what it may communicate, but envision the ways in which artistic formats may expand the boundaries of dialogue and thinking within researcher's minds and interpretations.

It may be argued that good qualitative researchers have been using multiple ways of knowing for years and that arts-based inquiry as methodology does not markedly differ from techniques used by many researchers. I do not contend that methodological uses of arts-based research provide ways of "seeing" and thinking that are entirely new to the research community. However, I do believe that thinking about arts-based processes as methodology expands our options for making interpretations about phenomena. Even those researchers who will never create an arts-based research product may benefit by using arts-based techniques to expand their field of vision. Qualitative researchers are their own instruments and as such we need ways to open our understanding and find new lenses through which to gaze at the world. I believe artistic thinking provides such a way.
CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

"Hope" is the thing with feathers-
That perches in the soul-
And sings the tune without the words-
And never stops—at all-

And Sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—

I’ve heard it in the chillest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of Me.
(Dickenson, 1890/1961, p. 34)

...faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true. (Book of Mormon, 1982, p. 289)

Introduction

I memorized this poem by Emily Dickenson when I was teen-ager. I often felt unsure of my worth and abilities and these words reminded me to have hope. The scripture from the Book of Mormon is also one of my favorites because it helped me define faith and understand a relationship between it and
hope that helped me find peace during turbulent times of my life. As I come to the conclusion of this dissertation I am reminded of this poem and scripture. Many days over the past few years I have despaired at the enormity of the struggles experienced by Hannah and Eliza in creating alternative gender-role identities. I was frustrated by the wrongs that had been done to them and the rigidity of gender roles within LDS culture. However, I have hope as a researcher and faith as a Mormon that these things can change. In this final chapter I will first discuss common elements between Hannah and Eliza’s stories that indicate ways in which the development of independent gender-role identities may be facilitated for LDS women. Lastly, I will discuss my place in this work and where this exploration of LDS women’s gender-role identity has left me.

Influences on Gender-role Identity Change

Hannah and Eliza each underwent a process of altering their conceptions of appropriate gender role behavior. Eliza’s story is detailed in chapter 5 and Hannah’s in chapter 7; however, these stories share common elements that are important in understanding not only how these women’s ideas of gender-role identity changed but what made these changes possible.

Learned Gender Role Constructions

Teach me to walk in the light of his love;
Teach me to pray to my Father above;
Teach me to know of the things that are right;
Teach me, teach me to walk in the light. (Hymns, 1985, p. 304)

Like this verse from an LDS children’s hymn implies, Eliza and Hannah were taught by their parents those things that were deemed most important to prepare their daughters to live with Christ again. Gender roles were a significant
part of these teachings. Both Eliza and Hannah were taught that women were to fill very traditional roles and all aspects of their femininity should be designed to compliment those roles. Women were to be physically beautiful so that they could attract a man for marriage. Women were to be social as their work centered around interpersonal relationships and making others happy. Women's interests should be geared towards service, fulfilling domestic duties, and pleasing others through talents such as music and crafts. As children and young adults, Eliza and Hannah believed these aspects encompassed the totality of femininity; however, they did not believe that they could fulfill this role. Eliza, because she believed herself to be incapable and Hannah because she believed that in this role she could not be happy.

**Knowing through Text, Spirit, and Self**

Eliza and Hannah accepted this gender-role identity because it was the only one presented to them. They were both operating under what Belenky et al. (1986) calls "received knowledge," or the assumption that they learned by receiving truth from others, specifically authority figures. This conception of knowing gives women power to learn from others but denies them power to create their own knowledge. As such, women are constrained by what others tell them. Hannah and Eliza were unable to create alternative gender-role identities because they had no confidence in their ability to independently construct knowledge. Both Eliza and Hannah talk about their early conceptions of women's roles as being all that they knew and being unable to think anything different. It was only when Eliza and Hannah began to break out of their received ways of knowing by finding their ability to create new understanding through reflection, that they were able to construct new gender-role identities for themselves (Belenky, 1996).
However, movement towards a more subjective knowledge (Belenky et al., 1986) led to isolation. Lyons (1994) discusses nested knowing, or the idea that knowledge is created through interpersonal interactions. As Hannah and Eliza developed independence in their conceptions of gender roles, the interactions they sought in creating knowledge moved away from the interpersonal and increasingly to the intellectual and spiritual. They created new understanding through engagement with texts and received affirmation and guidance through spiritual communications such as prayer and intuitive feelings of love from God. Feelings of acceptance from God led to confidence in knowing through self and acceptance of self. Their “nested” knowing moved away from the people surrounding them to the communities of text, spirit, and self. These non-bodied resources brought solace and helped these women create gender-role identities that fit their needs, but non-bodied resources could not prevent the loneliness that plagued Hannah and Eliza. Both women exchanged comfort with self for isolation from others.

**Developing Confidence through Achievement**

School provided one forum in which Eliza and Hannah began to gain confidence in their intellect and recognize contradictions between what they had been told about women’s lives and the reality of their lived experiences. Both Eliza and Hannah were smart. They knew they were smart. They did well in school, and their successes made apparent the contradictions between women as domestic and social beings rather than intellectual and ambitious. Recognizing these contradictions led to soul searching, particularly in young adulthood.

Literature is filled with characters struggling to define their moral selves within the world. Virginia Wolf (1929) in *A Room of One’s Own* and Binx Bolling in *The Moviegoer* (Walker, 1961) experiment with different ways of
being in their attempts to find a place in society where they can be happy. Both the characters in these books and the women about whom this dissertation is written searched for new ways of being because they were unhappy with their current state. The gender roles Hannah and Eliza had learned did not fit their life experience. In Eliza's words things, "clashed and grated" inside her so that she knew that something was wrong. For both Hannah and Eliza it was largely the surety of their intelligence that gave them confidence to reflect on their experience and reconstruct gender-role identity based upon intellect and personal experience. Eliza and Hannah both studied and prayed. They believed they could reason and receive personal revelation and they had success in making correct choices based on these abilities.

This is where schools become vital. Schools need to provide all students with opportunities for success that will help them develop confidence. This means that schools, like religions and homes, need to embrace diversity of talents and value a diversity of contributions. Fortunately, Hannah and Eliza were smart. Despite sexist attitudes that may have existed in their schools, they were able to succeed within a traditional academic structure. What happens to students unable to succeed at school or anyplace else? How is their confidence developed to become an internally defined person?

If girls are going to realize their full potential, they need to have the confidence to develop internally constructed ideas about women's roles. Confidence is the result of many small moments of success. When we limit what actions are appropriate based on gender, we also limit the areas in which girls and boys can claim their successes and relish them. Both Hannah and Eliza were extremely successful academically, while this alone was not enough to
enable them to develop independent gender-role identities, academic success was an important factor in developing confidence for independent thinking.

**Male/Female Gender Role Dualism**

Much of the trouble Eliza and Hannah had was caused by dualistic notions of gender. Poovey (1992) writes that humanism is dependent on binary opposition between male and female so any alteration of female roles is threatening to male gender role patterns. Gender roles may then become highly guarded territory. Davies (1989) discusses the indignation that even young children will express when confronted with behavior that seems contrary to the subject’s gender. Hannah’s experience of being confronted by a group of her classmates about her inappropriate behavior of doing better than boys on exams (see Chapter 7: Hannah Analysis) is an example of the threat altering female gender roles brings to those highly steeped in male roles. *Dualistic* notions of gender result in *rigid* notions of gender. Eliza’s overwhelming despair at her inability to exhibit stereotypically female behavior despite her many other successes (see Chapter 5: Eliza) is an example of the inflexibility surrounding cultural expectations of gendered behavior.

Eliza was highly successful according to a number of criteria; however, the criteria of stereotypical notions of femininity was important enough to make her a failure in her eyes. Because the external criteria for female achievement was so rigid, Eliza’s talents and accomplishments were not able to bring success. LDS girls whose interests and talents fall within stereotypically traditional areas have an outlet within the church for the development of their self confidence and ultimately their self-hood. Women whose talents and interests fit traditional gender role patterns may never question those patterns because the status quo fulfills their needs.
Both Hannah and Eliza perceive that their sisters did not experience these same struggles because they fit the mold of what a Mormon woman should be. Their sisters’ talents fit traditional women’s roles so their self hood and self confidence where reinforced because who they were fit into LDS culture. Interestingly enough, Hannah’s sister is just now beginning to have feelings of resentment for being pigeonholed into a particular role solely based on her gender. Looking beyond their sisters, both women felt that there were many women in the church very happy with the rigid role education because the roles given to women are one’s with which they are content. Hannah said:

You know I really think a lot of the ways that women are socialized in the church is very satisfying for some women. It really does fit some women’s needs, some women’s talents, some women’s interests. I think there’s a lot of comfort and security for them... but it doesn’t fit everybody. That’s, that’s really been my problem is that it just didn’t fit what I needed in my life.

Hannah goes on to talk about how this rigid role definition is also detrimental to men.

I think that there are men that are broken by the socializing they get in church as well. There are men who, who would like to be nurturers. Men who can’t be successful in a career. There are men in our own ward who cannot be successful bread winners, but unfortunately that’s what they think has to be their role. And I think they’re torn up inside over that, and I think it can destroy their families because there doesn’t seem to be any way of adjusting within the family and shifting those roles around so that things are more appropriate to the particular talents or interests that the individuals have.
While this research did not examine gender-role identity in men, it is reasonable that rigid gender role expectations would be harmful to all people. Research on this subject is needed. LDS girls whose talents lie outside traditional female roles have no outlet for success and confidence building within the church structure. These girls must look elsewhere for confidence building experiences and this can be confusing and painful for those who truly believe their religion to be of God.

**Religious Influences**

Religion was both a positive and a negative influence on the development of Eliza and Hannah’s selfhood. Both Hannah and Eliza drew a great deal of their strength from God. Major decisions they made to go against traditional gender-role patterns were the result of personal revelation through prayer. The love they felt from God and the understanding they developed through the scriptures built strength and confidence. Faith in God and faith in the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ sustained them through periods of their lives when they felt otherwise alone. Eliza found affirmation of her serious, intellectual self through her perceptions of God’s love and the LDS church seminary program. Hannah found the courage to pursue a career through her understanding of the gospel. Religion, even patriarchal religion, may empower women who embrace the gospel teachings rather than the sociological norms.

However, these positive experiences are the result of the latitude for personal interpretation that is present in the LDS church. This acceptance of personal revelation results in dualism in a church that is “hierarchical, authoritarian, and fundamentalist” while also being “individualistic, democratic, and loose-constructivist” (Leone, 1979, p. 7-8). Leone goes on to say that these first characteristics are explicitly demonstrated by the church but the last, while hidden, are responsible for the success of the Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints. The Latter-day Saints are not unique in the dualism of their faith. A certain amount of structure is necessary for religious identity, yet a church must also be adaptable to individual lives (Jarvis, 1991). However, the church's explicit emphasis on the hierarchical and authoritarian magnify this dualism as church leaders focus on certainty rather than ambiguity (Wallace, 1986). In the lives of many church members, the focus on certainty may imply that there is a right answer to every question. Yet member's experience demonstrates that paradox is evident in many if not most aspects of religious and daily life. Patriarchy is an established part of the LDS faith but in her research on Mormon marriages, Raynes (1987) states that:

Mormons are clearly in an era of transitional patriarchy, living daily with the paradox—one person should head the family but both partners should jointly steer the marriage. Church instructional materials, such as Family Home Evening manuals and Ensign articles, use the terminology of traditional patriarchy but describe a mixed model. Theory aside, however, I conclude that the term 'patriarchal family' has been so diluted that each individual and each couple now decide what it means for them. (p. 236)

Ultimately, Eliza and Hannah applied similar thinking to their conceptions of gender-role identity as they determined what behaviors were appropriate to them through personal revelation and their own understandings. Research suggests that LDS women do in fact develop their own conceptions of gender-role identity that resolve, or in some cases justify, deviance from rigid gender roles (Beck, 1994; Peterson, 1987). Eliza and Hannah are not alone in reconceptualizations of LDS women's roles. Unfortunately, they are likely not alone in the pain they experienced as they constructed new gender-role identities.
Eliza and Hannah's experiences may be altered for future generations of LDS women. The church has a history of paradox but it also has a history of change. Mormon reliance on personal and modern day revelation provide avenues for institutional and doctrinal change. Peterson (1987) found in her research with contemporary LDS women that some women hoped for change in the church as they believed the church was able to change. In Charles' (1987) analysis of Mormon women in scriptures, he notes that the LDS church has improved its stand on women and women are more greatly respected than they were before. Charles notes that in the early days of the church, members probably thought the attitudes held about women were eternal but they have changed. Charles concludes that there is no reason to believe that attitudes and roles of women in the church will not continue to change.

**Personal Reflection**

Within the introduction to this dissertation, I revealed myself as an active member of the Latter-day Saint faith and a woman who was struggling with her conceptions of gender-role identity within that faith. As a woman conflicted in religion, career, and desire, where do I place myself at the conclusion of this project? This research has at times been like examining a mirror as I have listened to experiences like my own that were Eliza's and Hannah's. This was both exhilarating and uncomfortable because it made me confront my life so that I had to question the core of my beliefs about myself, God, my religion, and the world—beliefs that I always thought should be harmonious. This is not an easy thing to do. I have seen imperfection where I never supposed it existed. In much the same way that Eliza struggled with the reconciliation of the theory of evolution to her religion, I am struggling with the reconciliation of my education with my beliefs. However, I think my questioning has made me
stronger, wiser. I have more hope of understanding my place in eternity now than I ever have before. I have seen shadows in Hannah's and Eliza's lives that I recognize in my own, and I am trying to understand the form behind the image.

How has this work influenced my understanding of women's roles within the LDS Church? I continue to grapple with what it means to be a woman in the gospel. Over the past two years I have resigned myself to the ambiguity of women's roles. I expect my conception of those roles to change with my life circumstances and experiences; however, I also expect that I will be the one doing the changing rather than searching for an authority figure's decree of what I ought to do with my life and how it ought to be done. I am at peace with this because I believe that ultimately the roles of men and women are the same. Both men and women are to become like Christ and live lives that will enable them to return and live with Him. I understand living a Christ like life means living a life oriented towards service and sacrifice for others. These are characteristics that are often associated with stereotypical female roles; however, I believe they are characteristics that are required of all people, male and female, and I believe the gospel teaches this.

However, I do not believe that members of the LDS church always live their lives and interact with each other as if this were so. We live in a society in which power is almost synonymous with control. As such it is easy for church members to transfer the power dynamics of society to the church structure and recognize that women have no control and no power. Within this mindset the LDS Church is hopelessly sexist and endlessly oppressive and unfortunately there are some Latter-day Saint men and women who conduct their lives as if sexism and prejudice are sanctioned by God. But I think their numbers are shrinking. The LDS Church is adaptable. I have seen the church change
teachings and policies within my lifetime and this gives me hope that it will
continue to change in ways that will help its membership become more
pluralistic, more tolerant, and less rigid.

Yet I have also lost innocence. I always knew that Latter-day Saints were
not perfect people, but I still believed that inquiries to expand our understanding
of women's experiences would be welcome. I am no longer certain of this;
although, I still hope it is true. LDS researchers conducting inquiry into
women's issues that challenge established practices and policies have met with
resistance from the church (Anonymous, 1996; Farr, 1996; Anderson, 1993). LDS
Leadership has chosen to remain silent on most of these issues, leaving one side
of the story untold. The climate of tension surrounding research on LDS women
leaves me discouraged. I am uncertain what type of consequences I might face if
I pursue this research focus, and I mourn my lost innocence.

Fortunately, I am able to live with uncertainty. If this project has left me
with anything concrete it is something close to peace in ambiguity. I continue to
change. The members of my religion will continue to change, and the practices
and policies of my church will continue to change. However, I hope some
important things about my church will not change and this project has forced me
to focus on those basic parts of my religion such as being honest, loving all
people, always forgiving others, and having faith. These principles have been
part of my religious upbringing and they have served me well. I am a better
person because of the things my church, with all its lived paradox, has taught
me. The principles learned in this religious are a precious part of my soul. I
cherish them, and I like what they have helped me become. In short my religion
has done me good. Even the anguish experienced throughout this dissertation
and the more personal moments of my own struggle with women's roles in the
LDS church have done me good, not because I figured out what women’s role should be, but because I figured out that each woman must be free to decide that for herself.

Lastly, I cannot honestly close this dissertation without acknowledging the personal benefit I am taking from this experience. In the chapter about insider research I discussed some common claims about the colonialist tendencies of researchers in benefiting from research in terms of promotion, tenure, and monetary gain. While my work with these two women is benefiting me through fulfilling the requirements for a Ph.D., I do not consider the degree to be the greatest benefit I take from this work. Any number of topics or studies could have satisfied the dissertation requirements of my department and university; however, no other topic could have satisfied the particular need I had to better understand my place in my religion.

Reinharz (1992) discusses how one of the aims of feminist research is change. Often this change has been interpreted as improvement of the research participants’ circumstances or the situation of women in society. However, Reinharz acknowledges that change is not only public but is private and often takes place on personal levels. This is where I situate the change that I perceive from this research. I hope that participation in this project has benefited Hannah and Eliza. I know it has benefited me. There is strength in numbers, and I am blessed to know that others have struggled and continue to struggle with women’s place in the LDS church and the contradictions inherent in those positionings. It is a relief to not be alone. Hopefully, other LDS women will find comfort in this work. I am indebted to Eliza and Hannah for their honesty. I am indebted for their faith. I am indebted for the blessing of associating with women whose questions are as strong as their testimonies. I am indebted for their
companionship, and I emerge from this research a far richer woman than I was before their lives became part of mine.

Afterward

Nearly 60 years ago, Virginia Woolf wrote the feminist classic, A Room of One's Own (1929). In that book, she asks her readers to suppose that Shakespeare had a sister with talents and ambitions similar to his own. Woolf leads us through an imaginary journey of what would have been the fate of a 16th century woman, gifted in poetry, drama, or any other discipline, yet restrained by society from the exercise of her gift. The tale ends in tragedy. Shakespeare’s sister dies an anonymous death and is buried at a crossroads. Woolf concludes her book by asking that we resurrect Shakespeare’s sister, telling us that:

She lives in you and in me, and in many other women.... for great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh. This opportunity, as I think, it is now coming within your power to give her. For my belief is that if we live another century or so—I am talking of the common life which is the real life and not of the little separate lives which we live as individuals—and have five hundred a year each of us and rooms of our own; if we have the habit of freedom and the courage to write exactly what we think; if we escape a little from the common sitting-room and see human beings not always in their relation to each other but in relation to reality; and the sky, too, and the trees or whatever it may be in themselves...if we face the fact, for it is a fact, that there is no arm to cling to, but that we go alone and that our relation is to the world of reality and not only to the world of men and women, then the opportunity will come and the dead poet who was Shakespeare’s sister will put on the body which she has so often laid
down. Drawing her life from the lives of the unknown who were her forerunners, as her brother did before her, she will be born. As for her coming without that preparation, without that effort on our part, without that determination that when she is born again she shall find it possible to live and write her poetry, that we cannot expect, for that would be impossible. But I maintain that she would come if we worked for her, and that so to work, even in poverty and obscurity is worth while. (p. 124-125)

This passage holds great meaning for me because I see its plea intertwined with the lives of Eliza, Hannah, myself, and other LDS women. We may not hold claim to the gifts of Shakespeare’s sister, but we have talents and desires that reach beyond the boundaries of traditional women’s roles. We are not buried at crossroads like Shakespeare’s sister, and our deaths may not be as anonymous. Yet we still scratch, scrape, and struggle for a place in which we may pursue dreams freely. We want rooms of our own.

A hundred years have not passed since Woolf’s (1929) challenge and Hannah and Eliza’s lives are evidence of progress. Despite difficulties, they have created gender-role identities that approximate their talents and needs. However, this progress has been individual. The community of Latter-day Saints has yet to acknowledge the diversity of women’s possibilities. Like Woolf, I have hope that we can create a society in which Shakespeare’s sister may be borne. We have time. We have people who work in offices, homes, playgrounds, and churches to create a more equitable world. But do we have communities in which women are supported in creating their own gender-role identities? As a woman and as a Latter-day Saint, I have faith that this can be done. I hope now that we will do it.
APPENDIX A. THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does reveal and we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American
continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, and what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.
APPENDIX B. RESPONDENT CONSENT FORM

Research: Kelli Jo Kerry Moran
64C Schilletter Village
Ames, Iowa 50010
515-296-8665

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this project is to gain an understanding of the educational socialization of women members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As a participant in this case study, you will be both interviewed and observed. The information gained from the interviews and observations will be used in the written report of this study. The following are terms of participating in this study.

1. The information obtained during this project will be used to write a dissertation which may be read by the respondents, the dissertation committee members, a fellow student research serving as a peer debriefer, and upon the project's completion by individuals who may chose to check-out the dissertation.

2. Real names and identifying information such as specific locations or titles will not be used during data collection nor in the written study.

3. The respondent has the right to withdraw at any time from the study, for any reason, and the data will be returned to the respondent upon request.

4. The respondent will receive a copy of all portions of the study using information gained from the respondent before the final draft is written and negotiate changes with the researcher.

5. The respondent will receive a copy of all portions of the study using information gained from the respondent soon after completion.

6. The respondent grants permission to be quoted directly in the study.

7. The respondent grants permission to be tape recorded.

8. Upon request, the respondent will receive a copy of all tapes and transcripts from interviews in which she participates.

9. Interview tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

If you agree to participate in this study according to the preceding terms, please sign below.

Researcher_________________________________ Respondent_________________________________

date__________________ date__________________
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