"A HUMAN BEING IS NOT A SUIT OR A SHOE!": THE CONSTRUCTION AND PERFORMANCE OF IDENTITY IN PERSONAL NARRATIVE

A Thesis

by

INGRID EDMOND BOU-SAADA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of Texas A&M University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 1995

Major Subject: Anthropology
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December 1995

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ABSTRACT


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Much of social science research and interpretation is undertaken with the aim of objectivity in order to posit hypotheses and make predictions about human behavior. In contrast, this thesis provides an in-depth, contextualized study of one individual, a Lebanese immigrant, by a researcher who, as his daughter, can provide vastly different, and yet just as valuable, interpretational information about the human condition. In order to uncover such in-depth, diachronic information, this thesis includes the use of various techniques, including the interview, the recording of a performer-controlled life story, and the documentation of personal experience narratives.

The narrative of the performer's life story, a predominately non-directed performance, is compared to an extended passage from a directed interview which concentrated on traditional Lebanese medicine and beliefs about health. This comparison will uncover the differences of the two methods as well as reveal the dynamics of tradition within the family as the performer/narrator teaches the author, his daughter, the specifics of customary Lebanese beliefs and behavior. In addition,
the comparison of these two methodologies will also address the philosophical issues of an "insider" doing subjective research. These two genres of oral narrative, the life story and the interview, will also provide complementary contextual information for a fuller understanding of what it means to the narrator to be an immigrant to America, a Lebanese father, an older man, and a human being with a sense of worth and dignity.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although the writing of this thesis was ultimately my undertaking and the final product my responsibility, there are many people whose guidance and assistance proved invaluable. I first extend my deepest appreciation and highest regard to my committee chair, Dr. Sylvia Grider. As a teacher in the truest sense of the term, she guided but did not direct me; supported me, but never as a crutch; and always critiqued my work without squelching my creativity. I also am indebted to Dr. Thomas Green for believing in my work, for taking out time from his own writing to make well-placed, beneficial suggestions, and helping me discover the worth and joy of folklore. Dr. Clarissa Kimber also played a key role by helping me to broaden my perspective, suggesting ways to apply my research to the "real world," and sparking my initial interest in traditional medicine and folk beliefs through her own enthusiastic interest in these subjects.

My family deserves special recognition for their lifelong emphasis on the importance of education, their financial and personal support which has helped me reach this point in my career, and their love and guidance which has helped me become who I am today.

The Department of Anthropology provided me with financial support throughout my year as a Teaching Assistant, and offered me a learning environment and caring professors that helped me discover my future.
I also extend my deepest appreciation to Michael Fitch, a true friend who always stood by me through the long hours of writing through writer's block and through the inevitable fits of computer malfunctions. Most importantly, he always believed in me and helped me to believe in myself. Thank you! John Anderson, another computer wizard, also deserves a huge thank you for patiently helping me learn to tolerate my computer and answering my seemingly never-ending questions.

Finally, perhaps the most important gratitude goes to my father, without whom this project would have only been a fleeting notion. His continued support and passion for this venture helped carry me through the months of hard work; while his sincerity, openness, and willingness to share some very intimate details with me and the readers gave me so much more that just words to interpret. I appreciate his efforts and his trust that I will do his spirit justice. I only hope I have.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I recently attended a conference concerning strategies for HIV prevention among minority women\(^1\) in which I was particularly struck by a recurrent observation made by a few presenters. In one day in three separate presentations each researcher discussed the important role of storytelling in HIV education. The information surrounding the virus and its transmission became both understandable and personally relevant when it was presented in the context of a case study or personal experience story. By using stories, health educators were able to connect with their audiences, to bridge a gap into familiar territory even while discussing such a frightening topic. In addition, the structure of stories enhances the listeners’ ability to remember the information framed within them since stories are such a basic, comfortable use of language. Most people have a mental categorization of language that easily recognizes from a very young age a group of words as a story, and this recognition aids the communication process. While my thesis is certainly not about HIV education, this one day spent attending a conference put all my research over the past two years into a new perspective for me, allowing me to see a broader context for the art of telling stories.

\(^1\) "Reversing the Trend: Strategies for HIV Prevention Among Minority Women," sponsored by Texas A&M University’s Race and Ethnic Studies Institute and the Brazos Valley Community Action Agency on April 6-7, 1995 in College Station, Texas.

The style and citations of this thesis follow the Journal of American Folklore.
There is something about stories, so simple, yet so incredibly powerful and multi-dimensional, that touches all of humanity regardless of age, gender, or heritage. Storytelling exists in traditional forms in every culture of the world. By showing another person's life events, the storyteller establishes an example for teaching the young. On the other hand, by creating a make-believe fantasy world, realms of the impossible become possible, and culturally defined limitations are surpassed, opening up an imaginary world full of options for a healthy human spirit. In families, much of the enculturation and bonding that takes place between the generations occurs during repeated settings where stories are swapped, where discipline is metered out and then justified, and where past events are recalled at gatherings. In my own family, storytelling is a very important activity for my father who enjoys and feels an obligation to pass on his learned wisdom to my brother and me, and also to others who will listen. The roles of father and keeper of the memories of his past and his heritage are immutably intertwined.

In many academic activities, the primary ground rule requires the observers or researchers to establish and maintain an objective distance between themselves and their subjects. This distance may result in scientific theories which allow researchers to analyze and predict the behavior of whatever they are studying, but when human subjects are involved, this is simply not enough. Part of the joy of researching human behavior is reaching a better understanding of humanity and of one's self in all of the rich diversity and complexity of life. By documenting my father's life and thoughts in
his own words and offering my own interpretations of "what it all means," I am
helping others understand him, aspects of Lebanese culture, the dynamics of folklore,
tradition, and culture, as well as the rich tapestry of self-presentation through speech. I
am also exploring my own heritage and family history, and learning who I am and how
I got to be who and where I am. If I attempted to distance myself from my father and
his words, I would not only misinterpret him and even miss the point of my research,
but I would also lose sight of the very humanity found in his words and in our
interactions.

With my research I plan to uncover and describe general truths about self-
presentation through the experiences of one individual, an immigrant to the United
States, who manages to maintain a sense of dignity and personal identity despite many
difficult and disheartening obstacles. The focus of this research will be my father, a
Lebanese immigrant, while the methodology of the research as well as the
interpretation will be drawn primarily from the discipline of folklore, but it will also be
guided by work in the areas of biography and life story, psychology, and philosophy.

I chose to approach this topic by way of one individual’s life story in order to
obtain a clear, in-depth, diachronic view rather than the more superficial synchronic
accounts resulting from the comparison of many individuals by way of questionnaires
or interviews. The narrative of my father’s life story, a predominately non-directed
performance, will be compared thematically to a directed interview in which we
concentrated on traditional Lebanese medicine, healers, and folk beliefs about health.
This comparison will focus primarily on one extended passage from the directed interview on folk medicine in order to reveal the many surprising similarities in outcome of these two methodologies as well as reveal the dynamics of tradition within the family as my father teaches me, an interviewer and his daughter, the specifics of customary Lebanese behavior. These two genres of oral performance, the life story and the interview, will provide complementary contextual information for a fuller understanding of what it means to my father to be an immigrant to America, a Lebanese father, an older man, and a human being with a sense of worth and dignity.

Folklore research, in general, and narrative research, specifically, do not easily lend themselves to direct measurement or to an operational methodology. Whenever the purpose of a study is to understand what it means to be human, the approach inherently benefits from an interpretive approach which can lead to greater empathy and appreciation of humanity in all its diversity. The collected narratives are preserved on tape, and I have transcribed almost all of them verbatim with a few deleted passages which are clearly marked off in the text. Seeking experimental controls on such a collection is both illogical and limiting to the range of possible interpretations; however, I do plan on being as forthright as possible in presenting the steps leading to my own interpretation.

While replication and falsifiability are not objectives of my research, I can provide the readers with the logical steps leading to my conclusions by adopting a naturalistic paradigm or "contextualization" (following Stahl 1989:10; 32-33) and
providing my personal perspective, theoretical biases, and past intimate knowledge of my father. Obviously, this raises the issue of objectivity; however, I strongly believe my status as insider/daughter is the greatest strength of my research and lends me a perspective not available to an outsider, though the resulting interpretations of an outsider would be valuable also. Some of these issues will be briefly discussed in the methodology section of the thesis since they are such important considerations.

My own research contribution will be to interrelate the points of view from many disparate fields by studying the performance of a life story and personal reminiscences in a directed interview of an older male immigrant who is carrying on his own traditions in the face of adversity and using his experiences and traditions to teach me about life. By drawing on many different disciplines, including folklore, cultural anthropology, narrative theory, autobiography and philosophy, I will achieve a more insightful perspective while still utilizing the strength of my insider status.

One of my techniques, termed the "directed interview," has an important built-in fallacy, the assumption that it is the interviewer who is the director, the prompter, and the creator of the general agenda of the interview by way of asking questions of her own choosing in order to receive answers related to specific topics in the resulting text. In our two rather lengthy interviews together, one on folk medicine which is included and one on folk cookery which is not included in this thesis, it became quite obvious to me that my father has important control over the situation in the way he chooses to answer or even redirect my question. He chooses what anecdote or
personal experience to use to illustrate his answer; he decides when his answer is, in fact, complete. He also develops the "tangents" he knows to be relevant even when this relevancy is not immediately obvious to me, the interviewer.

The life story, on the other hand, is much looser in structure, and is specifically intended to place as much control as possible with the narrator, not the researcher. In this particular case, my father's life story was collected and tape-recorded in two separate sessions, one on 28 December 1993, and the other on 2 January 1994. My only prompt was at the beginning of the recording session, and for the rest of his performance, I remained silent and did not prompt or interrupt him for the most part. The flow of these discussions are documented in Appendix A and B. While there was some overlap in the topics discussed in the life story as compared to the interviews, the choice of what to include or leave out was left entirely up to my father and his memory. It is precisely this selection process—deciding what is valuable to recount, important to how he portrays his life and whom he sees himself as, important enough to remember in the first place, and tied together in some form of narrative logic—that makes the life story such a valuable research tool.

The directed interviews have been fully transcribed verbatim, and so has almost the entire life story. I will include large portions of the transcriptions of both the life story and our folk medicine interview in the Appendix A and B, respectively; however, I will not include portions of our conversations which are either too personal, such as some family information, or totally irrelevant to the project at hand, for
instance, the interview dealing with folk cooking. The resulting text of the life story will be compared and contrasted primarily to one extended passage in the folk medicine interview, and by extension, the two methodologies will also be compared. Also, many traditional aspects of Lebanese life, both in the past in Lebanon, as well as in the present in America, will thus be documented. The pedagogical nature of tradition will also be discussed as the role of teacher and guide to his children is an important role of my father's personality that is evident throughout both the interviews and the life story.

In the thesis, I will first review the relevant literature in folklore, biography and autobiography, philosophy, psychology, and ethnicity. I will then discuss my methodology in detail as well as briefly discuss the philosophical issues life story research brings up, including subjectivity/objectivity, insider/outsider, notions of self and "truth" in memory, and interview problems. I will then present the various themes found in the life story along with textual examples illustrating these themes. And finally, I will discuss the similarities and differences noted in the two techniques as well as more importantly contextualize, or make salient through my own intimate knowledge of my father and his personality, my own interpretation of what it all means in terms of family and ethnic folklore studies.

While it can be and has been argued that such research is flawed because the truthfulness of the facts as presented to the researcher can not be easily, if ever, verified, such a critique misses the point entirely. What is important in the collected
narrative texts is self-presentation in relation to personal values and beliefs, and the *making sense of* the facts and events in one's life. It is this process which lends us the insights into how immigrants assimilate or acculturate into American life (or perhaps the extent to which they actually can) and not lose sight of who they are in terms of their own heritage and the things they hold dear.

In my father's case, he has not met the goals he set out to achieve as a young man, and has, in fact, lost plenty because of discrimination, both age-related and due to his foreigner status, but he has still maintained what he calls his "face" and "name." The opportunity to tell his story in the course of this research has certainly empowered him by giving his voice a chance to be heard by the educated elite in the very country which has both provided for him and his family, as well as taken away many of his dreams. He now has an interested audience whereas often he has been either ignored or laughed at in the past for being too "old-fashioned." In my own research, another more personal benefit of this work is a better understanding of my relationship with my father and the Lebanese part of myself and how that fits into the German (my mother's nationality) and American parts of my personality. Certainly such a mixture describes the state of many native-born Americans as well as those who are immigrants.

I will now turn to a review of the pertinent literature for my work.
CHAPTER II
A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Because of the interdisciplinary approach of this thesis, there are many directions to pursue in a literature review. Primarily, I ground my work in folklore and cultural anthropology, but other diverse disciplines such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, biographical and autobiographical studies, and cultural geography also inform my analysis. Recurrent subjects which cross and unite these disciplinary boundaries include family and ethnic studies, foodways, life story and personal narrative, tradition, and notions of "self" and identity. It is through these themes that I will present the work done by other researchers. Given my relationship as the daughter of the narrator in this study, I also find it necessary and worthwhile to pursue some other methodological issues such as the meaning of objectivity versus subjectivity, the nature of interviewing, and the contextualization of my results.

FAMILY

Doing fieldwork with members of one's family requires extra preparation and some additional research considerations for which there are a number of general guides including Zeitlin, Kotkin and Cutting-Baker (1982); Cutting-Baker, Kotkin, and Yocom (1978); Dixon and Flack (1977); and Yocom (1980). This latter source; Yocom's doctoral dissertation, is a comprehensive "how-to" research guide to all
aspects of working with one's family and its traditions, from gaining cooperation with the project to recognizing personal biases of the researcher as well as the cooperating family members and conducting the actual interviews and analyses. In another excellent doctoral dissertation, Baldwin delves into the actual stories passed around in her family and offers her interpretations of them as well as some of the theoretical implications involved in her work (1975). Sharing their own experiences of family fieldwork so that others might learn from their mistakes and successes are Yocom (1982) and Scheiberg (1990). Some examples of family folklore research include how misfortune stories function as a bond between family members (Brandes 1975); the patterns and functions of family stories (Zeitlin 1980); and the family saga as living folklore (Boatright 1958).

ETHNICITY

Since my father is a Lebanese man living in his adopted American home, the subjects of ethnicity and ethnic identity are important elements in my research with him. Folklorists have long been interested in the subject of ethnicity, beginning first with a focus upon peasant societies and the dynamics of immigration from one's country of origin into peasant enclaves in other societies, and more recently, with the individual whose ethnicity forms part of his or her identity. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett provides an outline for possible lines of inquiry into this subject, including the highly
She also has written an article on the relationship between narrative creativity and the experience of culture shock (1978). Also of value is the article on ethnic folklore found in Oiring's introductory text (1986). Dégh's work with immigrant folklore research (1966); and a review article by Stern (1978). The journal *Western Folklore* also compiled a special issue on the subject of folklore and ethnicity (1977) which primarily focused upon the demarcation of ethnic boundaries through the performance of expressive behavior and folklore (Danielson 1977: 1) Another compilation along similar themes is entitled *Performance, Culture, Identity* (Fine and Speer 1992) and includes an especially worthwhile article which analyzes one woman's stories and personal narratives in relation to the performance of her culture (Valentine and Valentine 1992).

An example of a more anthropological study of ethnicity provides perspectives on the creation and maintenance of ethnic identity, especially among immigrants, through symbolic means (Mach 1993). Similar themes permeate an edited interdisciplinary volume about immigration and ethnicity in America which questions the existence of a truly assimilated "melting pot" in America (D'I nnocenzo and Sirefman 1992).
FOODWAYS

My second major directed interview with my father focused on the process of preparing some traditional Lebanese foods, and my father's own memories and opinions about these dishes. While I do not specifically highlight this interview, it is still important to understand the role of food in tradition and family life, and to this end I offer some background information. Charles Camp has reviewed the multidisciplinary literature on and about food and has divided this large body of data into three types: descriptive, patterned, interpretive (1982:279). He emphasizes that authors in various disciplines contribute all three types of information, disciplines which include anthropology, nutrition, education, public health, folklore, medicine, sociology, history, archaeology, business administration, and psychology (ibid, p. 278). While many of these disciplines provide useful data, a material culture approach focuses more attention on the meaning behind food and the messages it communicates rather than on the nutrient content, health ramifications, physical roles, or marketing requirements of it. Therefore, most of the pertinent literature for the task at hand takes a material culture perspective on food and can be classified within the social sciences and humanities.

In sociology I found Goody's treatment of the history of Middle Eastern food personally interesting (1982). More useful to my project, however, are the foodways
studies in the fields of folklore and folklife. A handy introduction to Lebanese (together with Syrian) cuisine is provided by Barer-Stein (1979), who also provides a very brief general introduction to ethnic traditions. Aside from the already mentioned piece by Camp, he provides another general introduction to the field as well as a profitable bibliography in the *Handbook of American Popular Culture* (1989).

Georges provides an engaging article based on his own experiences as a Greek-American and this identity's ramifications on what others around him will and will not serve him (1984). Festivals and social gatherings as a locus for the role of food and its meanings are included in a co-edited volume by Humphrey and Humphrey (1988). Yoder (1972) provides a concise introduction to folk cookery, as he calls it, including helpful sections on research problems, functions of cookery, and its relationship to material culture studies. Brunvand provides a very simple introduction, and his bibliography is a valuable tool (1986). American ethnic foodways are collected in an edited volume by Brown and Mussell with an emphasis on group identity (1984). A unique and fun compilation of recipes from regions around America, including a few ethnic enclaves, *An American Folklife Cookbook* provides the instructions to make the dishes and the cultural context to better understand and appreciate their meaning (Nathan 1984).

Books on Middle Eastern cooking provided a context in which to place the recipes I collected. A popular introduction to Near Eastern cooking gave me recipes with which to compare those demonstrated by my father (Seranne and Gaden 1964).
Another popular collection of recipes is by Scott (1983). My father's own cookbooks were also helpful and prompted some of my questions in our "directed interview" (Anthony et al 1978; Rayess 1966).

LIFE STORY

In recent decades, the life story has become a popular genre in many disciplines, often with the express purpose of regaining the many voices of the dispossessed and empowering the powerless whether due to gender (Lawless 1993), ethnicity (Patai 1988), age (Myerhoff 1979, 1980), or political (Menchú 1984) reasons. The life story varies from another common social science research tool, the life history, which has been well-established in anthropology since the early part of this century, but especially since the 1920s (for example, Kroeber 1908; Radin 1926).

Whereas the life history also details important facts and events of an individual's life, the text is most often elicited and overtly constructed by a researcher in an interview format through such questions as: "When were you born?" "Where?" "What schooling have you had?" For example, Langness (1965), in a manual on the use of life history in anthropology, has a section entitled "Interviewing" in which he discusses rapport and interview techniques in general, referring to personal information as though it is simply a category of data to collect as any other data. He even discusses using other material on the culture of the informant as a means of insight into subjects
to ask about which the informant may not have discussed on his or her own. In this manner, the researcher essentially decides upon the framework or logical flow of the resulting text. In a subsequent book *Langness*, in collaboration with Frank, does recognize the importance of spontaneity and allowing the subjects to choose what is important, at least in the early stages of collecting the life history (1981). Watson and Watson-Franke provide another valuable reference for the varieties of life histories and their interpretations (1985). Both Crapanzano (1977) and Frank (1979) offer valuable critiques and warnings aimed at the life history, especially when collecting the histories of people with vastly different conceptions of "self" than our own or even without a concept of a life history to begin with.

In the life story, every effort is made to leave such choices up to the individuals, allowing them, for example, to omit work histories or frame their life around it, to deal with morality and religion or to omit such details. The very word "story" is a key concept since the text of an individual's life is given coherence (a plot) and is initially made meaningful, even relevant, by the individual (narrator) himself or herself (Linde 1993). The story not only comments on personal identity and how one became the person one is at the time of narration, but also, the story is used by the narrator as a means of negotiating membership in a larger group (p. 3). Daniel Bertaux provides a valuable sociological perspective on the difference between the two genres, claiming that the life story is a collaboration between the researcher and the subject, and that the life story told by the subjects themselves is one component part of the
broader life history which includes official documents, observation, and other people's accounts (1981). Barbara Myerhoff's work with elderly Jewish immigrants' performances of their life stories sheds light on the interpretation of my own father's story in terms of age, immigration, and the use of one's own life as a means of teaching younger generations (1979; 1980).

Another important source for my interpretation is the work of two cultural geographers who have researched the life stories told by South African migrant workers (Miles and Crush 1993). This article is incredibly valuable for its bibliography alone, but it also presents intelligent dialogue about methodology and interpretation in life history studies. The authors explore the significance of "giving voice," the differences between insiders and outsiders collecting life stories, the way meaning is constructed in a collaboration between performer and researcher, the life course of an individual in the context of social and historical forces, the role of memory, and the pedagogical use of the life story. All of these issues have great bearing upon my own work.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVE

Folklorists have relatively recently embraced work on the personal experience narrative, a genre closely resembling the life story since both are constructed recitations of personal memory. For the past two decades in American scholarship,
Sandra Dolby-Stahl has provided much of the theoretical work on the subject. She has written an extensive, though somewhat outdated, literature review on the subject as well as on the previous scholarship out of which her own study has grown (1977). This article also discusses the personal narrative as both traditional and non-traditional or unique. Other features of the personal narrative Stahl considers include style (1979), function (1983), and interpretation (1985). Since that time she has refined her own theoretical and methodological stance on the genre with the completion of the first book-length folkloristic study of personal experience narratives (1989).

Other approaches to the personal narrative include psychological, philosophical, literary, and structural or linguistic. Psychological analyses make important contributions to the role of "self" and identity in constructing narratives and making sense out of one's life (Sarbin 1986; McAdams and Ochberg 1988). Often, however, psychological studies venture into psychoanalytic theory and the role of personal narratives in the patient consultation which limits the usefulness of this material for folklore and my own work. The philosophical inquiry, which I found to be useful as well as interesting, pursues differing conceptions of "self" and identity from a metaphysical stance and relates these to the nature of narrative as both a framework for and an analogy of life (Kerby 1991). In a classic sociological monograph, the research uncovers how an individual carefully creates an image, or mask, of a self-identity to portray to the outside world (Goffman 1959). A literary approach studies the use of memory and the act of remembering specifically as a
literary device and as an examination of more general philosophical issues (DeConcini 1990). The linguistic or structural evaluation of the personal narrative focuses on the appearance of various types of words and phrases in stories about personal experience and how these are used for different functions in constructing a dramatic story out of a past event. This field draws heavily upon the work of Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972) as well as on a reappraisal of the above works done by Robinson (1981).

Finally, an especially constructive edited volume utilizes an interdisciplinary strategy to study self-understanding and narratives through psychology, sociology, anthropology, literary studies, and, though not specifically discussed, folklore (Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992).

In my first directed interview, my organizing principle was to discover how my father makes his choices of using a traditional Lebanese remedy versus a cosmopolitan medicinal remedy. In this interview it became apparent that his previous personal experience was a key factor in his decision-making process, a factor that has been targeted by other research as influencing subsequent health care behavior (Maclean 1978). However, this area of research into medical choice and experience has not received enough attention in the past. The journal Social Science and Medicine has devoted a special issue to the question of health care choice and medical pluralism which provides insight into decision making, mostly at the institutional or practical level (cost, availability, transportation, etc.) (Leslie 1980). In addition, the importance of context, not just personal experience, is noted by Dowie, whose research paradigm
recommends "treating health as the outcome of individual decisions made within evolving social and natural environments (constraints) under conditions of uncertainty and in relation to the whole life style of the individual" (1975:620).

It is within such a framework of uncertainty that people create meaning in their experiences, medical or otherwise, and structure the subsequent narratives or stories they tell others in order both to reflect and further reinforce this meaning. Folklorist David Hufford also notes the importance of context in his approach to understanding the utilization of traditional medical systems:

...the full context of folk healing traditions [should be] kept in view, including not only herbalism, folk psychiatry, and folk categories of disease, but also foodways and nutrition, the role of traditional narratives in determining the compliance of patients with medical regimens, the role of folk religion in coping with pain and bereavement, and a host of other topics which are at once of folkloristic interest and medical importance (1983:312).

Folklore provides a theoretical and methodological base from which to approach this contextual analysis of medical decision-making and the portrayal of self and identity to others in story. In the last two decades researchers have paid an increasing amount of attention to context, a term referring to the social and cultural situation within which a person lives and is a bearer of his or her traditions. It also refers to the circumstances of a performance and/or interview and how these circumstances affected the information exchange. For the study of context Richard Bauman has written a guide for folklorists on field collection as well as an extensive literature review on the subject (1983:362-368). Also important is Dundes' work with "Texture, Text, and Context" (1964). Perhaps the most influential inquiry into this
matter is by Ben-Amos, who attempts a redefinition of folklore in terms of context (1971).

And finally, for a general introduction to many of the above folklore terms and genres, including a differentiation of anecdote, narrative, gossip, and first-person reminiscences, see Brunvand (1986). It is with all of the above issues in mind that I explore the relationship of personal experience, the creation of an identity—both ethnic and family—and the narratives about personal and family experiences which reflect and further strengthen meaning and identity.

My own contribution will be to interrelate the points of view from many of these disparate fields by studying and comparing the performance of a life story and many personal reminiscences from directed interviews of an older male immigrant who is carrying on his own traditions in the face of adversity while using his experiences and traditions to teach me, his daughter, about life. By drawing on many distinct, yet complementary, disciplines I will achieve a more insightful perspective while still utilizing the strength of my insider status.

In the next chapter I will discuss my methodology for collecting and interpreting the narrative texts for my research.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY FOR OBTAINING THE NARRATIVES

Although no one in my immediate family has been back to Lebanon since 1976, we are all curious about the country's resuscitation and hopeful of a return visit in the near future. Coming to America has been both a blessing and a challenge for our family, as I imagine it is for most refugee immigrants escaping a war in their own land to start anew elsewhere. While we have been fortunate enough to remain intact as a nuclear family, we did leave behind a close, supportive community, many dear friends, and many members of our extended family. This following brief background sketch of my father is presented as an introduction through my own synthesis of the facts of my father's life, but the primary focus for the rest of this thesis will be on his own words. The situational context and logistic details of the two interviews and the life story are important for a full understanding of the resulting narrative texts. After all, there are some crucial differences that arise in what one has to say when an interviewer asks a specific question or requests to tape record a life story versus when one is simply having a conversation among friends or family. As his daughter, I have, of course, been privy to many of these informal conversations and have heard many of the stories before, but as a researcher with a tape recorder my role shifts and so does our relationship. My status as an insider and yet an academic "outsider" is part of the context I will analyze later in this thesis.
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In this study of oral narrative and tradition, by far the most important component is my father, the narrator of personal experiences, family anecdotes and history, and his own life story; a preserver of traditional knowledge; and the subject of my research. In order to truly comprehend the relevance of the stories and anecdotes he renders, one must understand his personality and the basic facts of his life. Born on September 16, 1931 in Jounieh, Lebanon, my father spent much of his early life in an extended household which included two older brothers, his parents, his maternal grandmother, and an uncle, while another uncle lived nearby in a close-knit community. This village was composed of families whose roots went back many generations, and whose members all knew each other—there were no strangers living there.

He grew up during the aftermath of World War One which, despite the years since its end, still had profound effects on the fortunes and fate of his family. Following that war in which France liberated Lebanon from the Turks, the French influence remained as Lebanon became a French mandate. The Second World War also had further devastating effects upon the family and Lebanon just as it, of course, affected a large number of other countries. The historical impact upon the Bou-Saada family (and his mother's family) has now become a recurrent theme to which he
alludes in his life story. Indeed, Edmond elaborates on his early life in the context of Lebanese history and explains how these past events still affect who he has become today. For example, due to French influence, increasing costs of importing French goods, and the lack of locally available raw materials, Edmond's father's shoe-making business suffered financially since leather and supplies became too expensive, and this added to previous misfortunes of the historically wealthy family. Because of the decline in the once thriving family business as well as both his parents' deteriorating health (among other factors), Edmond was not able to get further education or training after high school, a fact which he says has contributed to his many struggles through the years to "make something of himself." Certainly his lack of higher education has had many consequences in his life, some of which he discusses very openly with me.

After completing the equivalent of American high school at the age of seventeen, my father worked at many jobs in Beirut before deciding that he wanted to become a pilot. For many reasons, he found that he could not achieve this goal in Lebanon, and decided to seek his own path in America instead, with the intention of returning to Lebanon at some point in the future. Again, this time period immediately following his school days is one of many which he chooses to concentrate much attention upon in his reminiscences and in his life story despite the fact that work was intermittent at best and times were still economically difficult.

After arriving in New York City in May of 1959, he worked at a few jobs and met my mother, Renate, who had also recently immigrated to America (from
Germany) to seek a better life for herself as well as some adventure. They were married in November, 1962, and after a few years in New York decided to leave America to move back to Lebanon. They left in July, 1967, toured parts of Europe, and then stayed with Renate's mother for a few weeks in Germany where my brother, Tarek, was born on October 4, 1967. They then lived in Jounieh, my father's hometown, where my father held an administrative job at the Middle East Airlines main office in Beirut, a few miles away. My mother stayed home to raise first my brother and then me, but later did work for a German company in Lebanon for a short time before we left. I was born on September 7, 1969, in Beirut, and the family remained in Jounieh until the Lebanese civil war drove us out in 1976. I find it interesting that my father does not elaborate much on these years in Lebanon, instead choosing to bracket this time period by highlighting his life in New York immediately preceding it and the years since 1976 when he returned to America with our family. We left in March of that year and settled in Houston, Texas, where my parents still live.

Today, my mother is a budget-analyst for a major oil company, and my father is retired, although he is not yet 65, and does not leave the house very much. His "retirement" is the result of being laid off from his own job with a major oil company in 1986 during a slump both in the international oil industry and in Houston's economy in general. This is still a point of bitterness to him, and must be considered as one of many sources of disappointment and even depression that he continues to face and
work through. He blames his subsequent inability to find work, and the reason he stopped looking after a short period of time, on the fact that he is convinced no one wants to hire and train an older man who is a "bloody foreigner" and who speaks less-than-perfect English. In fact, he blames his lay-off on these factors as well as on his strict enforcement of the inspection policy for which he was responsible in his last position. He believes that because he expected the company's vendors to meet all of the requirements fully and did not act, as he puts it, "like a rubber stamp," he angered his supervisors since this brought them more work. This is an important illustration of his belief system and convictions; he refuses to act against his conscience by doing something that is not "right" and thus he feels that he had to suffer the retaliation of lazy supervisors, especially since he is a foreigner. Also, this event and his recovery in its wake are major themes that he focuses on in his life story and in both directed interviews.

During his recitation of his life story documented in this thesis, my father spent a good portion of his narrative on his early life, on the years he spent in New York, and then on his most recent decade. He leaves out many details on the years in between, primarily those details centering upon the time he spent in Lebanon between 1967 to 1976. I found this omission to be peculiar at first, but I believe now that those years he focuses on are the formative parts of who he presently has come to be. His personality rises to personal challenges and his stories show him to be the moral victor even when he lost on the surface of the situation or financially. It was not the
Lebanese civil war that challenged him, since we got out before it was really too late, but how he personally dealt with losing his support structure of the extended family, friends, and familiar culture, while starting anew as the head of his own nuclear family without giving up his moral base, pride, or his good name. That is the true mark of his own identity as I will show through his words and stories.

In a related note, Edmond is a Maronite Catholic, though his is a personal rather than a formal religious conviction. He does not attend church, but instead has deeply-held beliefs that each person must live his or her religion in every part of life, beliefs which inform many of his decisions in an often subtle way. He regards priests as human and subject to human faults, attributes which he feels make them unnecessary in his relation to God. For example, I remember hearing him speak several times about a well-respected priest in Lebanon who was caught embezzling the church money to build a beautiful seaside home. This is just one example of his delusion with and lack of faith in priests. Edmond's religious beliefs and views occur in many parts of his life story, but most of the time, he does not discuss them overtly.

CONTEXT

A considerable part of interpreting any personal experience narrative involves the many levels of context surrounding the narrative and its performance. Context can
be characterized as having two general components, cultural and social (Bauman 1983:362-63; Shoemaker 1990:232). Bauman distinguishes cultural context as "having to do with systems of meanings and symbolic interrelationships," while social context refers to "matters of social structure and social interaction" (1983:362-63). Of primary importance in studying cultural context seems to be understanding the culture bearer's world view, or how he or she makes sense of the surrounding world. Bauman borrows conclusions reached by Paredes (see Paredes 1968) to note that "much of meaning is conditioned by situational factors, but some variation in interpretation is rooted in the variability of human knowledge, understanding and experience" (1983:363). In other words, how does Edmond characterize his world, both from a Lebanese and from an American immigrant's perspective?

The social context of interpreting folklore has a number of elements. First, the social base of folklore is characterized by "the group or collectivity within which it is current" (p. 365). For the purposes of this analysis, the social bases important in Edmond's narratives include membership in an ethnic group, status as an immigrant, and his portrayal as an outsider or foreigner. Next, within the social base of folklore one finds individuals expressing themselves in ways unique to their personalities (p. 365). What is it about Edmond's personality that provides an understanding into his choosing to relate these particular stories? I propose that the importance of his role as father and teacher is primary. Also important are his bitter feelings to his and his family's situation, his romanticized (or ethnocentric) view of his ethnic background,
and his realization that this interview gives him access to speak to educated Americans about issues he considers important. Another social context is that of the situation, or "the ethnographic study of folklore in use, in the actual conduct of social life" (p. 365). This usually refers to documenting the natural situations under which the piece of folklore was performed, whereas my particular narrative collection took place under the artificial setting of an interview. However, there are still vital considerations to note including, "physical setting, participants' identities and roles, cultural ground rules for performance, norms of interaction and interpretation, and the sequence of actions... of the event itself" (p. 365). I will focus on these situational contexts as well as the personal contexts already noted.

The situational context is of such great importance for interpreting all of Edmond's responses precisely because of its artificial nature. He and I were both aware that the chief motivation for the interviews and the life story was a class project, without which I would not have visited that day, nor would we have had any of the discussions documented herein. Since I first only wanted to catalog his home remedies and folk medical knowledge, I asked to tape record him so that I could efficiently conduct the interview. I know that he has a great aversion to hearing himself on tape, and I therefore persuaded him to allow me to record him with the assurance that the tape was only for my benefit. This raises a difficult ethical consideration since my objectives have now changed, and the value of the recording is paramount. Related to this problem is the fact that he is much more self-conscious of
his less-than-perfect English while being taped. In this case he was probably counting on me to represent him well, and not to transcribe every word, pause, and stumble, and then to analyze his language even highlighting contradictions and repetitions, all things which I have done. Further, the unspoken agreement that I am his translator to an educated audience places responsibility on me to let his integrity and intelligence remain vital.

The situation is complicated by our relationship. Since I am his daughter, many of the things he told me would not have been told to just any interviewer. Not only do I share some knowledge with him which does not have to be made explicit, but also his openness can be read as a result of our relationship. Since he expects me to extract the positive aspects of Lebanese folk medicine and keep the tapes to myself, he may have been freer with his political and religious views than if this expanded project was discussed. He also seems to be taking advantage of having an opportunity to lecture and educate me, to pass along his knowledge to his daughter as a "good" Lebanese father does. These role enactments are made even more significant since our relationship in the past has not been ideal. I usually react somewhat negatively to his extended sermonizing, whereas during the interview I almost encouraged it. In fact, during the interview I was almost fitting my role as a proper Lebanese daughter, a role which is often ill-fitting to me since I value independence, but very important to my father and a source of much past friction between the two of us.
Throughout the transcript there are passages wherein he takes advantage of a chance to be heard. A layering of context builds as his personality and present life situation further encourage him to speak at length. He remains at home most of the time while his wife works and both of his children are away at college. He is bored with his life and usually does not have anyone to talk with, especially not his daughter who now is requesting him to talk about his past and my own heritage. Finally, he is validating the importance of his own existence in the face of an otherwise bleak time for him when his role as head of and provider for his family has diminished. This role is a defining one for Lebanese men, and yet he is not really needed as much as in the past by his increasingly independent family. He has not developed other parts of his own life to fill in this vacuum.

Finally, there is yet another layer of context to consider, one that Stahl labels as an interpretive context which she distinguishes as, "the identification of personal information that sparks a given focus, personal associations or situations that encourage the interpreter to interpret the performance or text one way rather than another" (1989:30). She proposes contextualization as a methodology to interpret folkloristic texts. This process is "a self-conscious attempt by an interpreter of a text or performance to make explicit the relationship between the item or performance, the interpretive context, and the interpreter's own response (interpretation)" (pp. 32-3). Part of this process is identifying allusions heard within the story's texts, allusions that mean something to the active listener (ibid). This also requires recognizing private
folklore which includes, but is not restricted to, "the listener's interpretation of the teller's identity, personal values, and beliefs as reflected in the story" (p. 45). This at last brings us to a contextualized interpretation of the first recording of Edmond's personal narratives recounting past experiences with American medicine in order to gain insight into his identity, especially his ethnic identity, values, and beliefs. I first discuss the situational context, but I will provide a more in-depth analysis of a piece of this interview and compare it to Edmond's redering of his life story.

*The Context of the First Directed Interview*

The first interview, which concerned traditional Lebanese medicine and Edmond's medical decision-making process in America, took place on October 24, 1992, at our family home in Houston, Texas, in a more-or-less relaxed atmosphere. It did not seem to bother either Edmond or Renate, who also was interviewed about her recollections of medicinal beliefs as observed during her time in Lebanon, to answer the questions posed. My father seemed to enjoy and even get personal satisfaction from detailed and elaborated answers; however, as many people are during interviews, he was a little uncomfortable with the tape recorder. Although the ideal situation would have been to leave the tape recorder running continuously throughout the interview, Edmond was not comfortable with this and constantly reached over and turned it off because he wanted to think about and order his thoughts before answering
the question. Despite assurances that there was plenty of tape and he could take as much time as he needed before speaking, he continued to turn off the tape recorder. Rather than interrupting the established rapport by frustrating him, I finally stopped resisting and have instead noted these interruptions in the tape transcription. As will be shown later in this thesis, an important way to conceptualize a life story is as a constructed past reality through the eyes of the present. Although this directed interview is not a "life story" per se, Edmond's attempts to structure the tape recordings of his memories by only allowing well-thought out answers to be recorded beautifully illustrates the constructed nature of self-presentation. This literal, physical construction of identity by way of his control of the tape recorder is only available to him in the context of a tape-recorded interview, and not in what may be termed a "natural" context, like a conversation, in which such editing is not really an option.

The transcription of this interview follows in Appendix B. Unfortunately, there were some muffled passages on the tape of this interview as well as the life story, and these are coded in the written transcription by either [?????], or the notation [unintelligible]. The transcription is also coded for pauses with plain ellipses, while words that are left out of a direct quote will be marked by (...). There will be further notes concerning the transcription coding I used as well as the organization of the transcriptions in a brief introductory section at the beginning of the appendices. The direct interview concerning folk medicine did have a time constraint on it; therefore,
near the end of the interview, there was more rushing around in the background and a much larger number of interruptions, as well as perhaps some lost concentration.

*The Context of the Second Directed Interview*

The second directed interview, which differs in both subject matter and presentation, again took place in my parents' home on April 2-3, 1993, in Houston, Texas and was also tape-recorded. I am not including my transcription of this interview because I am not specifically using it to develop my position in this thesis. I do refer to it, however, simply because it was crucial in helping me recognize the importance of storytelling and teaching to my father. I believe it is necessary to understand the circumstances surrounding this interview for the broader contextual analysis. At that time, I was collecting traditional Lebanese foodways through a demonstration and an interview with both my father and my mother. While my father speaks about foodways as part of his own personal cultural heritage, my mother, Renate, learned how to cook Lebanese cuisine when they lived in Lebanon, and she still cooks many of the dishes for the family, especially during the times when my brother and I return home for visits from college.

As with so many scholarly projects, the original intent changed as a result of field research. I first wanted to document an aspect of material culture, folk cookery, in terms of the recipes and types of foods eaten at various holidays throughout the year
in Lebanon, which is a typical folklife study. As it turns out, Edmond repeatedly denied any significance given to particular dishes at such times as funerals, weddings, Christmas, or even birthdays which he claims were not even celebrated until the more recent past. He ascribes significance only to pastries in general and one type, *ma'ahmoul*, in particular at Easter time. At this point I became disappointed until later when the information and memories that Edmond did speak about became more important than the framework of questions with which I approached him.

In both of these directed interviews, he has an uncanny knack for refocusing my naive, theoretically formed research questions in a new direction which is infinitely more interesting and somehow more "real" or substantial. As an interview subject he is ideal, providing as much detail as any researcher could ask for and then some! Since he was demonstrating how to cook three different dishes for me and the tape recorder in the first part of the interview, he talked about what he was doing at every stage, filling in gaps of time before he could start the next step with reflections, minute detail about exactly why he did specific things, opinions, and stern warnings. As it turns out, what he talks about and remembers is the soul of both the recipes and the food--what makes them live on, get passed to the next generation, and how they are adapted. The meaning behind material culture is the ultimate goal of a folklife approach to any "object," including crafted food and its recipes.

Again, an important part of the interview context of both the traditional medicine and the foodways directed interviews is my father's insistence on controlling
the tape-recorder. Initially, I repeatedly resisted gently (or at least tried to), but, later, I again stopped challenging his actions. The intriguing aspect of this is that the normal roles of interviewer and subject did not fully apply as they were overshadowed by the personal roles of daughter and father. Whereas with other interview participants I might have made it more clear that the interview necessitates full tape recording, in this situation I was left in the somewhat powerless situation of a Lebanese daughter who should not challenge her father too openly. I knew that if I wanted to continue the interviews and keep him feeling comfortable, I would have to compromise. Therefore, the best I could do was not to resist what he needed to do in order to feel comfortable, and then annotate our actions where appropriate in the text of the transcription which I still retain.

The fact that this happened at all is interesting for another reason beyond the light it sheds on interview roles. As my later discussions show, words and identities are of mutual construction. In this case, the framework for eliciting answers is not completely in my control as the interviewer, but in the control of the subject who so often decides when a particular train of thought is finished and that the next one needs to be carefully considered before committing it to tape. By turning off the recorder, Edmond has gained constructive power in a situation usually framed by the person asking the questions. In an extreme view of this situation, I am not merely collecting information for my own project, but he is speaking with his own agenda through me and the interview via the recorder. He instinctively knows his audience is wider than
just I, the only person in the room, and wishes to tailor any remarks to this other, non-present audience.

The Context of the Life Story

My father performed his life story for me and the tape recorder on two separate days, on December 28, 1993, and on January 2, 1994. The transcription for both of these performances can be found in Appendix A. Again, both of these performances took place at our home in Houston, and we were alone for most of each day's taping. There is one very significant difference in this undertaking as compared to both of the previous directed interviews as, in contrast to them, I only asked one question and the rest of the narrative was left entirely up to my father to structure in any way he wanted.

As mentioned in the introduction, I opened the first session of the performance with the prompt, "What I'm doing today is--I want to record your life story. I want to find out how you got to be the person you are today. So, start from the beginning and tell me how you are who you are. You can take your time and think and pause, just don't turn off the tape recorder. I have plenty of tapes, and you can make this as long as you want or as short as you want" (P1T1A - 3-7).

As this prompt shows, I did give him the general framework by saying "start at the beginning" as well as the more subtle cue that I would like him to explain his present self through his past with, "tell me how you are who you are." However,
beyond that I did attempt to leave his other decisions to him throughout the session. There was one exception, however, in which I interrupted the flow by dissuading him from pursuing a line of thought I was uncomfortable with, and the consequences of that interruption to the flow of the narrative are both interesting and informative.

While there was some overlap in the topics he discussed in the life story as compared to the directed interviews, the choice of what topics to include or leave out was otherwise left entirely up to him, with the already noted exception. It is precisely this selection process, a process wherein he decides what is valuable to recount and important to how he portrays his life and sees himself, that provides the clues to understanding his personality and the events in his life. By working through the logical and illogical flow of what is said, as well as what is left unsaid, "mere stories" become a storehouse of personal and cultural history, social presentation, and traditional means of passing on family heritage and learning. This active role of the performer is what makes the life story such a valuable research tool. My intimate knowledge of my father enables me to note when past events that would appear to me to be significant were nonetheless not mentioned, or only briefly skimmed over. The silent, unvoiced passages would necessarily remain unnoticed by an outsider collecting the same life story, yet they remain fundamental pieces to the puzzle.

There was one major problem during the recording of the first day's session, which actually turned out to be very beneficial. After a little over two hours into his performance, the tape in the tape recorder jammed, causing the machine's speed to
considerably slow down and rendering the resulting recording unintelligible. After the
initial period of panic and an attempt to recover and continue during the last part of the
performance, I finally ended the lengthy session. A few days later we made the second
attempt, one which now proves to be invaluable. Because my father realized how
devastated I felt at the loss of so much information, he tried to remember what he was
talking about and attempted to reiterate it. The result is a fascinating example of how
certain core stories as well as his style of oration and self-presentation remain stable. I
am now able clearly to see patterns that are found in both narratives. Whereas my
original frustration was borne out of some notion of losing "a coherent, clear, and
complete life story from beginning to end," I slowly discovered the reality and art
behind life stories. My father repeatedly performs and has performed bits of this same
story, and these pieces are well-rehearsed, patterned, and recognizable to me,
especially as his daughter, even when new elements enter into the narrative. There is
no "one-sitting" life story, but rather a moldable, adaptive patterned style of self-
presentation which is at the same time flexible. Also, in this second session, the
context shifts slightly since he is concentrating on what he said the first time, and often
offering me a summation of his beliefs and stories. Despite the recognizable elements,
these stories often did not have the richness or the depth of their first rendering since
he wasn't truly performing them for the same reasons, such as to explain a point or
rediscover a distant memory. Instead, this performance is a conscious reconstruction
of his very recent first session. I will note and analyze the patterns and their
differences later in this thesis.

Other Aspects of Context

This study is fortunate to have such a vocal and cooperative informant. In both
of the directed interviews Edmond often volunteers information without prompting,
continuing his answer as what he says sparks something else in his memory, a feature I
tried not to interrupt (though, as can be seen in the transcript, the final part of the folk
medicine interview was a heated discussion about superstitions wherein my manners
and attempted interview techniques failed). At times when I try to change the topic
during a pause (thinking he is done and that this is my cue), he ignores my new
question until he believes he has fully dealt with the previous one in all its related
aspects. He also gives more information than just simply what the questions call for,
elaborating, justifying, explaining a point, and most importantly offering anecdotal
evidence from an often distant past. These anecdotes, or personal experience
narratives, not only provide a contextual framework within which to place the medical
or foodways information, they are often also eloquent sources of information about his
own world view, beliefs, values, and attitudes. The anecdotes thus provide a rich
texture and a means of better understanding his own and his family's history, as well as
why they are relevant to his life and to his own identity. The anecdotes also provide
indirect information about Lebanese culture and customs, and are therefore of ethnographical significance.

Anytime a project relies on the recollection of the participant, the issues of memory and "truth" must be addressed. In the case of recollection framed in narrative, the actual events discussed are often not as important as the way those events are given substance, form, and meaning by the narrator. The theoretical aspects of this issue will be more fully examined in the next chapter, but I must mention that Edmond interjects several comments about his memory, some positive but most negative. He very self-consciously claims that his memory is not as good as it was in the past despite the fact that at other times he is surprised at his ability to remember details and past events. Again, I will be returning to the issues surrounding memory in narrative projects, and presenting Edmond's own words regarding his memory, since, as can be seen in the above statement, it is something about which he is keenly aware and even concerned.

In terms of the anthropological and ethnographic significance of Edmond's descriptions of Lebanese culture in the past, other limitations and biases must be recognized. Most obvious are the already mentioned limits of memory, but one must also consider the regional boundaries wherein he grew up since most Near Eastern countries, like many other countries, are not homogenous in their traditions. Also, in relation to the first interview about traditional medicine, the medical choices made by his extended family at the time, both in what they used and taught him, as well as in what they themselves rejected and labeled "worthless" within the broader Lebanese
folk medical tradition, must be considered. In the second interview, in the case of folk
cookery, the personal tastes of the family and local availability of key ingredients
affect which recipes my father learned and, equally as important from a folklorist's
point of view, which version of the recipe he learned to view as the "real" and
"authentic" one. Finally, related to issues of memory is the tendency to romanticize
and promote the past as superior to the present. Also, when this past includes one's
own native culture and the present takes place in an adopted culture, this bias is known
as ethnocentrism, and I will be discussing its influence on my father's words in
Chapter Seven.

These limitations notwithstanding, documenting any folk medical tradition,
especially one as little studied as that of the Lebanese, is an important undertaking and
this study is a first step in what is hoped will be a continuing and expanding area of
research. Also, despite what he may claim about his own fading memory, I did collect
a rather extensive catalog of remedies, folk beliefs, types of traditional healers, food
recipes and stories, and family reminiscences and anecdotes which shows that Edmond
certainly does remember a wonderfully broad array of traditions in quite some detail.
CHAPTER IV

PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF THE LIFE STORY, PERSONAL NARRATIVES AND INTERVIEWS

Throughout this thesis the genre of life story is my primary emphasis. I will use directed interviews and the personal experience narrative as techniques to highlight and contrast specific aspects of the life story, both structural and philosophical. As I will show, the boundaries between these three genres is complex, at times seeming clear, yet at other times blurring because of so many similarities. I will begin with an issue that spans all three genres and which deals more with choice of subject than with technique of analysis; namely, who is a prime candidate for study and are there some researchers better suited for tackling certain cultural studies than others?

INSIDER/OUTSIDER ISSUES

In the social sciences there has been a long-standing tradition of researchers making every attempt to maintain an academic and objective detachment from the people they study. This concern for distance between observer and observed arose out of a scientific pursuit of objectivity and validity, with the belief that the chance for biased observation was reduced if one studied a group in which one does not belong and, therefore, in which one does not have a vested interest. In anthropology this
intellectual tradition has stood in a paradoxical relationship with the technique of participant observation wherein a researcher attempts to understand dynamics of human behavior and the logical cultural system of a particular people by living with them. This technique requires anthropologists to live as the people they study live and to participate in as many of the activities that constitute normal life to that culture as possible in order to gain an "insider" view.

Early theories encouraged anthropologists to seek out cultures and peoples who were different, more "exotic" than themselves, with the underlying assumption that only an outsider can elicit certain information from the culture under observation. The assumption was based on the belief that people in the midst of living their lives within a particular cultural system were somehow "too close" to their own behavior, and by extension to the culture which spawned the behavior, to understand the reasons and meanings behind it. By living with an alien group as an adopted, temporary member of the society, anthropologists could ideally get both the "inside" view of the culture, while at the same time maintaining intellectual distance since he or she was raised in a fundamentally different cultural system. Throughout the early history of anthropology, therefore, studying one's own people was discouraged and, indeed, seemed frivolous since it was assumed that true insight into the "other" could only be gained from a cultural outsider.

In the 1960's, especially through the work of Marvin Harris, this view expanded slightly to incorporate the insider's point of view, or emic component;
however, the "insider" whose views were included was still primarily the subject of the research and not the anthropologist. Even in this revised approach to research, a western anthropologist was still the one who was framing the research and then asking the questions in order to determine the meaning of the "insider's" point of view in the culture under study. It is only recently with the globalization of culture that more non-westerners are receiving a western education in anthropology and are subsequently returning home to study their own people simultaneously as anthropologists and as insiders of the culture.

Concurrently, only in recent years has the discipline of anthropology fostered the study of peoples and cultures who are more like the anthropologists themselves, especially with the rise of urban anthropology, reflexive anthropology and the wellspring of postmodern theories throughout many of the disciplines in the social sciences. In reflexive anthropology, the "self" or anthropologist studied the "other," or a culture, and in turn learned more about themselves, their own culture, and the process of ethnography. In reflexive anthropology, it also became more acceptable for the anthropologist to study his or her own culture (Myerhoff and Ruby 1982:27). Through the influence of postmodernism and post-structuralism, especially in their examination of hegemony and representation, the voices of the people themselves, the anthropological "other," were finally accepted as having important insights to contribute to the anthropologist's voice in the framing and analysis portions of research. Whereas the "other" used to have their words and insights incorporated into
the researchers' conclusions, increasingly, anthropologists and other researchers are consciously attempting to separate their own thoughts and words from those of the people they are studying in order not to usurp and represent the unique insights of the indigenous point of view as their own work.

Instead of being just a passive source of information, today's cultural insiders are also often actively shaping the structure and direction of the research, or at least can lay claim to their own words in the resulting text since the author clearly delineates her own words from those belonging to the people she interviewed (see for instance Shostak 1981). In her work with clergywomen, Elaine Lawless clearly separates her thoughts and analyses from the words of the women she works with and even goes so far as to present the women's responses to her own observations and analysis. Lawless terms this process reciprocal ethnography whereby "the outsider's 'objective' point of view has not been authorized as the legitimate view," and she goes on to claim that through her work, "Instead, the subjective view, the insider's view, has been authenticated, validated, recognized, and presented as imbued with power and authority" (1993:285-86). In a different sense of the term "insider," more and more members of cultures that once were the object of anthropological inquiry have recently become anthropologists themselves and have written ethnographies of their own cultures, ethnographies that proved to stand the test of intellectual critique. I must emphasize the difference between these two notions of "insider" participation in ethnography. Whereas Lawless includes insiders as speakers of their own experiences,
speakers who add to her research questions their own unique answers, she makes sure their personal integrity is clear in the resulting text which she writes (1993). On the other hand, there is a notion of cultural "insider" which refers to an anthropologist studying his or her own culture. While I do not claim to do reciprocal ethnography, I am bridging both of these notions of "insider" in my work by studying my own Lebanese culture and a close family intimate, but I also highlight my father's own words and clearly separate his perspective from my own analysis and conclusions.

The disciplines of anthropology and folklore are closely related with their respective emphasis on people in a cultural context; however, there are some crucial differences as folklore focuses on a much narrower range of topics. Throughout this century, the discipline of folklore has been concerned with the traditional aspects of the non-official or folk segments of culture. Like anthropology, folklore has experienced an awakened awareness of ethnic and urban traditions in the United States; however, the intellectual roots of studying one's own people already stood strong in folklore and the shift was not as great as in anthropology. Today, folklore itself is a discipline made up primarily of cultural insiders studying their own cultures. In the discipline there is also a recent upsurge in the study of family folklore whereby the folklorist studies the sagas, oral history, and stories that surround her within her own family with the belief that a family member has an ear to catch the ring of familiarity in an often-repeated tale (Baldwin 1975:40-44; Wilson 1990:14-15). Who better to recognize a traditional tale told by a grandparent or parent than a member of
the family who has already heard it and knows the formula that signals its impending rendering?

**MY DUAL ROLES AS RESEARCHER AND DAUGHTER**

This historical breakdown of the implications of cultural insiders and outsiders and their roles in anthropology and folklore provides the intellectual context for my own work. I am both a western-educated and American-trained anthropologist and folklorist, and also the half-Lebanese daughter of the person whose life I am researching. Despite the changing attitudes in the social sciences, some may still say that I am somehow "too close" to the material I am analyzing and that this lack of distance invalidates or at least weakens my conclusions; however, I instead posit that my closeness enhances and particularly strengthens my work. Over twenty years ago Dundes already recognized the benefit of working within one's family, saying, "While some might object to a professional folklorist recording his own traditions (and those of his parents and children) on the grounds that he may be too personally involved with the informants and the data to be objective, it could be argued that it is precisely the subjective sense of involvement which makes [this] study so valuable" (Dundes 1973:596).

In maintaining this conviction, I am not saying that I believe an outsider cannot look at my father's life story and reach some similar conclusions as I do, or even
uncover interpretations that I did not, but I do propose that my insider's perspective
does offer me knowledge and insight that is often fundamentally different and even
more valuable than a cultural "outsider's" view. In fact, without my intimate
knowledge of my father's life through my own lifetime of observing him, the things
that my father chooses to leave unvoiced would remain silent. The allusions my father
makes in his stories without filling in all the details would remain insignificant or even
unrecognized to an observer who has not shared some of his experiences or the logic
behind his own cultural orientation. Stahl refers to the importance of her own work
with her mother's personal narratives, saying that since her mother is part of who she
herself is, she responds to and identifies with the character her mother describes (1989:
22-23). In a related note, without a lifetime of hearing these same stories repeatedly,
the triggers or rhetorical cues that signal a particular story would not be as familiar to a
listener who is hearing them for the first or second time. As W. A. Wilson says about
doing folklore research with his own family, particularly his mother:

One of the advantages of growing up in a family and hearing someone like my
mother tell her stories again and again is that one soon learns to separate
recurring, structured narratives from regular discourse. This is the reason, by
the way, why each of you, rather than an uninformed outsider, should collect
the narratives told by the storytellers in your families—you know what they are
(Wilson 1990:12).

The very fact that I am the storyteller's daughter and have witnessed the events
he speaks about, as well as the fact that I possess intimate knowledge about his
personality therefore grants me a significant vantage point from which to gain insight
into his words. In turn, however, our relationship also affects the text of what he
decided to say during the interviews in two important ways. First, because we already
share knowledge of some of the past events, my father does not feel the need to
discuss them specifically, but instead can merely allude to them. On the other hand,
some subjects are discussed precisely because of our relationship, a relationship which
lends him MORE freedom of expression as he feels a bond of intimacy with me, his
immediate audience. Despite this context of apparent intimacy, there is a subtle shift
away from the typical storytelling atmosphere in all of the situations in which I have
tape-recorded my father, precisely because he knows that the outcome of his
storytelling is a recording meant for potential public use. We were no longer situated
solely in the context of a weekend family visit; instead he was assisting me in my own
work and he was consciously, very consciously, searching his memory for what he
thought I would want to record or would find interesting. In the background was also
the pressure of what he thought the broader audience to this collection would be
interested to know about him and his beliefs. He naturally also would want to make a
"good" impression. Recent theory in folklore has explored the notion that audiences
are no longer merely the interpreters of a performance, but they also have a
"constituting part" in that performance (Mills 1990:6). In other words, the performer
takes the audience into account while preforming and actively shapes a performance
with that audience in mind.

Missing from my analysis (and my own personal history) is an extensive
understanding of traditional storytelling in Lebanon, a broader context and influence
on my father's own style of storytelling (see Jahner 1985:218). While I do have some insight into Lebanese culture and values, the art of encapsulating these into culturally acceptable oral storytelling is not something I have been privy to outside of my own father's efforts. I believe the most important influence on his storytelling style has been his own father, a man whom my father has often referred to as a natural storyteller, and a man whom I see my father patterning himself after in so many parts of his own life. Edmond refers to his father often in his life story, and he consciously discussed how much he owes his father for his personal set of values. He also mentions an uncle, his mother's brother, and notes how wise he was, and how much he learned from him as well. For example, in his life story Edmond even said:

So, I learned from him [my uncle] and from my father--my father was a very wise man, very wise man. People used to come from state to state, from fa-a-ar, hundreds of kilometers. They having a problem, they come to him to help them out and solve their problem. They go with his advice. They know they believe on him like a second god on earth--whatever he tell them they believe on him, and then, believe me! It was nothing but the truth! The correct answer the correct advice. And, so, they both were very, very wise, intelligent person. I kind of practiced on from their existence around me, the atmosphere around (PIT1B - 274-282).

Shortly thereafter, he sums up his thoughts on his family and what they taught him with, "Yeah, there were lotta advice, lotta sayings, lotta examples. You see your
parents practicing the life this way and you follow it. It was good time, and they were
good people" (P1T1B - 299-301). Again, it would have been invaluable for me as a
researcher and a family member to know especially Edmond's father and his uncle, but
also his mother and grandparents, and to see them all interact; however, they had all
passed away by the time my father was still a young man, and I met none of them.

During the interpretation stage of this project my relationship with my father
also had an influence upon my work. Whereas it is important for any folklorist to
protect research informants and collaborators, in my case such protection takes on
another dimension. Precisely because of our intimacy I have knowledge to which
other researchers do not have access, and I must decide how much detail to include for
the sake of clarity and interpretational depth and how much is too intimate to share
with the audience of the printed page. It is true that any researcher would come across
personal information in the course of getting to know a research subject as a human
being, but my knowledge is not restricted to the interview situation, but instead covers
a full and detailed lifetime of observation, and which non-family members do not have
a right to witness. For this reason there are a few passages in the transcript which have
been deleted and are clearly marked off in the appendices for the sake of textual
clarity. There are also a few minor name changes to protect the privacy of others my
father and I discuss who did not themselves agree to participate in this research. I have
kept changes and omissions to a minimum.
NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION: PLOT, CHARACTER, TIME, PURPOSES OF STORY

Most simply stated, a narrative is a story; in other words, it has characters, a plot, a time sequence or setting, and a purpose. Labov defines narrative, specifically those about a personal experience, as, "one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred" (1972:359-360). This definition highlights the point I already made about personal narratives, that their truth is a negotiated truth in which both the storyteller and the audience accept what is related in the story as depicting actual past events. Good narratives or stories also have a meaning beyond the immediacy of the story. In the case of personal narrative, the meaning usually relates to a personality characteristic or a justification for why things are the way they are for the storyteller in the present. Borrowing an idea from Polkinghorne, Richardson claims, "Narrative is the primary way through which humans organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes" (1990:118; see also Polkinghorne 1988:1).

Whereas myths, fables, and "fairy tales" usually have a tight structure with clear, formulaic beginnings, middles, and ends, the personal narrative may or may not be as strictly structured, and may, in fact, be difficult to distinguish from everyday conversation (Oring 1989:236). The more a particular personal experience is related
through time by an individual, however, the more it begins to take on the standard characteristics usually associated with good stories, namely a clear plot, defined characters, and clearer sense of its raison d'être.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES

A very distinct type of narrative is the personal experience narrative which can be defined simply as, "a first person narrative based on a real incident in the life of the teller" (Shoemaker 1990:238). The incident is not merely recounted; instead, the teller "combines the experience, its perception and context to form a self-contained narrative" (1990:238). The act of narration is, "the telling...of a series of temporal events so that a meaningful sequence is portrayed--the story or plot of the narrative" (Kerby 1991: 39). Stahl adds in her basic definition of the genre, "its content is nontraditional" (1989:12), however, "the values or attitudes reflected in the stories are culturally shared and thus traditional" (1989:13). Stahl goes on to say that a successful episode "effectively entertains, teaches, or awes the audience," and it is then likely to be repeatedly told and its form improved upon "whenever the context...is appropriate" (1989:269). An important aspect of these narratives is the dramatic structure which makes them both interesting to the listeners and an effective way to convey a message (Stahl 1989:16-17).
One important feature of personal experience narratives versus other statements or narratives about the past is the casting of an experience into a narrative with an evaluative function. The storyteller evaluates the meaning of the past event or experience and reflexively uses it to state something about himself, the world in general or morals (see Labov 1972: 367). Stahl also discusses the fact that some personal narratives are told specifically to elaborate a moral, or as she puts it a "homiletic," theme and these, she says, include stories about injustice, cruelty, and practical problems in life (1989: 28). As I will show with my father's stories, this evaluative self-reflection in personal narratives is of utmost importance to him as is his need to discuss morality, injustice, and the struggles he has faced in life.

Stahl discerns three basic features of personal experience narratives in general: "(1) dramatic narrative structure, (2) a consistently implied assertion that the narrative is true, and (3) the self-same identity of the teller and the story's main character" (1989:15). The truth of a personal experience narrative is a negotiated truth: although the story is often embellished to become more interesting and the teller's perception of the experience changes, ultimately, "...both the teller and the listener must understand that the story—no matter how rhetorically enhanced—is to be accepted as true" (1989:18).

While not deliberately fabricated, the truth is "manipulated" through "a relatively minor degree of falsification" which can happen: "(1) in the teller's perception of the experience, (2) in the initial telling of the personal narrative, and (3)
in the readaptations of the story to the varying contexts of retelling" (1989:18). An example of context that changes the version of the story or the way it is told is the audience since, for example, a performer targets the message with the audience in mind or even skips certain details because of the audience (Adams 1990:27). In addition to the above three sources of fabrication, memory must be considered since these narratives are about events which have taken place in the past. Memory plays an important role in both the construction of stories and in the focus a researcher chooses for the final interpretation of the story. Because of its importance, I will discuss the role memory plays in narratives in greater detail later in this chapter.

ASPECTS OF THE LIFE STORY AS RELATED TO NARRATIVE

While I will be delving into many of the theoretical issues surrounding life stories and their narration in great detail throughout the rest of this thesis, I do want to introduce a few points. The definition of the genre of life history has changed greatly over the last century, beginning with a basic question-and-answer interview about the typical stepping stones in one's life, and the resulting text was then "mined" for cultural data. For example, the researcher would ask where and when a subject was born, who the primary figures were in his or her youth, what types of things were learned in youth, etc. The primary emphasis was on getting answers to questions elicited by a researcher, not by the informant. This can be seen by Langness' definition
of life history as, "an extensive record of a person's life as it is reported either by the person himself or by others or both, and whether it is written or in interviews or both" (1965:4-5). This definition of a life history does not even require that the person about whom the history is and the person telling the history are one and the same. With time interview questions did become more open-ended, yet they were still framed by the researcher until the recent upsurge of narrative and textual analysis.

Recent attention rests primarily upon research subjects who are given the power to frame their own stories as they see fit, including and excluding any details they wish, highlighting what they think is important, and framing the stories in a tone of their own choice. In keeping with this shift in perspective, anthropologists, folklorists and other researchers are increasingly using the term life story instead of history. Not only does this term focus more on the narrative and constructed qualities of the text, but it also shifts attention away from the notion of a history full of facts and to a document that springs from the imagination. Folklorist Jeff Todd Titon defines this genre as, "simply, a person's story of his or her life, or of what he or she thinks is a significant part of that life" (1980:276). Further, he refers to the life story as "a self-contained fiction" (1980:276), a document distinguishable from life histories which he says "give the impression that someone is speaking about his life in his own voice, but in reality someone else has muffled and distorted it" since the voice is usually "an informant answering a series of questions" (1980:277).
Today, in life story research it is more appropriate to consider the narrators as research collaborators instead of as informants or subjects since the resulting frame of the work is as much the result of the narrators' creativity and power of performance as the training and theoretical angle of the researcher (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989:131). The role of life storytelling and its significance to the storyteller is elaborated by Bauman who states that researchers should "consider the ways in which expressive and symbolic productions may employ life experience as an expressive resource, using it to shape and present the social self in dialogue with others" (1987:197). Since, by necessity, a person must sift through years of experience in order to present a concise narrative about his or her life, the act of choosing and connecting these various pieces of a lifetime does lend a wholeness to the social self, an integrity that results out of the structure of the story. Daphne Patai notes, "The very act of telling one's life story seems to invite structure--one rethinks the events of one's life so that it makes sense. Thus, in the telling, a subject, in many respects constant over time, is created" (1988:149).

CONSTRUCTION OF AN IDENTITY THROUGH NARRATIVE RATHER THAN A "FOUND" IDENTITY

At this point I have introduced the life story which, by definition, is meant to recapitulate a lifetime, and the personal experience narrative, which, by definition, is
limited to a single episode or experience. While these two types of narrative appear
distinct, they do have many features in common, features which inevitably blur the
margin between them. Certainly, it makes sense to picture a life story as incorporating
many single-episode personal experience narratives within it; and it also makes sense
that the alternate view, to see a life as a single-episode narrative, is somehow
oversimplifying the situation. I find it more useful to break both of them down as
having common functions in identity construction. Both life stories and single-episode
experience narratives are structured by the narrator, just as they both, in turn, can
provide a metaphorical structure for the narrator to proclaim who he is and in what he
believes.

Certainly not all personal experience narratives deal with weighty issues of
identity since many of them can simply be a humorous portrait, a cautionary tale for
others, or have some other purpose (Stahl 1989:24-6). However, the type of story that
Stahl refers to as a "theme-of-characterization form of personal narrative" (1989:26) is
perhaps most closely related in structure and function as many life stories. Particularly
with storytellers like my father who are so conscious of the moral world and their
places in it, I believe that the narratives about one event and the narratives about the
many events of an entire life both can have an internal structure that acts "as a vehicle
for personal values or world view," (Stahl 1989:21). Richard Bauman extends this
image to include the social context of the self-presentation by saying, "Sociable
narratives are a vehicle for the encoding and presentation of information about oneself in order to construct a personal and social image" (Bauman 1986:21).

One of my prevailing tasks in this thesis is to compare my father's life story with a directed interview we had conducted previously in order to highlight the features of self-presentation in both, and in order to explore the generic boundaries between them. So far I have discussed the life story and the personal experience narrative, but have not yet introduced how and where the directed interview fits into this scheme. In our directed interview, I had a list of specific questions I asked him in order to elucidate the types of folk medicinal practices and beliefs he grew up with in his childhood. I had anticipated a basic "laundry list" of information, but instead, my father launched into personal experience narratives, wove together stories about his various family members, and interjected his values and beliefs even when they had nothing to do with medicine. He chose how he was going to answer the question, how he interpreted it in the first place, when he would elaborate his answers or otherwise not remember details about something, and even when he would totally ignore my question and follow a different train of thought.

The directed interview was basically a technique I used; however, since he does not really have a mental template for this type of sometimes abstract, theoretical social interaction, he replied with the form of speaking with which he was most comfortable. Namely, he took on the role of teacher or "elder" who imparted information to me by way of personal experience narratives, anecdotes, proverbs, and
moral lessons and diatribes. This type of speech played a key role in his formation of self, and most importantly, he used it in both his life story and during the directed interview.

Returning once again to the social presentation of self, I found this to be the crucial similarity binding together the many different forms of narrative my father uses in our interactions. Ruby notes his discovery of "how social dramas, ceremonies, rituals, and fieldwork could be reflexive moments in an individual's life" (Myerhoff and Ruby 1982:30). He goes on to say, "One of the functions of these performances is to give definition to the self by seeing the self alongside or in opposition to 'the other'" (p. 30). Furthermore, Fine and Speer comment that, "Through performance, human beings not only present behavior but they reflexively comment on it and the values and the situations it encompasses" (1992:8). With my work I will show that the performance of one's life story or any other such reflexive narrative does indeed serve this function. With my father's performances, he is both metaphorically and literally able to say, "I am Edmond Bou-Saada; I made myself; I am not like other people; and nothing anyone does to me will take that away from me!".

At the same time as he speaks of the formation of his personality in the past, he is actively constructing and reconstructing his present personality and self-definition by weaving a story/personality out of words. Rosenwald and Ochberg, both psychologists, claim that, "Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned"
(1992: 1). Identity is constantly in flux no matter how stable the core symbols (personal values) of that personality are, and, in turn, identity and its awareness, once internally realized, requires affirmation through such performances as family storytelling and the relating of personal experience. It is during these enactments that audiences learn much about the storyteller, particularly, "Self-presentation--what is and is not told and the manner of telling--may, in other words, reflect the narrator's contemporary image and self-image in the community" (Miles and Crush 1993:91). Beyond commenting upon one's present image, Titon makes an important connection, stating that "The life story tells who one thinks one is and how one thinks one came to be that way" (1980:290). Identity is also shaped or molded to suit the particular audience of the story, is justified to suit a particular context or purpose for the storytelling event, and is reshaped by present circumstances even when the identity a storyteller is discussing is that of himself or herself twenty or thirty years ago.

NOTIONS OF SELF AND "TRUTH" AND MEMORY

Memory is a key issue in personal experience narratives, life stories, and anecdotes about the past. As I mentioned earlier, when a person shapes a story out of past experiences, the factual or empirical reality of that rendering can become a tempting question, especially with the recognition of elements of fabrication in personal narrative. As Kerby warns, "What we must avoid here is the untenable
position that such recollections are images which somehow duplicate original experiences as though now we could relive them precisely as they once were" (1991:23). Discussing the constructed nature of remembered "facts," Nicolaisen states that "Even in our autobiographical recollections we continually invent ourselves, and the stories of our personal pasts are therefore as much intoxicated fabulation as sober memory, however genuinely portrayed as nothing but the truth" (1990:6). For example, in Edmond's recollections he often inserts what other people were saying to him as though he is directly quoting their words. Since some of the events he is recalling and describing occurred over two or three decades ago, it is highly unlikely that the dialogue he inserts contains the actual words used in the past, or that he expects me, the listener, to believe that they were, but they do add a dramatic quality to his story just as they convey the general theme of the story. When viewed from this perspective, they do not seem out of place.

Beyond the fact that one cannot remember precisely how things happened in the past, there is also a subtle shift in both the content and meaning of specific memories themselves, a shift which the teller's present situation and attitude towards the past dictates. Kerby describes this as, "Memorial experience (recollection) is not simply of the past; it is as we have said, the past for me now, and this qualification makes a considerable difference" (1991:24). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett makes a telling point, stating that a person's recounting of his or her life story is from the perspective of the present, of knowing how it all turns out, but in reality "life choices
are made in the moment, prospectively, without knowledge of the outcomes" (1989:127). Since a story is often being told to explain a point or justify a position, it is being told from the perspective of that purpose. Not only must the listener interpret this purpose, but the teller also must make decisions throughout the narration event about how best to portray the point he or she is making. This is summarized well by Kerby, "Memories are not what they are because they somehow mirror a pregiven and meaningful reality. Reality, like perception, involves a considerable degree of interpretation" (1991:27). Therefore, it is important to visualize memory's role in narrative self-presentation as an active one, not as a videotape of the past. As Mihály Hoppál states, "Thus it seems obvious that recall in folk narratives is not mere reproduction; rather it involves reasoning and explanation. In other words, memory--hence, recall--is essentially constructive" (1980:297, emph. in original).

Finally, yet another perspective on the nature of "truth," one that is constructive and creative, is proposed by Stahl, "Manipulation of the reality involved is for the sake of rhetoric--to persuade the listener toward an appreciation of the cultural truths represented by the story" (1989:18). Also focusing on the rhetorical nature of life stories, Charlotte Linde proposes that being overly concerned with the truth value of life stories totally misses the point of these narratives, and she instead claims the need to pay attention to how the stories create coherence for their storytellers (1993:14-16). Therefore, when one sees those stories as a reflection of a present identity shaping itself, the importance of whether facts about past events are indeed true or not pales in
comparison to the process of constructing a self-image for a particular purpose to a particular audience. Taking a cue from Ben-Amos, I find the interesting questions surround why some memories are retained in the first place and then chosen as ones to share, or transmit to others as he puts it, in storytelling (1971:14).

EDMOND'S OWN METASTATMENTS ABOUT HIS MEMORY

The issue of memory is not merely a theoretical abstraction since it also can be openly discussed by the participants in the research and is often recognized as an important element of the answers provided by the interviewee. Just as in our earlier directed interviews, Edmond refers to the role of his own memory in the telling of his life story, the limits upon it that he perceives time has imposed and the fact that his memory is dependent upon the situation or context in which it is called upon. He notes:

Not much I can tell you, believe me--anymore. I wasn't expecting you gonna ask me this--unprepared. And even I want to be prepared, would take me days and days to dig in my brain far back. So many of my past life most the time and many times--pops in front of me and makes me think of it and remember it. Sometimes I laugh and sometimes I cry, sometimes I feel bad, sad. You can't think of them all at once. They pop in front of you, depend on the
situation, the demand, what was the incident, the demand, the question. That's how they pop. They pop on occasion. (P2T2A - 83-90)

Almost at the very end of his second day narrating his life story, Edmond beautifully sums up how context-dependent his personal narrative is, and clearly demonstrates his own instinctive knowledge of the nature of story construction. At this point he said:

Yeah, I don't know what else I can say. I can't tell you everything now at once.

They have to go every day different in stage. Depend on every day.

Tomorrow, I'll have a different motive to remind me of something that I haven't said. The day after there's going to be another motive to remind me on something else haven't said, that depends on the incident, the happening. I believe that's all I can I can say for the time being. (P2T2B - 127-132)

Two years ago during our directed interviews concerning Lebanese folk medicine, Edmond had also commented upon his memory and the role it plays in both what he remembers, how he presents and what sparks a particular memory. During this particular interview, Edmond remarks several times that his memory in general is not as good as it used to be, that he has forgotten a lot of what was done in Lebanon, and that he didn't pay very much attention to what his family tried to teach him when he was young. He remembers the latter with, "...I never had any dumb brain to fill in a lot of advice" (FMT1A - 270). On the other hand, at other times he also expresses surprise at how much he is remembering, for example, "I wasn't expecting you too much to scratch my memory for so many things," though he then also discounts his
abilities when he continues that particular statement with, "...and I don't know much because I never paid too much attention--I was dumb, and you bum, I trying to at least pass to you certain things I know and you never have any interest, you never give a damn. Yeah, too late maybe, probably I have forgot a lot of things" (FMT1A - 263-267).

Later in the interview, Edmond reflects on another cause of what he considers a diminished memory, a cause that is located in his present circumstances. He says:

Yeah, there's so many things I forgot also, I used to know them even when I came to here, and now I don't have any such memory of.... I'm losing memory too much. I don't know. Locked here in the house for the past six, seven years and no practice with anything or anybody, or bother with, so, uh, your memory will rust, if you don't keep practicing and talk to people and go and come, whatever--exchange ideas and talk, words--you see now words I know since long, long time and now I couldn't find them. Sometimes I have to stay a minute or two and think about them because I forgot the meaning of that word--what, what does that mean what to use. I'm looking for some word sometime, I want to say and I can't remember it. It's lack of memory because lack of practice. Your memory would rust sitting around here by yourself (FMT2A - 248-258).

These memory impediments notwithstanding, Edmond very actively brings forth the past. In addition, by persistently recalling the past, the very act of sorting through one
memory often triggers another and this can help unleash even more memories. Finally, as Myerhoff states, "Telling stories is an important element in retaining memory" (1980:29). Edmond himself comments on the necessity of rehearsing the past and keeping the thought processes active, two crucial mental activities that he feels he is losing, but which the array of his stories certainly belies.

Beyond the benefit of helping a person retain memories, storytelling also provides other forms of positive feedback. Discussing one of the purposes of personal storytelling, Nicolaisen states, "We tell stories because, in order to cope with the present and to face the future, we have to create the past, both as time and space, through narrating it. If these stories are autobiographical in nature and sometimes if they are not, we create, in the process, the illusion of identity and of a continuous self by inventing ourselves in true stories of a past that never was" (1990:10). Certainly the desire to see himself as a stable character through time is very important to my father who portrays himself as not having veered from the path he has established as "the correct way to live." Commenting on this need to establish one's self with the integrity and single-mindedness afforded by hindsight, Huseby-Darvas concludes that "one of the important functions of oral autobiography is to reorganize life's events and particularly its key transitions and thus to supply meaning and structure to the current situation, while eliminating inconsistencies, contradictions, and detours for the individual" (1988:394).
PERSONAL NARRATIVES AND TRADITION: A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

If personal experience narratives and life stories are narratives that result from an individual recasting his or her personal history into a story with a plot, how can folklorists treat such a unique subject as a traditional form of narrative? The most important reason to view such storytelling as traditional is that the form of family saga and individuals recounting their past to their children and grandchildren has been a part of most people's experience through time. The storytelling event is therefore traditional, but what about the stories themselves? Since the audience is usually limited and the stories do not spread regionally or culturally, are they truly folklore or even traditional? Sandra Stahl said that in order to view personal experience narratives as traditional, we must reexamine our conception of what that term really means. She said, "The traditional aspects of the personal narrative will require looking at 'tradition' as a function of continuing time (past, present, and future, not simply past) and as a quality tied to a wide range of substance (process and its components as well as plot and its motifs)" (Stahl 1977:10). In a later writing, Stahl notes that the beliefs and values expressed in such personal narratives are in themselves traditional. Elsewhere, Stahl also discusses the, "traditional aspects of storytelling--predictable form, evidence of cultural and personal stylization, conventional functions" (1983:268).
SUMMARY

By breaking down Edmond's narratives, I do not intend to focus on the fabricated elements of his story as points that somehow belie or even betray the truth behind his words. Instead, I hope I have underscored the fabricated, or constructed, nature of all personal narratives, and the fact that valuable, affirmative insight can be gained into a person's belief system and values through these tales. As Kalogeras notes, "Facts exist, but stories and meaning are constructed" (1991:38). This relates to identity as also being a construction, one which pieces together a narrative and is in turn reconstructed by and through that narrative. In a psychological study of narrative, Gregg says narratives "show self-representation to be organized as a system of multiple and contradictory discourses, among which the location of lived experiences--the ontological construction of subjectivity by me versus not-me differentiations--moves by quantumlike reconfigurations of a set of core symbols" (1991:177).

The core symbols in Edmond's narratives are his own values and his belief system. Also important is the opportunity he took to lecture me and warn me about possible dangers in the world that he himself has already experienced so that perhaps I will not have to repeat his mistakes or find myself in the same victimized position.
His narratives in the context of our interview certainly do have teaching as one of their basic functions.

Reality can be seen as being constructed just as the narrative reflecting that "reality" also is constructed. When Edmond offers anecdotes from his past, often inserting validating devices such as repetition or other intensifiers, it can be seen that the experiences need not be entirely true, as when he inserts supposedly direct quotations from a long-gone past. Instead the power of the narrative lies in his shaping and reworking of past experiences in order to justify his position on an issue and to convince others that this position is truly the best one for the situation at hand.

In order to interpret the recurrent themes I have uncovered in his words, I will employ a process that Stahl terms "contextualization" whereby meaning is elicited not merely from the text, but more importantly, from the allusions heard and the traditions discovered in the story by the listener. Contextualization is defined by Stahl as, "a self-conscious attempt by an interpreter of a text or performance to make explicit the relationship between the item or performance, the interpretive context, and the interpreter's own response (or the interpretation)" (1989:32-33). By interpretive context, Stahl is referring to "the identification of personal information that sparks a given focus, personal associations or situations that encourage the interpreter to interpret the performance or text one way rather than another" (1989:30). Related to this interpretive context is the identification of private folklore which includes, but is
not restricted to, such things as identity, personal values, and beliefs which the listener hears in the story (1989:45).

I will first present the salient themes I discovered throughout my father's life story, compare these to an often-repeated personal experience narrative I recorded during the directed interview on folk medicine, and then provide my contextualized interpretation of my father's words.
CHAPTER V

THEMES PART I: ON PRIDE AND MORALITY

Before analyzing what the specific content and structure of my father's life story means, I will first present the recurrent, overriding themes I recognize in the narrative from the perspectives of a folklorist and his daughter. These themes will later be analyzed and compared to similar anecdotes and motifs found particularly in one extended passage from the folk medicine directed interview in order to highlight specific insights into the genre of life story in general as well as this particular life story. Certainly the following themes are not the only ones that can be deduced from the vast story of my father's life; however, they are the most frequently encountered, used the most often by him to explain the events and decisions of his life, and the ones that ring the most true to me when I think of the man I know from my own life's experiences with him. Just as he picked through his own memories and formed his web of anecdotes for particular reasons, some of which no one will ever know, so I also had to carefully choose the themes to explore as well as the particular passages of his narration which I believed best highlighted those themes. In addition, for the purpose of readability, I also purged the passages that I directly quote in the body of this thesis from false starts, stumbles, and stutters, but these are important considerations for narrative analysis in general. In order to record such information, the passages in the appendices still retain these natural elements of speech. The interviews in their entirety can be looked up in the appendices in order to gain
contextual information about the progression of his stories through time, as well as Edmond's complex weaving of multiple metaphors, themes, and memories into different parts of the story. There is most definitely a more circular, tapestry-like appeal to the stories than a strict linear, time-line approach to the events in his life. The tether binding the fragments and various themes together is my father's very strong sense of identity, of who he is and for what he stands. Before venturing into the themes I will discuss, I first must clarify my own role in the shaping of his story.

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LIFE STORY

Not only am I making the ultimate decisions of which themes to discuss in detail, I, like all audiences of storytellers, also had some influence on the shaping of the story before and during its telling, an influence of both a subtle and of a more overt nature. The prompt I gave in the beginning of the recording session was the primary influence that I had on the life story narrative that Edmond created. This prompt essentially gave him a tool that he used to loosely frame his narrative. He was still in control of what he chose to say and what he chose to leave unsaid, but my prompt did subtly shape the outcome of the story as does any interviewer's comments. In order to leave the narrative unrehearsed before we sat down to record his life story, I was very vague about what I intended to accomplish on that day. During the previous work we had done together which focused on traditional medicine and cookery, he had free rein
to insert anecdotes, memories, comments, observations, and opinions, and he had no reason to assume that this would be any different during the life story. When he or my mother asked me what we were going to do on the day I planned the recording session, I simply told them I was collecting stories about his life. When the day actually arrived and the tape recorder was on, I prompted him with, "What I'm doing today is I want to record your life story. I want to find out how you got to be the person you are today. So, start from the beginning and tell me how you are who you are. You can take your time, and you can think and pause, just don't turn off the tape recorder... I have plenty of tapes. You can make this as long as you want or as short as you want" (P1T1A - 3-7).

While not intending to tell him what to do, I did lead him in many ways. Perhaps the most obvious effect I had on Edmond's words is recognizable early in the narrative. By telling him to start in the beginning, I do hint that he should follow a chronological perspective most closely related to traditional biographies which start at birth and continue through the life span of the subject, unfolding as his life unfolds. However, while this sort of time framing device is apparent early in his life story where he does indeed follow a chronological sequence, it becomes less apparent and binding as the narrative progresses.

Another cue my father took from my opening statement comes from the broader phrase, "I want to find out how you got to be the person you are today. So, start from the beginning and tell me how you are who you are." Following this cue, he
arranges the stories to literally explain how he finds himself in his present circumstances, and to justify his many views and insights regarding the events that have happened to him throughout his life. Given the request I made, his opening statement is logical and sets the tone for his extended account. He says, "Well what I am now is not exactly what I planned to be. Life changed and sometimes you go with the flow, where you can make a living or where you can stand" (P1T1A - 8-9).

Immediately, he sets himself up as a survivor, one who can "go with the flow" and yet still "stand" or survive even in the face of great adversity. As I will show, the theme of maintaining stability in a changing world which he brings up so early in his response is one of great importance throughout his story. No matter how much he has had to accommodate change, he never compromises his values, and this in turn has made it difficult to truly adapt or fit in to American society.

Through my preliminary research, I gained the impression that the best life story is one that comes spontaneously and is not planned immediately before the telling of the story. I also thought that a life story is a complete entity, an autobiography that stands on its own and is immediately recognizable as a whole, intact personal history. After seeing the sorts of topics or themes that my father discusses in his life story and comparing these to the stories that are found throughout our two earlier directed interviews, I have modified my position to a great extent. Since the same sorts of stories are found throughout all of our sessions, and since I already recognize many of the stories simply from being his daughter and growing up
around them, I realize that my attempts at preventing a "rehearsal" of the stories before
the recording of the life story were somewhat misguided. These stories are ones that
already exist and which he tells in different contexts and often for different reasons.

By assuming that I had to get the story once and in its entirety, I was placing
artificial restrictions and boundaries on a mode of expression that survives well on its
own without such limitations. During our first attempt at recording his life story,
about one and a half hours into the session, the tape recorder malfunctioned, and
neither of us noticed it until about forty minutes into that particular side of the cassette
tape. All forty minutes were lost, and unfortunately, those forty minutes were
especially "juicy," bursting with proverbs he used to teach a lesson in the context of a
particular anecdote, as well as overflowing with opinionated comments and personal
values. I was devastated. I thought the whole venture was a loss since I did not get the
"original," intact, complete story in one sitting so that I could analyze it as one body as
though it somehow exists in a vacuum.

I have since discovered that there is no one perfect telling or rendering of a life
story. There is also no complete, undivided rendering of one's life story. Instead, the
life story is a verbal art form constantly in flux, forever being molded for a new
purpose and to a new audience, and often existing in fragments at different times in a
narrator's life. As a matter of fact, my father is himself keenly aware of such
contextual influence on not only his memory and what he is able to recollect, but also
on the resulting anecdotes themselves. Near the end of the second performance of his
life story he said, "You can't think of them [memories, incidents] all at once. They pop in front of you, depend on the situation, the demand, what was the incident, the demand, the question. That's how they pop. They pop on occasion" (P2T2A - 88-90).

A few minutes later he again comments on the fragmentary nature of memories, "I can't tell you everything now at once. They have to go every day different, in stage. Depend on every day. Tomorrow, I'll have a different motive to remind me of something I haven't said. The day after that there's going to be another motive to remind me on something else haven't said, that depends on... the incident, the happening" (P2T2B - 127-131).

Just because I have never in the past sat with my father and a tape recorder and requested his life story does not mean I have never heard it. I have heard it when there is nothing good on television. I have heard it when the family has company over to dinner. I have heard it when he reassures me or my brother when we find ourselves in a difficult situation by recounting an anecdote from his past which was similar to whatever hardship we are facing. In other words, in the many different fragments, in its many different manifestations, and for varied reasons, my father's life story has existed for as long as he has been conscious of personal decisions in his life and aware of his personality as the product of such decisions regarding values, morals, and beliefs.

When I look at the whole picture of what my father presented to me as his "life story," it becomes apparent to me that it is not the same as an autobiography. Most
autobiographies start out with the premise of presenting the "facts" of one's life in some basic semblance of chronological order. Also, most autobiographies focus the narrative on particular events, different people encountered, and then to some degree on lessons learned as one progresses through life. While to some degree this sort of loose framework does exist in my father's life story, especially as he presents himself through the various jobs he has held, he primarily follows a different set of structuring priorities. Instead of a strict chronological sequence, he follows tangents of moral themes and lessons he has learned. His life story is not limited to the events of his life, but extends to the different lessons he has learned from his parents, especially his father, how those lessons were grounded or discovered in the events of his own life, and how I should, in turn, use those lessons in my own life to avoid repeating his mistakes as well as to reach farther in life, to accomplish more than he was able to do.

The beginning of the narrative does start off logically with Edmond placing himself in the context of his own parent's history. His "life story" begins with the families of his mother and his father before they even met each other and even reaches further back in time with some reference to his mother's grandfather's fortunes. As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, family is an overriding principle in Lebanese culture and in my father's life, and thus, it is not surprising that he chooses to set the scene for his own life by way of his family's past. It would be interesting to collect other older Lebanese people's life histories in order to compare such thematic choices and contrast them to common American themes. In many ways my father chooses to
set up his life story as a conduit between his past, himself, and myself. He shows how he became who he is by way of showcasing his father's teachings and using his life story as a means of encapsulating his storehouse of wisdom, of proverbs, of moral beliefs, of the "right" way of life. In many ways he acts as a messenger, a voice for a past that no longer has a voice of its own.

I turn now to a survey of the major themes I discovered in the life story, and in Chapter Seven I will compare them with similar themes broached during one particular story my father told me during our interview on traditional Lebanese medicine in order to compare and contrast life story and directed interviews. In both cases, the themes overlapped greatly and were often of a moralistic nature. The themes included both commentary about human behavior as well as personal experience stories as a means of illustrating those moralistic points. Edmond also uses proverbs extensively as a means of highlighting significant moral beliefs as well as a means of linking personal experience and belief to the larger Lebanese traditional belief system while teaching me (and, by extension, others through my work) about his heritage.

In Chapter Seven Edmond's words will be discussed in the broader contexts of the genre of life story in general while also presenting some insight into the narratives of people in the later years, self-presentation, personal experience narratives, and family folklore.
THE IMPORTANCE OF MORALITY

The most important virtues to my father are having a "good name," being able to hold his head high no matter what the cost, and otherwise being honest, decent, and "straight." These are all virtues he has tried to instill into my brother and me as well as to maintain in his own life, and in turn, he frequently alludes to them in his many stories. There are several related threads that Edmond ties in with morality and having a "good name," including the importance of family, the worth of his signature, and the necessity of maintaining his dignity and pride in everything that he decides and does. Through the strength of moral character he finds a weapon to defeat any obstacle, whether the enemy is prejudice, discrimination, lost opportunity, lazy coworkers who undeservedly advance in their positions, or the decline of his native Lebanon after years of war and of his adopted country America since his first visit in the 1950s. His own strong moral convictions are an important facet of his life and must be understood if any insight is to be gained into the events of his life, the choices he has made, and the ways he presents himself in his stories.

To Edmond, one positive aspect of honesty is that others are willing to trust him, and trustworthiness on the job is an often-repeated theme during his life story. After finishing the equivalent of American high school in Lebanon, Edmond had a hard time finding work since, as he puts it, his uncle got involved in politics and was
in the "wrong party," the one that always lost. Remembering this time he said, "And wherever I go to be hired, with any place in the government, when they ask, I belonged to the wrong party. They never hired me" (P1T1A - 95-98). It is significant to note that in Lebanon one family member's involvement in politics meant that the whole family was considered to be involved, and in this case also tarnished. Recalling his late teenaged years, he told me about an early job he finally acquired with the help of a friend at a famous Lebanese resort, the St. George Hotel, in Beirut. He says:

One of our friends, he put me after I'd been out of school two--three years, he put me in the St. George Hotel, to manage the beach. That's a very big operation and the guy who contract that place in there used to lose thousands of dollars every year by people stealing and rob him. So, they trusted me. They know from which family I'm coming. They can trust me to play with their money in there and handle it, because they know nothing will be in my pocket.

And, in a matter of fact, he got five times income the year I held that place for him. (P1T1A - 103-110)

Through this anecdote, Edmond shows that just as one family member's involvement with the "wrong" political party jeopardizes the family's name and ability to get ahead, in Lebanon having a "good" family name in other circles provides many opportunities to all family members, and it is therefore very important to maintain. He is also establishing his own credibility and work ethic as already existing early in his
life while simultaneously establishing the importance of these personality characteristics early in our recording sessions.

One rhetorical style my father often uses is to make a broad assertion of some principle to live by or some other generalized statement which he then illustrates through a personal anecdote. For example, early in the telling of his life story, Edmond is discussing the fact that, among other reasons, he was laid off from his most recent job about nine years ago because experience and quality are no longer appreciated, and older workers are being replaced by cheaper, younger, inexperienced workers. As a generalized observation he says, "Honesty—it's cheap, and nobody looks for it anymore. How devoted you are, how honest, how good person or not good person. People don't care anymore. They overlook those things" (P1T1A - 214-216).

Immediately following this declaration, he comments on the way life currently is by contrasting the present with his own experiences at a job almost thirty years ago where honesty was recognized, important, and rewarded. In this portion of the narrative, he shows his honesty, skill, and clever tenacity as compared to his coworkers, some of whom have gone on strike, and others of whom are lazy, incompetent, and trying to cheat the employer out of undeserved overtime pay by deliberately slowing down production:

My God! When I worked in New York, I remember I worked for [M--] Steamship Company, the biggest company in the world has a steamship. They had 44 ships--freighters and two cruise. One time, the people went on a strike,
and the manager there... We were 70 people in that department. We were in charge of the billing and the calculation, how much we have to charge the shippers, and make the cubics, and calculate the measurement and the cubic for the shipments and send them to the pier to be shipped. They [the dock workers] went on strike for a while—they were union, I wasn't, and that's why I wasn't much beloved in there because the manager liked me very, very much. In that time, some of the managers recognize who's good and who's not good, and he was a tough manager, and he was from the people that they do appreciate the worker. Within year and a quarter he pushed me three positions up, and that made so many people hate me around there and jealous. But they don't deserve it because they sit whole day long doing nothing but baloney and laugh at the phone, and making jokes and slow down the shipment—on purpose, some of them they slow on purpose just to get overtime. So, one time they went on strike, and the manager said, "Look guys, I'm not going to force you to do anything and we don't have anything else to do anyhow, but do me favor, and pull out the old books and review your job, your work, what you have done. If you have made a mistake, if you billed... underbilling the customer, or overbilling the customers or whatever—check those bills, if you can find anything." People opened these books, and they sit on it. They don't want to work. Every once in a while they turn a page, every once in a while maybe one day, or every two days, somebody comes, "Well I found something
[uses dumb-sounding voice], there is here 500 dollars." And, that's all. They go on. I have discovered 780,000 dollars underbilled for customers. Like, lets say, 35,000 dollars, they don't know how to count zeroes those guys. A bill of 35,000 dollars--they make it 3 thousand 500 dollars, and they charge the customers 3,500 dollars instead of 35,000. 350,000 dollars becomes 35,000--they don't know! They don't know figures! They don't know zeroes! I had discovered 780,000 dollars!! I drove the manager nuts. He couldn't believe it (P1T1A - 216-246).

After establishing his worth as a worker and his honesty in his position, he then demonstrates that he earned his supervisor's respect, and this supervisor, in turn, was a decent man who rewarded his hard work. Being recognized and rewarded for hard work is extremely important to my father, who believes that it has become increasingly more difficult to find such a supervisor today who similarly appreciates effort and hard work.

Edmond gives his stories depth and credibility when he first makes a general observation or judgement that some may see as disputable by then backing up these observations with a real life personal experience which highlights how his observation holds true. Part of the worth of telling personal experience narratives is that they serve to prove a point by offering real-life experience as evidence that listeners find hard to dispute. These experiences then serve to confirm or solidify personal observations and judgements by showing how they have been true in the narrator's life. Stahl refers to a
subtype or form of personal experience narrative she calls a "cautionary tale" which I recognize in my father's personal stories. This form of narrative has a typical function, Stahl says, as it serves to "influence the behavior of the listener, to illustrate the effects of certain personal experiences as a lesson for the listener" (1989:27). In this way they serve a similar function as proverbs which primarily teach a lesson to one individual by drawing on the cultural experience of the countless masses who lived in the past.

Having honor and a good name are values that were definitely instilled into my father by his family, especially his father, and he in turn is trying to pass those values on to his own children. Edmond said, "I've been raised to live my own life, to be honest, decent, straight, because nothing will be lost or hidden, but the things that never happen" (P1T1A - 349-350). Immediately thereafter, he launched into a lesson and a proverb that his dad taught him, and he actually presents this lesson as a recollection of his own father's words. Edmond said:

My father used to tell me, "Look son, nothing will disappear, nothing will be hidden and disappear, only the things that never happened. You lose all the money you have, all the money in the world, you lose it. Doesn't make any difference--you make it again. If you lucky, you make it again, or you make half of it, or whatever, you still live, still manage how to live. But you lose your name once. And all the money in the world wouldn't cover... it back. You lost your name. You lost your dignity. You lost your honor. And you lose it once, and that's it. You wouldn't have--this is one thing you never have
a second chance." [pause] He said, "Never give your word unless you want to
back it up. You don't need to sign. Signature is, they tie you up with your
signature, and to my belief, only cows can be tied in their horns, put a cord on
and tie them. If a human being, his word is not enough to be, that he will be
tied up for it, he's not a human being anymore. He's just a piece of meat, living
meat, that's all. [very short pause]. (P1T1A - 350-363)

All of these thoughts, anecdotes, memories, and lessons learned as a child are
important to understand in order to realize the full importance and context of his layoff
almost ten years ago and the impact that event has had on his life, the choices he has
made, and the person he sees himself as today. Because the layoff has been so crucial
to his current life, and it is from the vantage point of the present that he looks out onto
the past and presents himself to me, I will now explore it in depth before moving on to
the next theme.

During the final two to three years of his last job with an oil company, my
father was responsible for inspecting the food shipments that were made to Saudi
Arabia for the American employees stationed there. Although he had never done this
particular type of work before, he learned quickly and approached the job with his
usual standards of honesty. He soon discovered, however, that the vendors which bid
the lowest and therefore won the company's account often then tried to cut corners and
save money by substituting lower quality food in order to still make a profit at such a
low bid. They also often did not meet federal guidelines for safe food storage and yet
still expected to pass his inspection. Edmond refused to pass lower quality food than what the vendors bid, expired food or commodities with short shelf lives since the food still had to be shipped for several weeks, or food which had been mishandled, especially with temperature, before reaching him. Despite these vendors' attempted tricks, his own supervisors wanted to keep the goods moving, did not want to deal with the many problem accounts Edmond rejected, and tried to persuade him to "keep it going" and to "just sign" for the goods. I remember the many nights of his frustration during those times. He could not understand why his supervisors trained him with a large number of rules and yet did not support his enforcement of them, and also how they could want their own colleagues to eat rotten potatoes, expired canned goods, and meat that had been allowed to thaw prior to shipment. He described the situation as follows:

And here in [Oil Company A], I was very much hated. Actually, has nothing to do with discrimination in that side. The last two, three years, they gave me a position to be in charge, inspect all the commissary that [Oil Company A] buys and ships to Saudi Arabia—and we ship a lot—full 747 will be full of goods, or half a ship sometimes. Anything they buy from meat to potatoes to other containers and cans, anything that the canteen [cafeteria] in there to be filled for Americans and the Saudi people which 100,000 employees in Saudi Arabia need to eat. We used to ship that, like they order 75 thousand kilos of potatoes and they would be ordered every six, seven weeks, every ten weeks will be
ordered that much, actually. [short pause]. Yeah [said with a sigh], and I go
there and they want to send all kind of a craps, and they say, "That's good
enough for the Saudis, or whatever." And to me, I don't care whether they
Saudis or they are American, or whoever they are. I am paid to do a job and,
those people paying me to ship them, and trusted me, and they're gonna get
their trust where they put it. They gonna get what they ordered. They're not
gonna get second not even second grade. They're gonna get the first grade that
these vendors had bid on it. He bid for first grade quality and that's what the
company's gonna get first grade. [short pause]. They try to underbid each
other figuring that they can ship third or fourth quality stuff smuggled inside,
and it makes up for the undercut of the price. But, it never worked with me. I
nailed them down to the penny, and they used to go bananas, they drove nuts.
They used to lose money. They used to undercut each other, figure they make
plenty money by shipping the lousy goods. I stopped the goods. God knows
how many times I have rejected goods. They—I made lots of enemies, and lots
of pressure piled up on me, and I told my boss. I said, "You have two choices,
either you sign them yourself, or you remove me to another position, but I am
not a rubber stamp. I'm not gonna sign just because you said you told me to
sign, or because a buyer or somebody else told me to sign, and I am going to
sign it and I examine the goods? I don't put my signature just like that.
unless.... I value my signature. Where it belongs, I put it, that's all. (P1T1A - 277-306)

By not putting his signature on things that he felt were wrong or not worthy of his signature, my father shows that he stands by things only if he believes in them no matter what the consequences may be. Immediately after summarizing the situation, Edmond launched into a specific incident that highlights the way he responded to attempted tricks by vendors and to pressure from his supervisors. He continued the above story with:

Yeah, they want to ship potatoes and some stupid guy make mistake in there and he leaves the frigidaire on freezing temperature because before that was something to be on very low temperature, and the potatoes freeze. People ship sausages and meat, frozen meat, from one state over outside the state to come like from Louisiana or someplace else to come to Houston where I have to go and inspect them, where their frigidaire is not cooling enough and the goods start to defrost, half defrost, three quarter defrost. And the worst thing you can do is when you defrost the meat and you freeze it again. You can't do that. Either you freeze it and you leave it. Meat to last six months frozen has to be at least 20 below zero and this meat in this frigidaire there was 48 degrees [laughs] above zero, and the sausage they were defrosting slowly, slowly. And they want me to accept them and sign for it, and I reject it. That made a very big stink in the company. I brought the big boss that he always yell at me that I
don't sign so easy and I reject everything. I brought him down and I told him, "Climb up! Climb up the truck or shut up and go back. You have a choice, but don't blame me, I didn't tell you. Now, I'm telling you. Climb up and read the temperature what it says." He said, "48." I said, "Above zero or under zero, I want you to say it." He said, "No, above zero." I said, "And, what those supposed to be? Frozen? Or regular?" He said, "No frozen." I say, "How can you freeze with 45 above zero? Touch them!" He said, "My God, they are like a rag--so soft." I said, "That's what it is." I said, "Don't you see the paprika already floating?" He said, "What does that mean?" I said, "That's what I'm trying to tell you people because you don't know why I reject things. When you have this paprika and all these colors all the way floating on top, that means this meat got too much frozen and then got soft. And you know yourself when you freeze meat and you take it out from the freezer how the juice and the blood and everything starts coming up, right?" He said, "That's right." I said, "That's what happened, and you see, and you're touching them yourself--so soft. And you forcing me to sign for it? Go ahead! You have seen them yourself, why don't you sign on it?" (P1T1A - 307-335)

In this story he not only shows how he stands up for his morals, but he also shows he is clever enough to detect and foil other people's attempts at fooling him or forcing him to do something against his will. Following this narrative about personal
experience, he concludes that this is why and how he lost his job. Again, he links a
personal experience to what he sees as a larger problem of moral decay. He claimed:
Yeah, so many pressure piled up on me by rejecting frozen potatoes and
unfrozen sausage and expired dates and cans and containers, old nuts, expired
the date on nuts for God knows how long and that tastes bad. Cheese was
defrosted, and so many things, and that's why [deep sigh] I was laid off because
the boss cannot order me to do what he wanted to. And they do not appreciate
hard workers and honest and decent human beings, and this is the result of this
country being what they are in the dumps now. Quality disappeared in this
country. Honesty and dignity and decency is dying out in here--nobody cares
for that. All they care, how they gonna make a dollar to survive. People don't
care anymore. (P1T1A - 336-345)

These narratives serve primarily to highlight Edmond's resolve to stand by
what he believes. Even today, nine years after the layoff, he still firmly stands by the
decisions he made and the actions he carried out in his position as food inspector. The
alternative would have been for him to give into the pressures, sign on foods readily
even against his conscience and his better judgement, and to keep his job. If he had
followed this route, he still might have had employment; however, his dignity and self-
respect would have been stripped away from him, and these are far more important to
him than any job. The number of stories, anecdotes, and sayings that he includes
clearly attest to his priorities. Near the end of the second day's performance of his life
story, he summed up this feeling of being the victor despite the many monetary and career losses. He said:

Sometimes I get argument or blame. People tell me, "You're stupid it's not worth it. Doesn't pay to be too much fanatic, one-sided. Just brag about dignity, honesty and devotion and all that. Those they don't exist anymore. They are in the past, they gone, we live in a different world." I can see that this is true. That's why I lost my job, because I was too much fanatic, one-sided, never been a, or accept to be, a rubber stamp for anybody. Never like to lie or scam, or fiddle around so, cost me my job--that's fine, but it did not cost me my integrity, my honesty, and that's what makes me happy--not even be sad I lost my job, because that's what I have got left, and I'm gonna enjoy it. I'm gonna have the best of it. This is what's gonna be lasting forever! Nobody gonna take it away from me. [pause] And everybody would get his shares. Those people they have done to me what they have done, because I was in their way--they gonna pay for it. I personally believe here we pay--in this world we pay--for what we do, good or bad. And I believe on it, they gonna pay for it dearly and I'm still the winner. I still have my integrity and my honesty (P2T2A - 97-111).

Placing such importance on morality has certainly been an important part of my father's life and a crucial component of who he is both as an individual and as a proper Lebanese raised in the Bou-Saada household. While this moralistic standpoint does
serve to bolster his self-image, it does also tend to be the source of much frustration in his life, especially recently. While he still firmly stands his ground, he recognizes the changing nature of the world around him, the devaluation of the values he grew up with, and his reduced power in the modern world. Observations of a world changing around him and his feelings of alienation, sadness, and rejection are connected in many of the stories he chooses to tell. I turn next to this particular theme in Edmond's stories.
CHAPTER VI

THEMES PART II: CHANGING WORLD...UNCHANGING SELF

Continuing my discussion of the themes I find throughout my father's life story, I turn to an often-repeated observation he makes, namely that the world is changing all around us, and that this change is often progressing too fast for most people, especially himself.

A CHANGING WORLD

In my father's case, one of the biggest challenges he has faced is a changing world, one in which the skills and personality characteristics he learned as a young man are no longer as helpful or as respected as they once were. To some this challenge can also be seen as being associated with culture shock since he is in an adopted country, but I contend it also has a base in the alienation many other people of his generation, including Americans, also feel. In other words, he is feeling not only estranged because he is having to survive in a culture which is so different from his native one, but he is also having to struggle with a perceived loss of the cultural values of the past that he so holds dear, but which are no longer embraced and appreciated.

These values are not exclusive to those he learned growing up in Lebanon, but many were also shared by the Americans he first became acquainted with in the 1950s in New York City. Having a "good name," keeping his word, not signing or going
along with something he does not agree with, and being loyal to friends and especially
family are all values that he still strongly believes in, but which he feels have been
deteriorating steadily around him. Fairly early in the life story, Edmond was talking
about the past when signatures were not needed because a person's word alone meant
he or she would follow through with promises, and since dignity, honesty, and respect
were foremost principles. He contrasted this situation with the present in America
when he said:

All those things \textit{changed}, Ingrid. Life is changing. The people are losing
ground, losing their dignity and respect, and decency, and they not looking
back to pick it up. They don't look back to pick it up. They don't care. You
slap a person in his face and give him five dollars, it's good enough, tell you,
"When you going to do it again?" Money talks, now. People kill and struggle
and do the impossible and load their conscience and steal and scam, just to
make money. And the more they make, the more that they want. Look at the
doctors which they earned the least respect of mine. I don't think I do respect
doctors in this country more than maybe one percent. Half are crook and the
other half are crook and stupid. Look at lawyers what they do. They do things
unbelievable. They go as low as anybody can go low just to win a case. They
don't care. We are downward, and when you go too much up there ain't any
more place to go, you start going down. And this is what's happening in here,
in this country. Politicians are destroying the country, and the people are
destroying themselves, they don't need the politician, because they put the politician in there. So, you see that their politician are crooks and liars, and all kinds of a... they destroy this country and they still go to the vote and vote for them. And then go another four years, cursing and screaming and talking about them, how bad they are, and what they have done to them and all this, and when the four years comes again, they go to put the vote in there and they come back proudly that they voted for their congressman or senator or whatever (P1T1A - 364-384).

By setting up a situation showing how others can be bought and commenting on the indignity of it, he underscores how he is different, how he cannot be bought, how his self-respect is more important than money. Even though he does not overtly refer to his own situation in recent years and his layoff, thematically this passage does help explain his decisions and his actions surrounding that time period.

A few minutes later he was remembering his parents and other family members with almost a dream-like quality. It is to this past that he turns, that he holds onto when he becomes sad or disgusted with his present circumstances. He had just finished individually describing many of his family members when he made a few observations about what life was like as he was growing up. He said:

Yeah, there were lotta advice, lotta saying, lotta example. You see your parents practicing the life this way, and you follow it. It was good, good time, and they were good people, and 50 and 60 years ago, they were good people.
They were honest people. They were proud. And, we didn't have many crooks around. If you see one per million, that's a lot. The whole town talks about it. The whole country speaks about it. And, this is the right life, right, correct life to human beings, for human being to follow and live it. Why can't we live in peace? Why can't we live and every human being, every person know his limit, know what he owns, and what he owe. I mean, if a person owe something, he owe it! Why all of a sudden he wants to deny it? And, if he own something, why other people has the right to take it away from? Who gave them the right? If every person on this earth know his limit, his weight, and he would follow his conscience, the way he's supposed to, we never have war, we never have hate. Hate should never exist. My father used to tell us, "Son, never hate! Hate is bad! Never hate anything. Anything you hate is being created, or done, or sent by God, and if you hate it, you hate God, and that's not the way to be. Nothing happen without God's permission and knowledge. So, don't hate. No sense to hate." (P1T1B - 299-315)

In many ways he longs for a time when he felt like he fit in, when the things he did and believed were shared by others who were raised like he was, and life was more predictable for him. In Lebanon when he was a younger man, Edmond was surrounded by many friends who cared for him and enjoyed his company, and despite his attempts to form a new network of friends in the States, he is now rather isolated mostly by choice. In America friendships tend to be more transient in nature as people
are constantly uprooted in search of new jobs and better lives for themselves, whereas in Lebanon there was a stronger, more long-term tie to an area. Families often had ancestors who lived in the same town for many generations which meant that friendships tended to be more life-long and family-oriented. Edmond longs for such deep roots and friendships, but nevertheless finds himself lonely. He discussed the situation as:

I can tell you [said with a sigh] when I left Lebanon, I had thousands and thousands of people, good friends of mine. I know more than half Lebanon, more than half of the Lebanese people, I mean more than half of the Lebanese people in Lebanon, I know them, they know me. You go from one town to another from the capitol to the biggest city people know me. You could not--your mother used to drove crazy when I--she's with me and we go to town, we go to Beirut, or someplace else, other place. She never get there even she's in a rush from people stopping us on the way and talk to me, and, "Hi" and "Hi" to left and right--people talking to us. She said [sigh] to me many times, "I hate to go with you because I come home exhausted. I'm never--I'm standing on my feet talking to Tom, Dick, and Harry, and trip takes 15 minutes takes you 2 and 3 hours. [pause] I had friends by the thousands, and when I came to this country I thought I will have the same idea, and build up my life with light, big crowd of friends, and crowd of people around, and know a lotta of people. That didn't work, didn't work at all. It's very hard to get friend around for many
reasons. First, you won't be much beloved as a foreigner, no matter what you do—you can paint yourself yellow, red, and black, in any kind of color—you can't change your tone, your personality. You still gonna be foreigner. You can hand carry with you ten citizenship, not one, and you still gonna be foreigner all your life in here. Doesn't mean that you are American citizen and that's it. [pause] And those friends never last. [pause] And, people you build a friends between twelve and noon you lose them. You have a friend, and you think he's your friend for 2, 3 years, and all of a sudden he forget you and turn if he doesn't turn on you or she don't turn on you, they just leave you on your flat behind. People don't care for friendship anymore. People don't care to have, to socialize on an honest, decent way just for the sake of being social and friends, and spend time with friend. If they can get out of you something, you their best friend—you good. If they can't, they drop you like a hot potato.

That's why I don't care anymore, flatly I don't care for anybody around. I don't socialize. I don't care to be nice to anybody, or anybody be nice to me. I just isolated myself, and I don't like to meddle because [was speaking slowly and reflectively then speeds up] so many people so many times, you hear on the TV stories that really bust your brain. People try to be nice samaritan, to help, to be nice to people, and then [those other people] took advantage of them and then they be in trouble themselves. They get in trouble themselves by being nice to other people. (P1T1B - 384-419)
He is bitter about the situation for many reasons. First, he did try to become friends with many different neighbors, only to find open rebukes, people who were friendly on the surface while laughing behind his back, or people who literally did drop him "like a hot potato" as he said. There was even one man who tried to make him look dumb and foolish as though he did not understand anything, probably because he was an outsider. Often neighborhood children would be friends with my brother and me only to turn on us when other children were around, and their parents, in turn, would do nothing even when aggression and physical violence were involved. These were not people my father wanted to continue pursuing for friendships. Next, even at work, my father thought on the one hand that he was forming friendships with some of his co-workers and our families would get together on weekends sometimes, but the moment my father felt things on the job were turning against him, none of these friends would back him up. I remember that there was even one supervisor who admitted that my father was doing the right thing, but went on to admit that he was unable to stand behind him for fear of his own job. Instead, this supervisor let Edmond lose his job, a job that my father had done completely "by the book."

Edmond then launched into an account of how he used to stop on his way home in Lebanon to rescue stranded cars and their drivers during the rainy season. Often my father used to give his friend, Zahki, a ride home from work, and looking back in time he recalled the following situation:
So, on the way going sometimes it's raining, and a lotta water on the street. Some of the cars are open in the bottom in there, and very, very shallow and small car or so. They gain water and shut off in the middle of the water. And, I used to be passing by and see that and go behind the car, and push them out of the water....Tak! Tak! Tak! one after the other, one after the other. Sometimes, I push 5, 6, 10 cars in one trip, and the guy [Zahki] he used to say, "You crazy! You crazy! You gonna break something in your car! My God! You cannot see somebody in trouble without killing yourself and jumping on..." I said, "Look, if I don't do that, nobody's gonna do it, and that guy, whatever it is, he's in a rush, or he's sick, or he's tired, or whatever. He has to go, he has a family. He has to go home. How do I like if I am there and I need somebody's help and nobody would give me a hand, but step on me? How do I feel, myself? So, this is how I am raised, Zahki. Just do to other people what would you like other people to do to them, to you. And, don't do to other people what you don't like to do to you." I say, "Well, doesn't hurt me. Doesn't have--okay, something breaks in the car, will be fixed. It's not the end of the world. It's not a human being is gonna die. It's a part gonna break. Big deal! But, at least you help somebody to go to his family get him out of that trouble. Every time during the winter there, it rain like a deluge. I never could see anybody many times I stop my car, get out from my car, and I push the person, push his car on the street keep pushing, pushing until he be able to start his car. I can't see
somebody in trouble. This is how we are raised in there. Anybody in trouble--
give him a hand--you know him or you don't. (P1T2A - 14-36)

Although he presents the value of helping out other people in trouble as if it were a
Lebanese trait by saying, "This is how we are raised in there" (P1T2A - 35), it appears
to be more of a personal or perhaps a family-taught value instead since his Lebanese
friend, Zahki, did not share in it. Whatever the case is, helping others out in times of
trouble is important to my father, even though in recent years he has become
disillusioned and is somewhat less apt to give of himself. As I have witnessed, he has
been burned too many times.

He continues the above story by first referring to a saying he remembers his
father teaching him, and then again giving evidence from his own life to back up the
wisdom of the saying. Finally, he brings the story full circle by again contrasting his
teachings, his memories of the way things used to be to the way he sees things today.
He continued:

And, there is a saying, it says, "Always that one mountain will never meet
another mountain, but a human being always is gonna meet another human
being, and that human being sometimes, someday, somewhere, and you help
him now, and you in trouble, and God will send him to you to pay you back."
And, this is why we say, and this is true, "Have you ever seen or heard one
mountain met another mountain? They don't move, but human being moves
around, and they always meet in some place unexpectedly." Many times I was
in Paris or I was in Belgium, and I see--turned around and see say, "Hi, Bou-
Saada!" unexpected see somebody in there unexpected in a place in Belgium
which you never expected. Turned to be one Lebanese in there passing the
same way I been there. So, this is true, you never know. You help somebody,
and one time you in trouble God will send you either that person or somebody
else to pay you the favor. It doesn't hurt to be nice, to help other people. This
is how I am, and I thought I can do it in here. In here what they do most crooks
they show themselves they in trouble that they get you out of your car either to
steal your car or to shoot you dead and rob you. You can't help people here
without taking a chance, and taking chance on your life or on your family life.
You never dare to open your window to check on that other person if he needs
help, or what can you help him or whatever, not to push him or to get out and
help him with his car, or her car. You think, "Oh, she's a woman, she won't do
that." Baloney! Now women can do more than men, they can carry guns, they
can rob, they can kill. I'm not saying all women are crooks, but you have some
women you would love to meet a man than meet that woman. (P1T2A - 37-59)

Finally, he concludes this series of thoughts and anecdotes by moving from
specific sayings and events to a generalization about the times we live in today, and
about the current condition of America, adding just a couple more examples from his
past to justify his position. He said:
So, the whole world is out of focus. The whole world is gone berserk, and it's the end of the world. To my belief it's true, 'cause if you just sit by yourself half an hour, and really think about it from one place to another, think about the whole world from one country to another, what's going on, what's happening. Think about the mentality of the people in here, that this country here, the United States is number one country in the world. They gave the style, the symbol to everybody, and they pretend to be number one in the world, which they were. And now look what they doing to themselves, not to the other people, to themselves what they doing. They killing each other! They killing themselves, either with guns or with drugs or with scam, or with anything! or with drugs, medicine. You--your dumb government here is not any government that you be proud or brag about it anymore. My God! Police in--my aunts and uncles used to tell us about the police in her neighborhood--is like God on earth! He knows every person, he's very polite, he would greet you before you even say, "Hi, officer!" You need help, he's there. Two people dispute and argue, whatever, he will settle the problem, and if you don't listen to him, you better don't see him in court, because he's gonna be on your case in court, and the judge will be two times on your case. And, now if the police doesn't--won't be more crook than the other person--uh--Huh! I, I [snort, chuckle] don't know what's going on anymore. I don't know what's going on. [short pause] (P1T2A - 60-80)
As the above statement clearly shows, along with the feeling that the world is changing all around him comes the feeling of being lost and alienated, of not knowing how he fits in, and of not even being sure that he wants to fit in such a world. The above extensive passage is followed by one which further illustrates his feeling of loss, and his acceptance of what can be called "fate". He resigns himself to how he sees the world by saying:

Yeah, it—that would change your person, your personality. Uh, you would change you as a person, uh, you have feeling for others. You should feel and think of others, and you change your personality completely from being a human to being just dry, like a wall—don't care anymore, losing sensitivity. [pause] I can't be involved anymore with other people. I can't be involved with any friend. There is no friend that you can rely on anymore. My God! I got it in my behind from friends in here I thought of them they are, I said, "Thank God, I don't have any family in this country—no brothers, nobody—[at least] I'm building up, and I have a friends around here. Friends that I been with them 4, 5, 6 years and 10 years—they turned on me." I can't—you can't trust much anymore. [above passage spoken very fast, now speaks slower, more hushed] Uh, yeah, there ain't much left of my life, that I can build on my own to do something, or not to do something. Just gonna retire and now you lead the way, you and your brother, you gonna take over, and I hope you would achieve what I missed—twice as much, and you go hundreds of times further
than what I went in my life. And, I hope you be successful. [short pause]

And, I'm sure you will, because you have the intention and you have the quality. You good people. [pause] (P1T2A - 81-98)

In the next section I will discuss another important theme, that of not changing his personality "with the fashion" as he puts it, of sticking by his beliefs no matter if they are popular or not. However, as the beginning of this passage shows, he does concede to a personality change, a change of opinion, and I believe it is the feeling that he has been forced to give in that makes him so sad. He would not willingly have changed from being a generous, helpful individual who loves friends and socializing to one who is reserved, unwilling to lend a hand, unwilling to form new friendships simply on a whim or for expedience. It took many long years and many, many disappointments to reach the bitter loneliness he feels today. It took many people using him to their advantage, or simply tossing him aside to do the one thing that he repeatedly claims he will not do, namely change who he is and part of his personality, even though it is one small part of who he is.

A little later in his life story Edmond refers to the fact that his own people are also changing for the worse. It is too simple to see his distaste for the present as simply limited to Americans since it is here that he has undergone only his most recent disappointments. Instead, he sees his own Lebanese people as losing the heritage he is so proud of. He said:
So, that tells you how small-minded other people are sometimes. That's why I'm trying to tell you, I don't like to have any more friends. I don't interfere with anybody. I don't bother with anybody. It's nothing but a headache. I don't even bother with my own people--if I want to say that American people has a different mentality--my own people now changed. They changing. The war change them a lot, and now they right away, the moment you open your mouth, it has to show whether you are with them or against them, whether you are with Moslem or with Christian, or if you are against both of them, or.... So, people don't socialize anymore on a friendship. There is a benefit, fine. There is no benefit, dash off. Turn your back and leave before you get hurt. You walk outside your house, you in trouble. You looking for trouble. Become life very sensitive. Life become very dangerous outside. Once you leave your house, you have to count yourself that you are looking for trouble. Any moment, any time, you gonna have something to argue about it, to fight with, or you skip an accident from some drunk driver, or somebody shooting. Life become very, very difficult (P1T3A - 172-187).

In the last few years of his life he has become not only displaced, but also sensitive and overprotective of himself. He has become defensive and resigned. He referred to this feeling of disorientation during the second day of recording his life story. He said, "Yeah, sometimes I feel I'm lost. I'm living in another world, and I have to be here, whether I like it or not. Until I be called one day. Meanwhile, I have to struggle."
Sometimes, I'm happy for what I get, sometimes unhappy--not much I can do about it. Take it one day at a time" (P2T1B - 47-50).

A few minutes later he returns again to this feeling of alienation when he says:

Life is changing very rapidly, very, very much changing. There is no--what I would say I'm looking for the word for that is happen. There is no easy transition and slow transition. And see that things are fading slowly, slowly--no. Things are fading faster than you even can think of it. Every day is a new day, every day is a new life. Yeah, my father used to tell me, "Look, son, there is no two days alike." And this is true, there is no two days alike in life.

Especially now, life is changing rapidly, and without any comparison or slow transition. So rapid is changing. [pause]. You know they used to laugh before, and give an example, and say, "Yeah, the difference is between twelve to noon," which is the same, twelve o'clock or noontime is the same just for a laughing, laughable matter, say, "Yeah, from twelve to noon." And you can be sure of it, it never become, never, it's never anymore a laughable matter. It's a FACT! Life and everything is changing between twelve and noon, from twelve to noon. It's unbelievable how quick life is turning around. And this is scary. This is very scary, because not many people can or will accommodate these fast changes of life. Could create a clash between two people that they living in the past, between two people live yesterday cannot live today together anymore the same life. That's dangerous. Thinking and mentality is changing
so fast, that not many people can keep up with, or go up with it (P2T1B - 128-147).

In many ways, my father has responded to his alienation in America, and the sense of being left out and left behind a such a rapidly changing world by giving up on some pursuits. Instead of changing who he is and adapting his beliefs to those around him, he has withdrawn. Because of his rigid system of morals, when the world or other people disappoint him, does not lower his expectations, instead he often responds with frustration and a sense of disgust for what he sees happening around him. At other times he simply becomes sad at the changes he has witnessed or fearful of a future for which he does not feel he is able to prepare. He said:

I don't know. I trust so much on it, and I'm learning, a punch in the face from it, from trust is very disappointing. Let's say I get sick and I go to a doctor I trust, the doctor which I believe the doctor is representing the decency, the humanity, the honesty. He believes in God, and they honest. I got cheated, and you don't get the service you looking for. You go and deal with the person for days and days and days, and all of a sudden, you deal with the same person and you see you got cheated. He turns on you because business is bad or whatever, or life is changing bad, turning on business. That can be very dangerous. People has to struggle to survive, so then dignity, and honesty, and pride does not exist anymore which the world passed. This is what bothers me, bothers me so much. Because this is the only money I have, and I got rich with it, and
the only money I can pay with it, and I can deal with it, and it is a dead money-
worthless. That hurts. Used to be with friends of my age, and we be talking
what's going on this world, the changeable life, the change of the world, and I
say, "Well", tell him, "Shut up! We still lucky. Thank God million times we
still lucky, but God help our kids! What they're gonna go through!" And this
is true. This is true. Look at yourself, you guys, you barely finished high
school without the problems, the problems started the same year you finished
[gang problems started to get bad the year I graduated and thereafter]. And you
lucky you got out fast. God help your kids now, when you want to send them
to high school. That was not like that in my time, was not like that at all. And
that hurts. When I look behind for the years I had, I look behind and I turn
around to look, look for the future, I get fear in my life, in my soul. I don't
know what kind of a future. I don't know what tomorrow is gonna bring.
Long, long time before, used to worry about five, ten, fifteen years from now,
what's gonna be, what you gonna do, you plan for the next twenty years. Now
we can't even plan for tomorrow. You sit in the evening, you plan your life,
you plan what you gonna do tomorrow, and by the time the sun is up,
completely is a different world. That really puts fears in your life, in your soul
when you don't know what you gonna, how they gonna deal with it, what you
gonna do. Damned if you do, and damned if you don't [sigh and pause].

(P2T1B - 149-180)
In many ways my father fears for the futures of my brother and me, especially in these days when he is recalling his own past and years growing up and comparing these times to our present ones. As he ominously stated a little bit later, "To my belief, I think the future generation, they're not gonna enjoy life at all anymore" (P2T2B - 24). If his life story is understood in the context of his beliefs, then his views of the future must also be understood from that vantage point. It is who he is today and what he has gone through that helps me to interpret his words, and when those words reflect upon a different time period, both past and future, they speak volumes about him. In light of the romanticized perspective he offers of his past, it is no wonder that he fears the future so much.

In order to fully understand his fears, it is important to note from where they stem. In the system of values, in the world in which he feels most comfortable, people work together toward a common goal in a cooperative, homogenous community. The individual is a part of the whole, whether that whole is a family or a community, and that individual is not more important than the whole. In contrast, the world surrounding him now and the world that he foresees in the near future is centered on the selfish interests of individuals, individuals who will take advantage of others if given the chance, a lesson my father has certainly learned the hard way. He comments upon his position in this new world:

I mean, this is what you see now, it's completely a different world. This is why I feel myself lost between myself and the new society. Everybody cares for
himself and herself, that's all. People became selfish. People walks on corpse to achieve that, what they want. No more feeling, no love, no caring. You see that they took from me when I act in my old-fashioned way, I see the [muffled word] from other people, it hurts. It hurts. Try to care for other people like you been raised for, you been living all your life this way. You try to care for other people, other people call you a sucker and they take advantage of you, and look at you like you stupid and coming from the moon, from another planet. This is true. It did happen to me many times. I have too much of a good heart, try to be nice, to help other people, and I always got it up my behind because those people take me for a sucker, too stupid. [pause] That hurts. [pause] Yeah, many people are suffering from their past, and barely waiting for the future to enjoy, or whatever. Myself, it's completely different. I think of my past. I'm proud of it. I enjoy it. I enjoy thinking of my past. An' I'm shivering for my future because we are entering a different world, different disgusting world, and I love my past. Led a life of decency, and dignity, honesty. People loved each other. We enjoyed life in a good way. Nobody care to live anymore now. Life become too cheap. [long pause] (P2T2B - 1-19)

In the world of his past, a world he is proud of in which he lived "a life of decency, and dignity, and honesty," life was more predictable to him. Although things have changed, he still stands firm in the knowledge that the way he was raised and the
values he was taught are still the best way to live, and he sees no reason whatsoever to
give into the changes all around him. Amidst the tumultuous world, he has found a
source of stability with its own spiritual and personal reward, his own steadfast
personality. He comments upon the personal rewards he reaps by saying:

My pride comes first. That's why I'm proud of what I am, and I think myself
too much of a pride I have, and a good one. Never been insulted, never been
sold or pawned. All my life I preserved my pride, better than anything. That's
what's keeping me going, keeps me proud of myself [pause]. And I would say
always, a person to be proud not for what he is--a big shot, president, or king,
or whatever. Those are nothing! Those are nothing. Those are artificial. A
person can be proud of what he is, he has a pride--preserved, respected pride
(P2T2B - 91-97).

I turn in the next section to an exploration of this unyielding personality, to a
characteristic which he repeatedly comments upon and to which he alludes.

"I AM NOT CHANGEABLE!!"

Related to his strong moral convictions and his belief in being honest, my
father also firmly stands behind his creed of not having a changeable personality. A
possible response to the shift in cultural mores discussed in the previous section would
be a similar shift in personal values, a flexibility which can allow one to adapt to a
changing environment. While being able to blend in, being a "survivor," and "going with the times" are held in positive regard in American culture, to my father they are merely a sell-out, a giving in to what others want instead of holding firm and true to "the correct way," living and being the type of person that he can respect and with whom he can be at peace. Whereas in America such a trait may appear inflexible, rigid, nonadaptive, and generally negative, to Edmond, forming one's personality and sticking with it is a sign of strength of character, stability, virtue, and honesty. He beautifully sums up why he lives with such rigid standards when he asks, "Yeah, I'm stubborn. I'm not denying that, but why shouldn't I be stubborn when I am right? And I can't just be with double and triple and five face and being the man that you wanted me to be--why should I? I've been raised to live my own life, to be honest, decent, straight, because nothing will be lost or hidden, but the things that never happen" (P1T1A - 346-351). The latter part of the passage has already been used in the previous section to illustrate the importance of living a moral life. Edmond claims that he learned to live out his life following a straight and narrow path from his father, which he illustrates by saying:

And, my father used to tell me, "Look son, human being is not a suit or a shoe, that you wear it today, tomorrow you throw it away, or change it, you look for something else. You change your shoes and your clothes, this is how you have to change your personality. Your personality is one person. You got it once, and you gonna live with it all your life. It's up to you to make up your mind
how you wanna form and make your personality. And, once you decided, and you make it, then that's the personality you gonna live with it. Never change it! Never color it! Never pretend it! That's what it is and that's what you are, and this is how you stay. Never be double-faced, double-stand! Never give your word, unless you can back it up! Never say "yes" or "no" unless your are sure of what you saying. Never sign before you read what you signing (P1T1B - 287-298).

Following such a creed in his life may have made it difficult for Edmond to "fit in," adapt, and even succeed in America, but living by his convictions has given him a satisfaction that eclipses his many disappointments. For example, even though he was laid off several years ago because he would not partake in practices he believed were wrong, he still has his pride and dignity intact, two qualities which are much more important to him than advancing in any career or making other people happy.

Throughout the life story, Edmond is very conscious of the fact that he built himself up, specifically, that he created his own personality by adapting what he learned from his family, through both Lebanese and American proverbs, and through his own experiences. He refers first to the process of building his personality when he tells me:

Believe me, Ingrid, a person when he build his personality, he builds with it attitude, character, manner, behavior, meaning. He would fill himself with all kind. Now, you have to put it this way. You don't buy something because you
don't want it. You buy it because you want it. You don't eat something you
don't like. You eat something because you like. And, this is what I mean.
You look around you think of it, and you form your personality. You form
what you are, because you thought of it, you like it, and you study it, and you
think, "This is the way I should be, I suppose I should be, and I wanted to be."
And, you work on it because you want it. You were agreed to that. You were
convinced because your brain thought that over, and over, and over either from
practice, or theory, or from happening before you, you saw that this is the right
way. And, you guide yourself to take that route, that way, and not the other
(P1T2A - 99-111).

He then turns to the maintenance of his character, and by extension to how he feels
people in general should maintain their personalities in the face of adversity and
broader cultural changes with which they don't agree. He said:

Why do you have to change? Just because your neighbor changed? Or the
society is changing towards other, but don't think if the society is changing,
they are right. Look at the society now, and the television, and all those. They
changing for the worse and they were seeing themselves they changing for the
worst, but that's where the money is, and the business is. They didn't care.

Now they waking up. (P1T2A - 112-117).

He continues a minute later with:
No, I don't change with the flow. I don't change. I don't eat because my
eighbor like that food, or he wanted that, and I have to eat, or he think this
way, I have to think the same way, or dress this way, I have to. They like red, I
like blue. And, they want to do this, I don't like to do it, I do something else.
So, don't change your personality! Don't change as a person what you are, just
to please other people. That could put you sometimes on the odd, with the odd,
I mean, in the questionable chair, being questioned, and trialed this way—why
you are out of the right stream what's going on, what's going on in the society.
Don't care! Don't change it! Why don't they have to change, that you have to
change? I don't care. This is how I am. When I was built this way, it was the
right way, and we were convinced this is the right way, now I am not going to
change it! (P1T2A - 123-134)

There appears to be an inherent contradiction between the very first sentence
he uttered in his life story and the above passage. He first said, "Well, what I am now
is not exactly what I planned to be. Life changed and sometimes you have to go with
the flow where you can make a living or where you can stand" (P1T1A - 8-9). In the
above passage he says among other things, "No, I don't change with the flow" (P1T2A
- 123). However, when one looks at the two statements in their surrounding contexts,
it becomes apparent that they are not contradictory at all, but instead make logical
sense both in his life and in the points he is trying to make. In the first statement he is
referring to his life in general and to how he has managed. From the vantage point of
the present, he is saying that throughout his life things happened that he could not predict, and he had to adapt to these changing conditions by being flexible. He went on to describe his flexibility in education, job training and actual employment, and then later residency with the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. Through all these changes, however, he still kept a clear perspective of who he is and what he stands for, and his second statement refers to this aspect of his life, to the steadfast nature of his personality, his values, and his beliefs. These he will not compromise even if it means having to then adapt his life to what happens next, for instance, getting laid off. These are two very different interpretations of "going with the flow" and when placed into their contextual perspectives, the seemingly opposing statements are no longer contradictory.

Having discussed the themes I found most salient throughout his life story I now turn to a discussion of the nature of personal narratives, both the life story and the personal experience stories and other narratives that appear within the context of a directed interview. The themes I just discussed in the life story will be compared to the themes I found in the theoretically distinct directed interview in order to compare and contrast the two genres.
CHAPTER VII

THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN ORAL NARRATIVE

In order to highlight specific aspects of the life story in general and Edmond's life story in particular, I will now introduce one extended passage from the previous directed interview we conducted concerning Lebanese folk medicine for a comparison and contrast of the two methodologies. I will also refer to shorter passages from both of the directed interviews as well as the life story. Again, the entire edited transcripts for all of these sessions are included in the appendices for further reference or information beyond the passages I am examining as well as for the fuller context of what is being said.

Possibly the most surprising discovery I have made in the course of this research is recognizing the similarity between the narratives I collected first for the two directed interviews, especially the one centering around folk medicine, and then for the life story. At the outset of this project I anticipated a higher degree of distinct subject matter, narrative construction, and rhetorical devices in each. Noting so many similarities does not lead me to conclude that the two genres of narrative are actually one and the same; instead, it has led me to question some of the assumptions inherent in the defining characteristics of each. For example, I envisioned that narrator control of the life story would lead to stories and themes that were different from the ones found in an interview in which I led the questioning and I chose the topics to discuss. This did not happen as often as I had expected, perhaps because my father and I know
each other so well, or perhaps because "directed" interviews in general still leave a
great deal of creative choice to the interviewee. As Daphne Patai says about her work
collecting a Brazilian woman's life story, it is the narrator, the one being
"interviewed," who still decides what stories to bring up and which ones to highlight
over others. Patai challenges the notion that a directed interview is controlled
primarily by the interviewer by claiming, "To situate the researcher at the center of the
universe is a mistake. By doing so we are once again overvaluing our role as
individuals 'in charge'" (1988:147). Furthermore, I also see familiarity as an
interceding trait in our interviews and in the life story, both a familiarity with each
other, and a familiarity with the general nature of the work we were doing together. In
other words, I may have tailored my questions in the initial interviews to what I
already knew about my father, and the resulting anecdotes would then come as no big
surprise, or, on the other hand, my father could have tailored his subsequent life story
narration to the types of questions I had asked him and the types of answers he gave
me in the earlier directed interviews. In addition, both of these factors may have
occurred as complementary effects.

Another, perhaps more important reason, for the widespread similarities I
found in the narratives is due to the person my father is and the personality
characteristics he chooses to display throughout both the life story and the directed
interviews. Some people just place a greater emphasis on self-reflection, tell their
personal histories spontaneously at various points in their lives, have a greater
narrative sense of identity, and consequently have developed a rhetorical style of their own which shines through regardless of the context of their storytelling, whether it is supposedly a "directed" interview, or a looser, narrator-controlled life story recording session. I propose that personality characteristics are paramount in understanding the similarities I have discovered in the two genres of storytelling described in this thesis, and I will be exploring these personality characteristics and personal values further in the next section.

But what then explains the differences found in the genres of my father's storytelling? He is still the same person, so why does he also at times alter stories, choose one over another in a given context, and emphasize different aspects of the same story at different times? Rather than exclusively relying upon an explanation of inherent, fundamental difference between the two genres, I propose that the context of a particular story and of the storytelling situation, as well as the function of a given story have a huge influence upon the differences found in the narratives resulting from a directed interview versus those found in the life story. I reiterate that I do not wish to eliminate a recognition of two distinct genres, the directed interview and the life story, but instead, I question whether these genres are truly divisible by interviewees in the non-academic world, or, whether the division stands clearest and firmest as a purely intellectual abstraction for research purposes. Certainly the process of collecting each is different, but while one can separate out the theoretical characteristics of each on paper, it is much more difficult to place the resulting stories and conversations in such
tidy units. As Lauri Honko poetically asks in reference to the division of oral tradition into genres, "Do those 'genres' we speak of really exist? Do they grow naturally like flowers in a meadow or would it be more to the point to consider them as scholarly agreements, artificial aid-constructions, or ideal types?" (1969: 56-7)

BRIDGING TYPES OF NARRATION: CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY AND SELF

A consistent sense of himself and his identity are profound facets of Edmond's personality and, in turn, pivotal elements influencing his choice of narrative construction, anecdote recitation, points he wishes to make, and even style of speaking. This strong personality serves to bridge any superficial differences that may result from the particular processes I employed to collect the narratives. The strength of his personality also serves to explain the uniqueness of his narratives as compared with those that may have come about if this same research was done with another person, one not as consciously self-reflective and as firm in his convictions. Stahl distinguishes between two types of storytellers, those who are "other-oriented" and tell stories which "underplay their personal role in the story to emphasize the extraordinary nature of things that happen in the tale," and those who are more "self-oriented" who "delight in weaving fairly elaborate tales that build upon their own self-images and emphasize their own actions as either humorous or exemplary" (1983:270). Stahl
further claims that self-oriented storytellers' "own values influence the perception of experience, encourage the casting of the incident in a story form, and prompt the repetition of the story in various contexts" (1983:270).

Stahl's findings are certainly corroborated by my own, and in fact, the most important similarities I see between the different contexts of the directed interviews and the life story are found in the values that my father chooses to transmit to me and the extended audience of my research. Furthermore, his stories usually spring out of his strong personal values and ideas about morality, without which he would not see an experience or event as meaningful, and these stories are then inserted in appropriate spots in different contexts, the life story and the directed interviews. If he did not have such strong convictions about what is right and wrong, I do not believe he would have perceived so many events in his life as important enough to cast into stories. For example, being laid off from an oil company could have been interpreted by another person as the result of a bad economy, one which was especially desperate for the oil industry in Houston at the time. However, in my father's case, he believes that he was slighted and therefore casts his stories surrounding this last job from the perspective of injustice. Instead of economics, my father sees corruption, laziness, a loss of respect for values and pride, and a disregard for the wisdom of older members of American society as the causes of his particular lay-off. In turn, I also believe that when he recounted his life story to me, he ordered his life through his work history, as many people do, and then focused on the values he personally exemplified at these various
jobs, the very values that he proves were missing in his coworkers throughout his life, but especially at this last job.

While his life story is made up of many often discrete episodes and distinct stories, we can see that there is also a truly overarching theme that he portrays throughout these individual stories to bind together the bigger picture of his life. In other words, he builds one story, his life, by tying together many episodic stories into a coherent, unified whole, a picture that is only truly perceived by the listener or reader when the shorter episodes are viewed as parts of this whole even though many of them are complete little stories in themselves.

As a self-oriented storyteller, to use Stahl's distinction, my father uses all of the storytelling opportunities afforded to him to portray his values, casting them into often-repeated themes which he inserts in both directed interviews and into his life story. These values include the importance of pride, self-worth, morality, doing "the right thing" in a situation no matter what the consequences may be, and the paramount importance of maintaining a good name for himself and by extension, for his family. Perhaps the single most important value he holds, given how often he weaves it into his reflections and stories, is the importance of an unshakable, unchangeable personality, one which never succumbs to being "double-faced" or "changing with the fashion." All of these values emerge in many different contexts throughout all of our sessions together, and he includes them spontaneously, even adding them at times when I was asking him for something totally different, proving that it is ultimately he
who is in charge of his stories. Naturally, since the life story gave him an open floor to discuss himself with no other intended purpose, the narratives collected at that time were on the whole more self-oriented than the narratives obtained during the two directed interviews which required him to have a somewhat narrower focus. However, even during these more focused sessions, I am not entirely in control of the flow of our conversation, his responses to my questions, or even what information he perceives I am actually asking him to furnish. In addition, he also turned topical questions I asked into opportunities to comment about his beliefs and his views, instead of merely focusing on the information I sought.

In a study of a famous Texas storyteller named Ed Bell, Richard Bauman noticed that most of Bell's stories also tended to have a "systemic interrelationship," a relationship which acts as an expression of self by way of themes which illustrate his values (1987:197-199). The interconnected nature of self-oriented narratives is also discussed by William A. Wilson. Calling this inclination "intertextuality," Wilson draws on his familiarity with his mother and with her stories to say that her stories "do not stand alone; they are always related to other stories and background events and can be understood only as they are associated with these" (1990:14). The necessity of such "background information" for a fuller understanding of each particular text and how it fits into the broader corpus of stories as well as the life experience of the storyteller is the strongest reason for me and for Wilson, both family insiders, to be the interpreters of our respective parent's texts. Taking the extreme position, Wilson also claims that
outsiders could never be adequate interpreters of his own mother's stories since outsiders "have not lived my life, have not heard the total body of stories I have heard, do not recognize the connections that are obvious to me" (1990:14-15). Besides the texts committed to paper and tape-recording, insiders have a wealth of other information and experiences from which to draw, experiences not available to others. The notion of intertextuality also helps us to understand the repetitive nature of an individual's various stories. In my father's case, I see the interconnections of his stories in the directed interviews and in the life story as part of a larger self-expression. In both cases he is presenting himself to me and to the wider audience and in his mind, the context of "interview" versus "life story" is not as important as showcasing who he is and what he believes. Each particular story is only one small part of the bigger picture, and neither the individual story, nor the bigger picture can be understood in isolation.

Having established that storytellers consolidate their stories around repeated themes and personal values, the next step is understanding why this assemblage occurs. The most useful explanation I uncovered stems from the work of Sharon Kaufman, an anthropologist working in the field of gerontology. Just as I have discovered the crucial variables of identity, self-concept, and presentation of this self-concept in my father's stories, Kaufman in her work with older people's life stories found, "In the description of their lives, people create themes--cognitive areas of meaning with symbolic force--which explain, unify, and give substance to their
perceptions of who they are and how they see themselves participating in social life" (1986:25). Further, Kaufman says these themes that people portray in their stories "are the means by which they interpret and evaluate their life experiences and attempt to integrate these experiences to form a self-concept" (1986:25). Thus, themes are "building blocks of identity" (1986:26), and, in turn, the various parts of this identity and its concomitant themes are themselves building blocks which are recast into narrative form and then performed for others in the course of a life story. Through performance, a person can reinteract what life has laid before him or her, and can give the events of one's life a found purpose, a meaning, a wholeness, and a trajectory that may not be self-evident. In other words, a performance of one's life story is an active, creative, self-made and self-making activity which "gives one self-definition" (Myerhoff 1980:25). Similarly, my father often also reinterpreted the questions I laid before him during the directed interviews. He decided what and how he responded to me, and therefore, he retained much of the control during these interviews as well.

For people like my father, as well as the marginalized older subjects of Myerhoff's work, this opportunity for making sense of and re-interpreting events of one's life allows the performers/narrators an active, powerful role and allows them, more importantly, to regain control over the meaning of these events and themselves, a control that may have been taken away from them earlier in life (1980:25). The great power in regaining control over their tainted images lies in new-found opportunities to present themselves "in the light of their own internally provided interpretations,"
opportunities which, Myerhoff claims, marginalized people "regularly seek" (1980:25). In working with a Sioux woman's life history, Elaine Jahner discusses this extension of control by individuals who "utilized the resources of their own creativity and courage to shape, and in some cases to escape, the roles presented them by society" (1985:214). Certainly, gaining or regaining such control does not give my father back his homeland, his friends, his family members who are now deceased, or his job, but it does afford him perhaps a more rewarding opportunity to stand a bit taller and lay claim to a personal, moral victory. He can and does, in turn, reject other people's definitions of him, replacing them with an intact picture of himself that he paints. He is therefore able to keep his good name, his self-respect, and most importantly to him, his pride intact since he remains in charge of these despite having so much else taken away.

The integration of past experiences into a unified self-concept discussed by Kaufman and others also helps us to understand omissions in a person's life story as well as unstated or glossed-over topics in directed interviews. Again, researchers who are not intimate with their research collaborators obviously will not be able to discover most of these omissions simply because such omissions are things left unvoiced or even cut short, and outsiders, therefore, cannot know of their existence. While I will not betray the events and experiences my father did not choose to discuss out of respect for his right to both self-presentation and privacy, it is important to understand why he and other storytellers would purge certain events or even many years from the
texts of their life stories. Kathleen Sands discovered in her own research with a tribal elder that the types of things he told her did not always match up with previous narratives collected by a different researcher whose transcripts she had read. Sands determined that he avoided certain topics in order to retain his "sense of respectability," and she finally realized the things he did say were "an imaginative recreation of his life in which he played a public role shaped by selective memory and poetic license" (1983:63). The reason he was so selective, she determined, was that he was not just performing for her and the audience of her research, but, more importantly, he was performing for himself as "he told his life as he found it acceptable to himself--a story he could live with" (1983:63).

It is important to realize that the audience for any given performers' work includes themselves foremost as the style, topics, and values transmitted must first always meet their own performance standards and their perceptions of social standards. Perhaps even more importantly for people like the tribal elder Sands worked with and my father, the more personal performances must meet the often very high standards set by their self-concepts. As I have shown throughout this thesis, my father has a very rigid, highly elaborated system of morals to which he holds others; however, he does not exclude himself from this system and operates on the assumption that he must first meet these standards if he expects others to do the same.

A more psychological element of the concept proposed by Sands is that there is a reciprocal relationship between story and storyteller since stories provide storytellers
with a coherent, stable sense of self and identity just as the story is itself born out of
this identity. If there is, therefore, an event that does not fit into a storyteller's sense of
self at the time of performing or does not fit into the identity he wishes to portray to a
given audience in a particular context, that event will be excluded or even
subconsciously "forgotten." In my father's case, he may not see a particular time in his
life as pertinent to who he is now, or it may not be a topic he wishes to discuss when
he knows his audience is eventually going to be broader than just the tape-recorder and
I. His reasons for neglecting to discuss, for example, the years he was in Lebanon
between 1967-76 may be personal and not as important as the fact that this time period
is probably not missed by most non-intimate audience members since on the whole his
story still provides a coherent and unified sense of self.

An idea I introduced earlier in Chapter Four is that the truth value of stories is
not one of reference, whether an event actually occurred as it is told, or whether a
conversation is relayed precisely as it unfolded sometimes many years before the
retelling. Instead, the truth of a personal narrative is found in what it says about who a
person is at the present time, and this truth is necessarily a created and a creative
account. Just as in literature, personal narratives do reveal a human truth, a truth that
is interpretive and in many ways says more about someone than a strict chronological
sequence of "real" events can. The selectivity of stories, both what is said and what is
not said, can give the audience, as Wilson says about his mother's narratives, "stories
that may not always be historically accurate, but that have over time and through
repeated tellings become... artistic representations for what she holds most dear and would most eagerly communicate to others" (1990:20). The relationship can be taken to an extreme, as when Nicolaisen says, "Story inevitably fictionalizes while always telling the truth," since, "in our autobiographical recollections we continually invent ourselves" (1990:6). In fact, Titon also claims a similar distinction between history (in the sense of biography or factual personal data) and fiction (in the sense of a life story), a distinction which is reflected in their respective word origins. According to Titon, "Facio, fiction is not a lie but a 'making;' whereas history, istorin, is 'found out'" (1980:278).

When we shift the emphasis from "truth" to believability as Nicolaisen suggests (1990), we can begin to see how personal narrative performers develop their credibility and invite the audience to share in a meaningful past, a created past which extends to the present. By not seeing identity as a "found" state, but rather as a work in progress, the text that both reflects that identity and lends it its framework takes on new meaning. This interrelationship of narrative and identity is highlighted by Myerhoff who says, "I see 'making text' and 'making self' as inseparable" (1980:32). Returning once again to an observation Wilson makes about his mother's stories which I find also holds true for my father's narratives, he says of her stories, "...She has not been reciting history--she has been presenting herself to the world and capturing through these artistic forms the values and people she holds dear" (1990:13).
I have already discussed the themes and values found in my father's life story, and I will now highlight similarities found in one of the directed interviews in order to show how my father used this opportunity for self-presentation in much of the same way as the life story, and also to return to the theoretical generic differences between these two types of narrative contexts.

"THEY DISGUST ME, BASTARDS!": EDMOND'S THYROID "PROBLEM"

When I listen to my father's stories, stories that I have heard throughout my life, with a newly-trained folklorist's ear, the moralizing and preaching I used to shrink away from take on a new significance. The process involved in capturing and recounting a past experience for a specific present purpose is suddenly infused with new life, the static, "Not this story again" feeling metamorphosizes into a new-found appreciation for the dynamics of the storytelling situation. My father's often idealistic view of how the world ought to be stands in sharp contrast to the world as he has experienced it, and it is precisely this dissonance that has been the source of the many anecdotes, teachings, and moralizations my brother and I (and sometimes our friends) have heard throughout the years.

One of the most important aspects of my father's stories is this moralizing quality inherent in just about everything he describes and says. Not only does this quality give his words an innately pedagogical function, but it is also the framework
for many of his observations. The role of moralizing in storytelling is discussed by Linde who claims, "One characteristic that distinguishes good storytellers from average or poor ones is their ability to construe a moral meaning for events that appear to others to be morally neutral. The best storytellers I have ever known appeared to live in a densely moral world" (1993:23). Throughout the folk medicine interview and his life story, my father discusses how he kept his morals in the face of adversity as well as how the world in general is "losing ground," as he puts it, leaving morals and their importance behind in favor of making money and getting ahead.

The importance of morality is certainly seen throughout most of his personal narratives, sometimes blatantly and other times as a subtle background piece or "flavor" for what he says. One of the common topics around which his observation of moral decline rests is his manifold comments about doctors in America. In the first directed interview about traditional Lebanese medicine and healers, I particularly asked him to recount the past in Lebanon, to remember what sorts of medical practitioners there were when he was growing up, and to tell me about the two European-trained doctors in his own extended family during his youth. Through this initial outlet, he began to romanticize his past in Lebanon which eventually led to his diatribe and unfavorable comments about American doctors in his recent past. Because it is such a key passage and truly captures the essence of many of his related comments, especially during that first interview, I will include an extended excerpt at this point. Also, I will provide an extended contextualization of this narrative in order
to compare it to the often similar passages found in his life story and to exemplify the often striking similarities between the kinds of narratives collected in each type of storytelling situation. A few other passages from this directed interview will be referred to, but the actual passages often will be included only in Appendix B.

In order to demonstrate these concepts, I will now develop a contextualized interpretation of a typical personal experience narrative told by my father, typical in that he often sermonizes to me and my brother, using anecdotes and stories as a teaching tool about things that have happened to him. These sessions last anywhere from a few minutes to a couple of hours and have gone on for as long as I can remember. It is typical also because I have heard versions of this narrative before as well as since this particular telling. As a matter of fact, recently the topic of crooked doctors again resurfaced during a few telephone conversations because of yet another wrongful incident that happened to him in the hands of a doctor. Since my brother and I moved away from home to attend college several years ago, the talks we have occur less frequently, but still do take place, usually after dinner on a weekend visit home. While this is the situational context of a typical performance, the particular narrative which I will discuss is situated in the context of a tape-recorded directed interview with my father over two years ago.

This narrative describes a series of medical misdiagnoses which culminated in severe anxiety and a hospital stay. My father not only portrays himself as a victim of medical incompetence, but he also uses the story to exemplify his view of a much
broader problem of corruption, injustice, and declining morals in America, as well as, perhaps less explicitly, the superiority of his own culture in contrast.

The narrative occurs near the end of our interview, after we had been talking for over two hours. The discussion at that point centered upon how he makes the decision to utilize "modern medicine," especially when there is a traditional remedy he could choose instead. After a good bit of discussion, he says that he likes to wait a few years before taking a newly-approved drug in order to give researchers an opportunity to discover all of the side effects and to see whether it really is safe over time. At that point, he launches into a diatribe about corruption in Washington D.C. and unsafe drugs being approved because of lobbyists and pay-offs, saying:

Because, in this country here the lobbyists are so criminal, and our people in Washington are so miserable. They run behind the money, don't give a damn for the people. Anybody would pay them, they put any kind of medicine in the market, and they tell you it's been tested. I don't trust them. Many times they had pull some tablets from the market after two and three years, four years when they had so many accidents. So, I don't jump to modern medicine right on the spot, unless I know its been in the market for a while...[pause]...Shame, the best country in the world, now that I have no trust for, no respect. I can say that openly and you can put that in there [this paper], and tell them "My father had no respect for the doctors and for the lawyers, and the politicians in this country." Tell them, "He came to this country because the aunts and uncles,
they used to write to them, to Lebanon, and tell them about this country and about the people, and about the justice, and about the government, about everything in this country, for what he have heard, because he had facility to go someplace else, too, and he didn't, he came here because of what they wrote to them. And after a while he start to get disappointed.” My aunts and uncles when I came in '59, they were already start talking bad about what's going on with the government, and the corruption, and the doctors. (FMT2A - 335-353)

This is the impetus for him reopening his discussion about doctors in America, and this then leads into a distinct personal experience narrative, one which is offered as "proof" for the many things he had just said. The positioning of his story in our discussion is a clear example of Barbara Allen's claim that personal narratives are crafted for specific rhetorical purposes and then inserted into a conversation at an optimal position to make a point or clarify a position. She says, "This quality of context-relevance reveals why personal experience stories look naked as collected texts. Their meaning, like the funniness of some events, depends on the situation in which they occur" (1989:237). By using himself as the character in a story set over ten years ago, he portrays himself as the victim of a doctor's greed and corruption, showing that his beliefs and condemnations of doctors are indeed set in reality by offering the audience his own life as a testimony for what can happen. He continues his story with:
This is what happens—everything is getting expensive in this country. Doctor goes to medical school and pays fortune. Costs him $2-300,000 or even more. He has a debt above his ears, and he wants to live in a high luxury life. The moment he gets out from there he has to pay his debts and he already wants to have a high-class Mercedes and BMW, and he wants to have a boat on the beach and he wants to be a big shot, and have the most luxurious villa. So he starts sucking and cheating the people, and he puts his fingers in everything, and have a lab with somebody else, and keep sending people, like they send your father a few times to the lab, and tell him he has a thyroid problem, and I have no thyroid [problem] at all, and they keep letting me go back and forth, and withdraw blood from me and tell me, “Your thyroid is deteriorating, and getting bad, and bad,” and increase my medicine until I got to the hospital, and at the hospital after they test, they find out that I have no thyroid [problem] whatsoever, no PROBLEM, not even 1%, and he [the first doctor] was giving me the amount of [medicine of] a guy in the same company with me—he had cancer in his thyroid. They took them out, and he was, they were giving him .2 mg. He was giving me .3 mg, the son-of-a-bitch, and I had no problem with my [thyroid], until I went through the ceiling, and I almost had a nervous breakdown—I was so tense and so nervous, and you know how nervous I was, and I run crazy until I wind [up] in the hospital and they checked a test. I had no problem with my thyroid. This is the doctors, most of them in this country.
They give you medicine, barely listen to you, give you a medicine, "I want to see you within two weeks, I want to see you within ten days," and that's not the right medicine. They give you that medicine because they are pushed by this company—they pay them that much, they pay them a vacation trip, they pay them so many things to push on that medicine in the market. And they let you have it to try, and then they bring you again for another visit, and for another visit, "Okay, try this, and try that," and meanwhile you got from this medicine all kinds of side-effect, and you getting worse and worse. I don't trust the doctors. I have no respect for the Justice Department, the justice people in this country, and for the lawyers, for the judge, for the doctor, particularly the doctor and the dentist. Dentists drill in your teeth anytime he feels like just to charge you—for no need. No, that's a criminal to drill on your tooth without any, any specific reason, just to charge you $150. I have no respect, they disgust me—bastards! What they have done to me, I couldn't believe that would be done in China, or in Russia, or in any place in the world, what they have done to me, those doctors in this country. Put me in the hospital twice for no, for nothing. Put me in the hospital to make this balloon in my chest that time, what you call that—catherization [sic]. I did not need it, they make me worry to death that my problem is deteriorating, my heart is deteriorating, I have a problem in my heart, and is nothing wrong with my heart. Dr. [O.] finally at the end, he say, "You come here, I kick your ass! There is nothing
wrong with your heart, and stop worrying and bugging. Go home and relax!”


A contextualized interpretation of this narrative provides a means of insight most directly into his general feelings about American medicine, but also implicitly into his identity, especially his Lebanese identity, as well as his values and belief system all of which are particularized and shaped into the preceding story. This narrative serves to explain and justify his rather pointed remarks about medical doctors and also serves as a point of departure from which to understand his current medical choices given these unfortunate experiences. These experiences began in 1976 shortly after arriving in the United States to live for the second time, a time in which he and my mother were under stress from leaving war-torn Lebanon, their friends, and family behind and facing an unknown future without secure employment while caring for two young and rather scared children. This stress finally made him so uncomfortable with many physical symptoms that he went to a doctor.

At the time this incident with his alleged thyroid problem did, of course, anger him; however, since that time he has been the victim of many other cases of ineptitude and deception in the hands of doctors, cases with which I am intimately familiar. For example, he has undergone two unnecessary catheterizations which again first caused much anxiety over his health and then anger when he discovered that there is nothing wrong with his heart, anger in response to what he feels is victimization. At another time he was warned that he needed immediate surgery for yet another problem, this
one personal, only to discover later that, in fact, the doctor needed a relatively healthy man on whom to perform surgery with students in order to minimize the risk of complications. And these are only two examples of a host of frightening installments in his dealings with the medical establishment.

What do these other incidents have to do with his alleged thyroid problem and this story? As Anthony Kerby, a philosopher who relates conceptions of self to narrative, points out, one intervening factor in memories of the past is the present. These other medical misfortunes have happened between the thyroid incident and the present, which poses a potential problem in interpretation since, as Kerby notes, we cannot proceed by "...simply saying that the past is relived or remembered, for there is always the influence of the present perspective to contend with" (1991:24). In other words, what the thyroid problem meant to my father at the time it occurred has through the years evolved to become a story worth repeating, a story which illustrates and defends his distrust and even, at times, hate towards most doctors. Due to the other frightful incidents, the story relating his "thyroid problem" has become a core representation or crystallization of his current attitudes, becoming increasingly more important as each new incident reaffirms its message. The potential problem this raises for interpretation is again somewhat countered by the fact that I have personally witnessed many of the intervening events.

While I have heard this story before, I do not remember his linking the thyroid ordeal with the unnecessary catheterizations as he does in this interview, nor do I recall
either being used to exemplify overall corruption and greed in America, but instead, I only recall them referring to doctors. Here then is a shift in the core story which I believe results from the situational context of this interview. My father had just spent two hours favorably recalling Lebanese folk medicine and medical practitioners, as well as a simpler life within which he had an important social role and a sense of acceptance. By favorably recalling his Lebanese past, his Lebanese identity became a base for comparison with his current life. At this point in his life as he feels tossed aside by American society as well as no longer constantly needed as a father, he seems to be faltering for a new identity. However, as he states a number of times, he has no respect for many of the institutions in America or even for the culture itself. He often deprecates the manner and character of Americans whom he portrays as being rude, selfish, without feeling for their families, and generally having a poor attitude towards others. This attitude places him in a bind since he cannot realistically return to Lebanon, he does not want to become involved with a Lebanese community in America for personal reasons, and he cannot honestly "blend in" to an American culture he despises. In light of these feelings, the episode of his thyroid condition takes on several levels of meaning and is reinterpreted by him to meet the needs and potential of each situational context. He is able to depict himself as a victim of the medical establishment and, less obviously, of his immigrant or foreigner status. In a broader perspective, he is also perhaps less saliently able to portray himself as the
victim of fate, finding himself in a position and situation not entirely of his own
choosing because of political upheaval in his beloved homeland.

Another important value that he holds which plays a part in his reconstruction
of the story and my subsequent interpretation of his rendering is the importance of
community in his Lebanese past. Not only are Lebanese families interdependent and
cooperative, but also, the larger community provides a strong network of support and a
protective role whereby one has "neighbors," not merely people who live nearby.
During much of my father's past in his small hometown in Lebanon, there was a great
deal of stability and a sense of everyone knowing everyone else for generations. One
clear contrast to his thyroid story which highlights the above values was mentioned
elsewhere in the interview. He said, "...You know, the doctors in Lebanon aren't
commercial like in here" (FMT1B - 205-206). Later, he says, "If a doctor in Lebanon
will do that, keep letting you go back and forth, back and forth, he is finished because
everybody knows everybody in Lebanon, and his reputation is ruined, that he is
commercial, and he is finished. He better pack up and leave town" (FMT1B - 210-
213).

The latter part of the thyroid story shows that not only does my father not have
recourse to a protective and supportive community, but in America, he also feels that
the very institutions which are supposed to protect him from incompetence and
corruption are just as malicious as the doctors themselves. This conspiratorial
victimization is also a belief he holds about his lay-off from his job nine years ago
which he believes resulted from his honesty in "going by the book," whereas his supervisors were lazy and did not want to enforce the inspection procedures for which he was responsible, since that would create more work for themselves. Of course, he also blames his lay-off and his subsequent inability to find another job on the fact that he is a "bloody foreigner," as he puts it.

However cynical and disparaging his characterization of Americans may be, it can best be understood in contrast to these essential qualities of his past. During the interview I noticed an increasing sense of loss and sadness as he discussed his homeland, feelings which he channeled into a romantic recreation of the past which stands in sharp contrast to his present life of loneliness and cultural isolation. He is not always ranting on and on about Americans, but in this situational context, his words are appropriate responses to the sorts of issues he discusses.

A final important allusion I hear in his narrative springs forth when he says, "What they have done to me, I couldn't believe that would be done in China, or in Russia..." (FMT2A - 385-386). This statement intrigues me since it consciously singles out the historical enemies of America, countries which have been characterized as "The Evil Empire" and "The Red Menace." In these characterizations, America is the moral force working against corruption and cruelty, whereas in his narrative and experience, my father makes his point of being mistreated in the hands of the American good guys in ways that are even worse than what they have historically and patriotically been fighting against.
TELLING THE STORY: BEADS ON AN EVER-EVOLVING, CONTINUOUS STRING

I have already presented an in-depth survey of the major themes found in Edmond's life story in Chapters Five and Six, but I will take this opportunity to summarize these findings and to make generalized observations as I compare these themes to the ones found in the "thyroid story." By showing that my father developed the same themes in a personal experience narrative told over two years ago in the context of a directed interview as he did more recently in his narration of his life story, I am underscoring the important similarities between these academically-separated genres. In both cases he had particular things to say and particular reasons for saying them, and these themes certainly shone through despite any attempts I may have made to the contrary.

The most important theme that I highlighted in my discussion of Edmond's life story and which he himself highlighted in his own rendering of his life is the importance of morality, especially honesty, decency, being "straight," and having a good name. Taking these virtues as a constellation of interrelated themes, I find that they all appear in some aspect in the thyroid story. My father is committed to these principles in his own life and therefore feels he can demand and actually must demand these same principles in people he deals with in his daily life. Doctors as ministers of
healing are particularly expected to be decent and honest in their dealings and when
they are not, their failings seem to take on a deeper dimension to him, especially in
comparison to his remembered experiences with Lebanese doctors in the past. In turn,
in his thyroid story, he portrays the behavior of doctors, dentists, and politicians as
falling far short of his standards, a failing which causes him to say harshly, "They
disgust me--bastards!"

Besides doctors, my father also expected co-workers, especially supervisors
and bosses, to live by these rules and was repeatedly disappointed and disgusted by
their actual behavior. Recurring throughout his life story are many instances of my
father either outwitting lazy co-workers or catching crooked ones trying to cheat the
company. As shown in Chapter Five, one well-formed story describes how my father
was under scrutiny for being too picky at his last job where he inspected foodstuffs
until he finally convinced his supervisor that the vendors were in fact trying to cheat
the company (P1T1A - 277-345). Just as in the thyroid story, this particular story first
shows how he was a victim, how he had been cheated by crooked dealings until some
climax incident finally sent him over the edge and he ends up being vindicated. Both
stories corroborate his view of how the world is and by the end show him to be the
winner because his moral order remains intact. As he claims much later in his life
story, "I personally believe here we pay--in this world we pay--for what we do, good or
bad. And I believe on it--they gonna pay for it dearly and I'm still the winner. I still
have my integrity and my honesty" (P2T2A - 109-111).
Another important theme I find in my father's life story is his notion that the world is changing, primarily for the worse, as people are leaving their own morals behind in exchange for easy money and a quick fix. In addition, he is discussing his sense of alienation in a world he no longer understands and in which the skills he learned are no longer culturally valued or adequate. As he very eloquently states, "People has to struggle to survive, so then dignity, and honesty, and pride does not exist anymore... This is what bothers me, bothers me so much. Because this is the only money I have, and I got rich with it, and the only money I can pay with it, and I can deal with it, and it is dead money--worthless. That hurts" (P2T1B - 156-161). This notion of a changing world is also highlighted in the thyroid story as he talks about his aunts and uncles in America persuading him to come to America and then shortly thereafter complaining about how the country is changing. He claims they complained about problems in the government, about widespread corruption, and also about doctors, and this segment spawned the beginning of his own claims about medical corruption in the thyroid story.

Despite the fact that life is changing, one very important aspect of my father's personality, one which is found throughout his narrated life story, is his immutable personality. While he does not blatantly refer to this aspect of his identity in the thyroid story, he does expect his doctors to be straight-forward and not to cheat him. Just as he does not present a "double-face" to the world he laments at how the doctors can get away with claiming he has medical problems which he in fact does not have,
just to make money. This runs counter to his own world view and is one of the many sparks which encourages his retelling of what has happened to him. At another point in his life story he does make a reference to this problem by saying:

I don't know. I trust so much on it, and I'm learning, a punch in the face from it, from trust, is very disappointing. Let's say I get sick and I go to a doctor I trust, the doctor which I believe the doctor is representing the decency, the humanity, the honesty. He believes in God, and they honest. I got cheated, and you don't get the service you looking for. You go and deal with the person for days and days and days, and all of a sudden, you deal with the same person and you see you got cheated. He turns on you because business is bad or whatever, or life is changing bad, turning on business. That can be very dangerous

(P2T1B - 149-156).

Part of who he is today stems from this feeling of being betrayed, of not being able to count on others to behave the way he feels they should, especially people in positions that are supposed to be "representing the decency, the humanity." This passage also alludes to people not being what they seem because after someone gains my father's trust "he turns on you." In contrast, Edmond repeatedly portrays himself as someone who will not change with the times, will not forget others just because business is bad, and is always honest with others.

Reading this interpretation into one episode requires a "high context situation," with my intimate knowledge, as his daughter, of his values, beliefs, and past
experiences as well as my recognition of allusions, as Stahl labels it, to all of these issues within his story (1989:41). In addition, my familiarity with his typical stories and storytelling situations has also aided my recognition of similarities between most of the stories found throughout this thesis as well as those myriad stories that did not come up in the course of this research, but which continue to fill our time together. Certainly, a familiarity with him as a person has also triggered many other insights into his speech patterns, his choices of topics and his shaping of events into narrative format. I shall turn now to a discussion of these aspects of his storytelling.

Although my research does not spring directly from discourse analysis, there are a few observations about language usage that I must make in order to gain a fuller, richer understanding of how Edmond presents himself and his identity through speech. Upon analyzing the themes present in his stories, I have discovered that these themes and the narrative construction of his stories are not, in fact, two separate issues, but rather, they are interdependent as each lends shape to the other. One obvious example is found throughout his life story with his repeated use of the phrase "Yeah, life is a struggle." Not only is he repeating it for dramatic narrative effect, he is also using the phrase as a summary and commentary within his story itself to reflect the repeated theme of struggling in his lifetime as he faces the same challenges over and over again. In addition, throughout his interviews and specifically within the above thyroid story, he also uses repetition as a rhetorical strategy.
He uses repetition to mirror his view that he was "milked" by his doctors. For example, he recalls the labs telling him, "Your thyroid is deteriorating, and getting bad, and bad" (FMT2A - 364). In this passage they repeatedly told him what he himself repeats in the narrative reshaping of the event. This also happens later in the story when he says, "...Until I went through the ceiling, and I almost had a nervous breakdown--I was so tense and nervous, and you know how nervous I was and I run crazy until I wind in the hospital" (FMT2A - 370-372). This particular statement repeats the same feelings in many different ways, and even breaks the action of the story to address me for confirmation. Yes, he was nervous, and the very act of agreeing with him about that particular point functions as an affirmation of the rest of the story. Ending up in the hospital is in this case the climax of his past experience which receives dramatic emplotment in this narrative. He finishes the narrative by drawing an analogy between the thyroid incident and his heart. Just as the doctors told him his thyroid "is deteriorating," so too other doctors told him, "My problem is deteriorating, my heart is deteriorating." Similarly, he found out in both cases that there was no problem.

Not only are words and phrases repeated within the story, but also throughout the interview itself certain phrases are echoed, a strategy which functions to tie together his overall themes. In this story he attributes the following words to the doctor, "I want to see you within two weeks, I want to see you in ten days" (FMT2A - 374-375). In many other places throughout the interview he uses a similar phrasing to
depict his being "milked," as he puts it. This is also related to the beginning of this story where he claims doctors keep, "sucking and cheating the people" and, "keep sending people, like they send your father a few times to the lab" (FMT2A - 360-362). By using similar phrases, Edmond is able to create an image, one that holds true generally--doctors milk patients, as well as specifically--he is milked by doctors and labs.

Repetitions such as these are termed *intensifiers* by Labov, who says they function to select one particular event out of the narrative plot to strengthen it (1972:378). In the above examples, the events that Edmond chose to highlight or intensify include being repeatedly cheated and having various parts of his body used as cases of deterioration which frightened him until he finds out later that, "there is no problem with..." or that there "is nothing wrong with my...." Not only does repetition intensify the theme or event, but it also serves to "suspend the action" (Labov 1972:379).

Besides repetition, Edmond also uses another kind of intensifier, the *quantifier*, which is a very common strategy according to Labov (1972:379). For example, when the hospital took tests and discovered there was nothing wrong with his thyroid, he says, "...They find out that I have no thyroid [problem] whatsoever, no PROBlem, not even 1%" (FMT2A - 366). The designated, arbitrary figure of 1% emphasizes the complete absence of any problem and the absence of any chance for the doctor to have made a mistake as with a borderline case. Indirectly then, the doctor must have been
acting maliciously since the case is clear-cut according to hospital tests which are usually less disputable than a diagnosis. Another example of the use of quantifiers is found in Edmond's report of the dosage of the thyroid medication. Edmond's colleague had cancer of the thyroid and only received .2mg of thyroid hormone replacement, whereas Edmond just stated that he himself had no problem and received .3mg of the same medication. This led to his going "through the ceiling" and almost having a nervous breakdown, two exaggerations which become more believable when they follow immediately after he relates the dosage discrepancies (FMT2A - 365-370).

Finally, the very last part of his narrative refers to Dr. "O.," a heart specialist whom Edmond trusts. This trust is not stated explicitly, but is an example of information we both share, and to which he can, therefore, simply allude. It seems that part of what makes Dr. "O." so trustworthy is the very fact that he actually sent Edmond away instead of "sucking him dry." Within the context of the above horrible experiences, the fact that Dr. "O." sent him away along with his assertion that everything is fine has won Edmond's respect and admiration instead of his usual suspicion and distrust.

Returning once again to the life story, these same elements, intensifiers and quantifiers, play important roles in the development of coherency, believability, and persuasiveness. Throughout the life story, my father repeatedly uses the phrase, "Life is a struggle," which serves as his own summary of life in general as well as his life in particular. The fact that he reiterates it so frequently signals to me that this is his
perception of an overriding theme that makes his actions and experiences
understandable to himself. In fact, the very first statement he uttered during the
recording of his life story sets the stage for the rest of what he says and the topics and
themes upon which he focuses. He began with, "Well, what I am now is not exactly
what I planned to be. Life changed, and sometimes you go with the flow, where you
can make living or where you can stand" (P1T1A - 8-9). By showing that life changed
and he had to adapt and change the plans he had made as a young man for his life,
Edmond is setting the scene to show how he struggled through the changes. Again,
adaptiveness in his actions and the roles he assumed is certainly exemplified in his life
story, and this adaptiveness must be seen as standing in sharp contrast to the inflexible,
nonadaptive nature of his values, beliefs, and sense of his core personality.

I find it interesting that on the second day of recording his life story, Edmond
begins his narrative with a similar sentiment as on the first day, and then he
summarizes some of the major points and events he had discussed previously. He
opens his second performance with, "Well, I had lotta obstacles in my life. Had lotta
good opportunity, and I missed it, but, I wasn't too, too lucky in the sense--luck wasn't
my friend all the time" (P2T1A - 5-7). He then gave short bursts of thoughts, events
from his past, lessons to teach me, and other items that he had said during the first
performance. One possible reason for his covering the same ground again is that he
knew some significant parts of the tape from the first performance had been destroyed
and he knew how devastated I felt about this. By trying to recall what he had said, he
was trying to lend me a helping hand; however, despite being able to recall the themes and topics he discussed, his delivery lacked the conviction and flow of the original, and each story or passage was not only shorter, but also out of context. He was merely providing a laundry list of sorts.

Another way to view this repeat performance is a bit more positive, as the repetition served a function that he alluded to several times through many of our discussions and taped sessions. Just as he regrets that he did not pay attention to his parents when they were trying to teach him about life through their musings, proverbs, and "nagging," as he puts it, he in turn wants his own children to benefit from his experience and wisdom so that we do not repeat his mistakes. The act of repetition and "nagging" by his parents is something that he is now grateful for because he realizes he remembers many things they said because of how often he heard them. With my brother and me he also carries on the practice of repeating important stories and memories with the hopes that we will remember. He recognizes what he is doing immediately into this second performance of his life story when he says:

You know, when you listen to your parents when you are a teenager, there is a lot of things bugs you 'cause you think you always know better and whatever they say is not to your convenience, because you want it different. You always want something different than what they preach you and what they tell you. But they always know the truth, and know their duty as parents and what to do with you. Many times I never listened to them, but, as we say, always there is a
back ear. When the parents nag you enough and repeat the things more than once, you have to figure sooner or later, some of those repeats is gonna stick in your mind, and sometimes—would be very useful. I feel sorry I was young and dumb, I didn't listen for so many advice and so many good things my parents tried to teach me, to let me know, but as I said, it's the repetition of their advice and their nagging—once in a while, it's gonna hit. I always, when I'm in trouble, I try to review what I heard, what I know. And, you know, in Lebanon, we have lotta proverb and example and there is always right to those proverbs. Most the time, I follow them, they can be kind of helpful, very nice (P2T1A - 27-41).

By using this opportunity to repeat himself, he is most importantly doing what he thinks a "good parent" ought to do, and very subtly trying to make sure I hear and remember his words for my own future just as he remembers the words of his mother, father, uncle, and grandmother. In this particular passage he is referring to himself as a child and a young adult; however, by using the pronoun "you" instead of "I" or "me" for self-reference, what he is saying about himself is very directly, yet subtly, referring to me also.

Another technique my father uses to tie together pieces of his narrative is pausing between subjects, sometimes sighing, and then launching his next piece with "Yeah" which is also sometimes followed by a sigh. By doing this he is able to clearly signal the divisions between stories to the audience while at the same time establishing
a rhythm through repetition which ties the many separate and often diverse themes together. As he starts his next piece, he also often uses a proverb or an adage to signal what the next story is about. For instance, during his second performance of his life story, he had just finished a moralization in which he has instilled the importance of listening to other people’s advice, but then always making up one's own mind for one's self. He ends that piece with, "Anybody's smart they would listen to other people, and then decide what he wants to decide," and he then marks a shift in subject matter with "Yeah" before beginning his next segment, again with the often repeated theme of "I kind of struggled in life, yeah. It wasn't too easy for me" (P2T1B - 21-29). At that point he is free to launch into a personal observation in which he discusses his search for "the truth, for the right way, the honest way, the correct way" (P2T1B - 30). This pattern of separating out distinct topics and musings while still making them part of a bigger picture, a complete narrative is certainly found over and over again throughout our sessions together, both in the life story and in our directed interviews.

I see his speech pattern reflecting his assumption of the role of a sage, a role I believe is important to him as he is becoming older. Many times as he reminisces about his own father, the way he changes his speaking style and describes their time together, I see him assuming the same role he describes his father performing in the past. Since his father died while he was still a young teenager, I did not know him and have no way of corroborating this impression; however, I certainly do recognize a shift in speaking style and pattern when Edmond moves away from narrating his own
experiences to a more sermonizing, teaching oration. This style is especially recognizable from the middle of the second life story performance to its conclusion. At this point he no longer focuses on events as much as he portrays his life lessons and his father's teachings. Just as hearing traditional Lebanese storytelling would help me understand my own father's style better, so too, knowing his family would certainly shed light on his rhetoric, values, and moral world. Jahner makes it clear in her work with a Sioux storyteller that traditional patterns influence individual choices in storytelling, both in what to include and what to leave out, and due to this influence, "The process of discovering patterns, finding traces of the past in contemporary materials, is therefore of special importance in the study of personal narratives" (1985:218).

Edmond often made it clear in his stories that he owes his beliefs and way of thinking to his family, especially his uncle and his father. He indirectly ties together his own family experience as a young child growing up with the legacy that he is apparently hoping that my brother and I have absorbed and embraced by again substituting pronouns in his story. While he does not specifically refer to me, he does instead allude to me by using the generic pronoun "you" when he is describing what he himself did in the statement, "Yeah, there were lotta advice, lotta saying, lotta example. You see your parents practicing the life this way, and you follow it" (P1T1B - 299-300).
Teaching me, his immediate audience, important life lessons and presenting who he is to a broader audience while justifying his positions on important issues are very important reasons for why and when my father tells stories or recounts anecdotes. In many ways, storytellers have a personal, often subconscious, agenda behind their words. This agenda can be considered as part of the context of the storytelling situation, since it is often the causative reason or impetus for the stories, especially personal stories. Another part of this personal agenda that I see is Edmond's need to promote Lebanese ideals and values. He is extremely proud of the creed by which he lives and of the heritage that has produced these values and his identity.

Promoting one's own culture over and beyond all other cultures can be viewed negatively, as arrogance or haughty disdain for others, but it can also be viewed in a more positive light as national pride and a self-assured knowledge of one's heritage. Cultural pride, or ethnocentrism, is a universal human characteristic which is defined as, "the practice of interpreting other cultures from the perspective of one's own culture. It is also the condition where a culture believes that it is superior than others (sic) (Shoemaker 1990:233)." George Herbert Mead spoke of an ethnocentric relation of "self" to the group by stating, "It seems to be perfectly legitimate to assert the superiority of the nation to which one belongs over other nations, to brand the conduct of other nationalities in black colors in order that we may bring out values in the conduct of those that make up our own nation" (1962:207).
This superiority, Mead says, "In some sense seems to be essential to self-consciousness (1962:207)." It is thus not merely an idiosyncratic personality trait, but a human characteristic. This aspect of self-representation is only one part of the entire context in which to interpret Edmond's decisions and attitudes, although it is an important one. Given his present bitterness towards his personal situation, the many injustices he feels his family has suffered in America, as well as the many ways he feels the political policies of the United States have betrayed the Lebanese people, it is perhaps not surprising that there are so many examples of this tendency in Edmond's narratives.

TRADITION: AN ACTIVE, CONSCIOUS PROCESS

Changing the notion of what tradition is from a passive concept which describes the unintended outcome of collective human behavior passed on through time, I adopt a newer model of tradition which is an inherently active, creative and created process. In viewing tradition as an active process, I am relying on Handler and Linnekin's definition of tradition as, "A symbolic process that both presupposes past symbolisms and creatively reinterprets them" (1984:285). It is, "a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present through making reference to the past" (1984:285). Fine and Speer further conclude, "Tradition, therefore, is created,
negotiable, influenced by ideology, and subject to continued reinterpretation and change" (1992: 17).

This more deliberate and dynamic view of tradition is certainly a departure from the definition put forth by Brunvand, who claims that folklore is traditional only to the extent that it is "passed on repeatedly in a relatively fixed or standard form, and it circulates among members of a particular group" (1986:8). Instead of seeing tradition as a corpus of "relatively fixed" items and practices from the past surviving today because they are "handed down," in the newer view tradition is analyzed more from the perspective of how it functions in the present for human actors, ultimately gaining shape and meaning from its dynamic rather than static nature. In the proceedings of a conference on culture, tradition, and identity, Royce claims that the conference "supports the notion of selectively using tradition as a way of creating meaning in the contemporary world and of building flexible strategies to meet the demands of changing contexts" (1984:96). In the older view, tradition as strictly an unintended outcome of behavior which nonetheless survives seems to carry a superorganic quality, an independent existence which is almost able to manifest itself without human intervention. In fact, as a strictly descriptive term pertaining to things, customs, and knowledge, the concept lacked the most important element, people. Placing the human element back into the puzzle and then shifting the focus of analysis from things, both animate and inanimate, to the process and function of tradition leads to both more interesting and more insightful conclusions. However, it is important to
note that not all of the dynamism expressed in these more recent views of tradition is the result of conscious decision making. While the previous view of tradition had an almost superorganic quality to it, going to the other extreme is not the best solution. Yes, human behavior must be considered, but so too should some unintended properties of behavior. For example, Baldwin notes, "Stases in the flow of traditions transmitted by remembering and repeating occur as frequently as an old person forgets or a young person misunderstands. Because of this, creative substitution and change, however unselfconsciously done are necessary for the continuance of an otherwise conservative tradition. And sometimes the license to create is taken with broader intentions" (Baldwin 1983:74).

What does all this mean for my interpretations of my father's words? First, Ben-Amos states that the term tradition embraces "the knowledge of customs, rituals, beliefs, and oral literature as defined and practiced by a particular group, and as transmitted within its confines from generation to generation" (1984:105). I view my father as a deliberate actor who fulfills a personal and cultural obligation by passing on his stories to his family. This age-old responsibility of teaching lessons while enculturating identity and heritage is a duty to which traditional families generally adhere, some to a greater degree than others. Certainly my father is trying to teach me such knowledge about my Lebanese heritage, especially in the two directed interviews, but he is also performing a traditional act when he encapsulates his knowledge and his family's knowledge into narrative form. As long-standing as this act of pedagogical
narration is, the content he portrays, the values he incorporates into the self-image he presents, and the way he ties his episodes together are also infused with highly creative, individualistic elements. In addition, Simon Bonner comments that "Creativity and tradition are intertwined, and represent the complex processes of humans expressing themselves to others in ways that carry value and meaning" (1992:3).

When my father decides which stories to tell me, when he emphasizes one over another, and when he chooses to eliminate an episode from his repertoire, he is shaping, altering, and consciously manipulating the traditional act of passing on knowledge, and he is formatting this knowledge in response to the demands of his audience, both me and the wider, not immediately present, future audience. As mentioned above, some aspects of change in traditional knowledge are not the result of conscious decisions, but rather, of his forgetting or my misinterpreting the information he gave me.

By way of this discussion, I am not proposing that we totally eliminate the notion that items of folklore are relatively fixed and are handed down through time, but I do believe that we must shift the focus of the research question to include how such items are used in the present, are actively manipulated, redefined, restructured, revived or abandoned by people and why.
SUMMARY

In our growing multicultural world, immigrants must establish themselves in an unfamiliar land while they struggle to redefine their identities. In the course of this struggle many will encounter injustice and bitterness which will often be restructured and communicated to others in narrative form. As we can clearly see today with the growing awareness of major problems--even a crisis in our medical system--there is widespread, national concern with the very issues my father finds personally relevant. While ethnic narratives often do affirm one's distinct heritage, therefore playing a part in self-definition, it is proposed by Yiorgos Kalogeris that they also serve as a means of empowerment (1991:38), or as Barbara Myerhoff suggests, a profession of "both existence and meaning" (1980:25). And, finally, throughout both of our interviews as well as the life story, my father assumes the role and responsibility of a Lebanese father by sermonizing to me about the world and teaching me through his own experience what sorts of things I must beware of in my future. Because of our relationship then, the narrative becomes more than a vehicle for his values, beliefs, and identity--it becomes a traditional mode of passing collected wisdom from father to daughter.
CHAPTER VIII

PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the evidence of their insignificance offered by the outside world, they were quite clear about their own importance. It is my interpretation that their self-consciousness, promoted by collective performances and private self-narration, their recounting of stories and life histories, influenced and nourished their success as old people (Myerhoff and Ruby 1982:103).

Throughout this thesis, I have been discussing how one individual, my father, views life, interprets the events and experiences that have happened to him from the perspective of his system of morals, and then presents himself in the form known as a life story, making sense of and reinterpreting his history. If I could, I would want to be able to share the sense of pride, the hard work, and feeling of intimacy our work together provided for both of us. By listening to his stories, I have grown as a person, as a family member, and as a folklorist/anthropologist. I have also shared something special with someone very important to me, my father, whose heritage I share, but whose world view I have not always understood. Having grown up for the most part in the United States, I feel that I lose more and more of my Lebanese heritage as each year takes me further from 1976 when we first came here. Just as my father fears forgetting, I also want to retain and even redevelop my memories and knowledge of what life in Lebanon was and could have been. Speaking of oral history work within the family Linda Shopes says, "It can be the impetus for developing or deepening relationships with other family members. Even more importantly, it can enhance one's own sense of identity" (1984:239).
Certainly, this thesis is not overtly about me; however, as the researcher who began this project and who offers my own conclusions and interpretations of my father's words, it is important to understand my own biases in order to place the resulting thesis in perspective. I have tried to separate my own thoughts and beliefs from those of my father throughout these pages so that I do not presume and subsume his original intentions; however, this is not a truly possible task. The sheer act of joining my words with his into one manuscript has created a wholeness which cannot be ignored. While I absolutely make no claims to objectivity, and instead embrace subjectivity, there is always the risk that my own thinking and the pictures I paint throughout these pages obliterates some of what he had intended to say, or gives his words an angle with which he would not now agree. I am the one who sifted through the myriad stories and anecdotes and reformulated them into the themes I found to be apparent, and then I highlighted some more than others, bringing them to the fore to discuss them in more detail. In addition, I initiated the storytelling sessions which I then recorded. The best I can do is take responsibility for what I have written since "narrative explanations are a doing, not a passive recording" (Roth 1989:478). In other words, just as Edmond constructed his stories while simultaneously constructing his identity, I, in turn, shaped and reconstructed those words. Roth further says, "Explanations, in this sense, are loci of moral responsibility. Explaining is a doing, not just a saying. As Clifford Geertz has put it, we must sign our interpretations" (1989:478).
My main point throughout this thesis has been to show how one man uses storytelling opportunities to present himself and his beliefs and morals as a unified whole through interrelated stories and the themes found within them. Another major point I have made is to question the reality of the two genres, "directed interview" and "life story," by demonstrating how fundamentally similar the resulting narratives are. I have also proposed that my role as a cultural and family insider has been my greatest asset in recognizing the stories I heard as being important, in understanding the subtext, the background information that is not immediately present at the storytelling situation, and in interpreting the narratives themselves.

First and foremost, my father's incredibly strong personality is the bond which ties together all the various narratives I collected, both during the directed interviews, and in the life story. Without having such a strong sense of self, I doubt that he would have asserted his positions during the questions I asked in the interviews which did not on the surface require his personal information. In addition, as a self-oriented storyteller, it does not matter as much to him whether he is in the midst of what I considered to be a directed interview or a life story. To him, both were equal opportunities for satisfying his need to tell, his need to portray himself, his actions, his beliefs. Of course, during the life story, such personal information was far more appropriate and he took advantage of "having the floor" for several hours, filling in details, exemplifying why he holds the beliefs he does, and illustrating by way of
personal experience stories what results his morals have had for him, both positive and negative.

In both the directed interviews and the life story, Edmond organized the sorts of experiences he discussed around very similar themes, primarily the breakdown of a solid value system as an overriding guide to life in America, and even in post-war Lebanon. His values in many ways encourage the telling of a story, and, in fact, these values are the impetus for him to recognize an event in his life as meaningful, as worthy of shaping into a story in the first place. In addition, he also responded with examples of how he lost because of his value system. He lost family, jobs, and advancement opportunities, all of which have left him somewhat saddened; however, he has achieved some sense of peace about these circumstances because he did not lose his most precious asset, his solid, unwavering, unchangeable pride and dignity, and he also did not smear the family name in the process. He followed his judgement of right and wrong and has learned to deal with the consequences. Despite years of bitterness, his voice is still proud and strong when he speaks of how he stood for what he believes is right. The other themes I described in detail from the life story were also all represented in the directed interview on Lebanese folk medicine; however, comparing each of them individually is far beyond the scope of this thesis.

Another more subtle reason the texts of the life story and the directed interviews tend to be so similar is because ultimately on the day of our recordings, he was the one in charge. As his daughter, I could not cut him short, redirect him, or
usurp his authority, especially if I wanted to complete the interview. Therefore, he was ultimately in control, even going so far as to control the tape recorder on the day of our interviews concerning Lebanese folk medicine. This reason for the similarities in the outcome of the forms of research is not directly related to any inherent generic difference. Instead, it is primarily a result of our particular situational and relationship context.

The idea that a storyteller's various stories are systemically interconnected, or have the quality of intertextuality does have some bearing upon understanding the resulting similarities and differences of the two genres of research, especially when they are both undertaken with the same person. Since a person's stories stem from his or her personality and from the values and beliefs that are deeply held, then it logically follows that similar stories will appear in the midst of two theoretically different research genres. In other words, if there is a point a person wants to make, what difference is it to the storyteller if the situational context is a supposedly directed interview or a life story collection? Once we realize that a person's stories are interrelated, then we can understand their repetitive nature, and that, in turn, can open up a new arena to research. Which stories are repeated? Are some elements repeated more than others? Is this significant? In the case of my research, the fact that Edmond repeatedly stated the phrases "life is changing" and "Yeah, I struggled, life is a struggle" gave me a vantage point from which to understand and organize many other stories and elements, even when they did not surface until later in the sessions. This is
only one example of many such repetitions in his stories, but it does again highlight
why I, as an insider, can perhaps make connections that others who are not intimates
would not be able to make at all or at least not as easily and thoroughly. Recognizing
repetitions is not limited just to the collected text for insiders who may have a whole
lifetime of experience with the storyteller, and who know, as W. A. Wilson points out,
which stories are standards in the repertoire.

Why do storytellers create themes and then structure their narratives around
them? As Kaufman states, by organizing one's life story thematically, a storyteller is,
in effect, able to "explain, unify and give substance to" his life experience and self
concept (1986:25). While life and its circumstances all around the person may change,
by creating a unified theme for themselves, a storyteller maintains a stability amidst
the chaos. When we shift our understanding of identity from a static state to a
creative, ever-evolving, self-making activity, then Kaufman's observation that themes
are "building blocks of identity" becomes a clear, powerful explanatory tool (1986:26).
During a narrativization of an experience or of a lifetime of experiences, themes again
play a role as this unified, stable self-concept lends structure to the narrative. Just as
people view themselves in the light of specific themes important to them, so then do
they form the stories that present their self-concept to others around these same
themes. When stories and self-presentation are viewed as being organized around
such themes, it is no longer as important to try to fit them into artificial categories such
as "directed interview" and "life story." Instead, research can be redirected into the
natural thematic breaks and what they can tell us about both the storyteller and the storytelling situation in general.

One of the most important reasons I believe my father tells personal narratives (regardless of the generic context for them) is in order for him to regain control over his self-definition. In society people rarely have the ability to totally control their own destinies; however, in social situations, people do have a great deal of control over their public faces. Through performance a storyteller is afforded the opportunity for self-definition, even when circumstances in the past may have previously stripped away that power. For example, my father may have been powerless against supervisors who wanted to see him gone, but he has refused to buy into their definitions of him; instead, as I have shown, he has reinterpreted events such as his layoff in terms of a moral victory for himself. This reinterpretation is not necessarily blinding him to reality sugar-coating what was once painful, but it is instead helping him understand what happened to him, giving the events meaning, and then empowering him to deal with his feelings and the realities facing him in his own way, regardless of what other people want him to do.

Besides reinterpreting the meaning of the events of one's life, personal narrative performances also provide an opportunity to reinvent social rules and the roles one is supposed to fulfill as a member of society. The narrative is a locus for explaining why one does not follow a particular rule and for justifying how a different behavior is seen as being more appropriate. This function of storytelling holds true in
both genres of narrative, the directed interview and the life story. For example, whereas teamwork on the job is emphasized and highly respected in American culture, for my father being a team player is not a priority, and can in fact be a source of shame since it can indicate an inability to think for himself. In situations where he has been faced with a choice of fitting in with his coworkers and keeping quiet or instead following his conscience, he invariably chooses the latter. For example, in a story set in New York City when he worked for a steamship company, he shows how he worked hard even while the rest of his coworkers sat around, and that he was not a popular person because of his actions. At the end of the story he shows how one particular supervisor wanted to highly reward him with a choice promotion for his hard work even though many other people had worked there longer than he had (P1T1A - 217-269). Again, there are other such examples throughout his many stories, especially those that detail his employment history, but the point remains that he consistently shows that he refuses to act in opposition to his values in order to "go along with the crowd," a choice which led him to both rewards and losses.

Another important observation I have made is that a storyteller does perform with an audience in mind, tailoring and editing the story to suit that audience, but an often-overlooked member of that audience is the storyteller himself. My father, like others who narrate personal stories, has standards of good and proper storytelling based on what he learned growing up from both family members and others, from social standards, and also from personal preferences. In order to tailor a story to meet
such standards, my father highlights examples of wisdom he learned, of what he considers to be moral behavior as opposed to injustice, of his struggle in life to live the correct way. In turn, he also glosses over and ignores other parts of his life for reasons that only he knows. Having established that storytelling themes are building blocks of identity, it follows logically that my father would include and exclude activities, events, and values that do not coincide with the identity he is forming and presenting for his audience, including himself. I must again mention that my status as a family insider grants me a clearer vantage point into such insights, helping me to recognize the sorts of stories he emphasized or ignored in each particular telling and giving me knowledge of the broader corpus of stories I have heard throughout my life with which to compare each rendering.

Finally, one last major point that I have stressed throughout this thesis is that in personal narratives truth lies not in a perfect rendering of events and dialogue as it actually happened in the past, but instead it lies in the present personality of the storyteller and how well the storyteller portrays it in the narrative. The issue becomes more of believability, of a past imbued with meaning from the perspective of the present.

Differences that can be found between the various narratives within the life story and those personal experience narratives that may be embedded within the answer to a question in a direct interview primarily result from the context relevance of the story and its function. As I mentioned, the audience, both immediate and
imaginary, plays a constitutive role in the make-up of any particular story as well as the direction the linked stories may take in a larger storytelling session. Also, obviously during a directed interview, the researcher often does have specific questions that he or she may repeatedly return to during the interview. Storytellers then vary according to how compliant they are to that directed purpose. If a storyteller wishes to relay a message due to a personal or cultural agenda of some sort, this will also affect the type of stories told and the themes they broach. In addition, some storytellers do not naturally divulge information of a personal nature just because of their natural personalities, whereas others seize every such opportunity available them. In my work I have found that personality traits do have a very important impact upon the storytelling situation, the types of stories told, the subjects they relate, and the amount of elaboration involved in the event. Also, as with any art form, there is some amount of talent involved in weaving together words into interesting stories.

Throughout our work together, my father has been an intermediary in many ways. Through his stories and memories, he is shaping and representing his own culture for me, and by extension, for the broader audience of this thesis. It is precisely this position of representative and, in some sense, interpreter of his culture that prompts many of the stylistic elements I have described in his words. As all people do, he wishes to portray his culture and himself in a positive light, and he wishes to shape this portrayal into a narrative with a definite purpose, one showing his distinct personality and self-concept. This again is a very natural part of self-storytelling.
His role as intermediary is also apparent in a chronological scheme as he is rendering his memories of his own family, especially his father, for me, the next generation. For this reason his words and stories often take on a teaching quality and an air of wisdom transmitted in "kernels" of the truth as he has found it. In addition, my father feels that the lessons he has learned from his family and through experience have a broader impact, as they have an importance for anyone who can hear them (or in this case read them) so "people can avoid the mistakes I made." In this sense, he is continuing a typical activity he engages in even when we are not "working" together on one of my projects.

Just as he is an intermediary between the past and future generations of his family, he is also an intermediary more generally between life in the past and the present. As the person who experienced the past, all the while carefully observing his surroundings, my father stands in an alien world. Whereas he adapted to life and morals of another time both here in the U.S. and in Lebanon, he looks around him today with great sadness and bewilderment. I reintroduce a critical passage, one that perfectly sums up my father’s feeling of being stuck in a world he is not prepared for and in which he is not interested in participating, in order to show how he himself feels about this intermediary, or liminal, position. Toward the end of our last recording session together, he said, "...Dignity, and honesty, and pride does not exist anymore. This is what bothers me, bothers me so much. Because this is the only money I have, and I got rich with it, and the only money I can pay with it, and I can
deal with it, and it is dead money--worthless. That hurts" (P2T1B - 157-161). This sense of alienation is not restricted to him, but I strongly believe it is a broader problem for many people as they age, especially as our life spans become extended, and people bear witness to so many changes over time. Some people just cope with change better than others.

One final aspect of intermediacy in our work together is the fact that I am representing his words in my own style for my thesis. No matter how much I attempt to foreground his words in this thesis, ultimately I must take responsibility for what my thesis as a whole says since I am negotiating his words to make specific points of my own choosing. In addition, the act of making his words salient by interpreting, or contextualizing, them is again reshaping these words to a new purpose, mine. Even when I include large passages of his words in the midst of mine, the context of my surrounding words may lend a shape and a meaning which he neither anticipated nor consciously chose, and to which he may not even ascribe. The best that I and anyone doing similar research can do is to make a clear distinction between our own words and those words of our collaborators, the generous storytellers. In this way, both the reader and the storyteller who originally gave life to the words we reshape are free to analyze and distill the same words and to offer alternative interpretations or criticism to our original findings.
REFERENCES CITED


SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCES CONSULTED


APPENDICES
INTRODUCTION: A KEY TO USING THE TRANSCRIPTS

The following transcripts are provided in order to enhance the contextual understanding of any one narrative by showing the broader sequence of events and dialogues in which the narratives or excerpts were embedded within the recorded folk medicine interview or the life story. In addition, our taped sessions reveal a wealth of folklife and folk beliefs which are always important to document, especially since I did not discuss many of these items in the body of the thesis. By preserving them in this appendix, they will not be lost and may prove fruitful for other researchers. The tapes of the interviews themselves will be retained by me instead of being stored in an archive since they contain some private information. However, I can make available to other researchers on a case-by-case basis.

The life history was recorded over two separate days, and it is therefore presented in two main parts entitled “Performance 1” and “Performance 2.” In the body of the thesis, the reference will note on which day the passage was recorded. An example of the notational system for the life story will help clarify how to use this appendix. A typical reference such as (P1T1A - 337-350) first refers to the day of performance, in this case “Performance 1.” The next group of letters refers to the on-tape location of the narrative, in this case, T1A means that the excerpt or quote can be found on Tape #1 on side A, and the transcribed passage can also be found under the subdivided section of the appendix entitled “Tape 1, Side A.” And, finally,
the last two sets of numbers refer to the beginning and ending line number of the passage in the appropriate section of the appendix. This example passage therefore can be found in the appendix by first finding the division Performance 1, then finding the subdivision Tape 1, Side A, and, finally, searching for the corresponding beginning and ending numbers in the far left margin of the transcript.

In the text of my thesis references to the folk medicine interview will appear as, for example, (FM T1A - 45-50), where FM stands for "Folk Medicine," T1A again refers to tape 1, side A, and the last set of numbers refers to the beginning and ending line numbers in the far left margin of that particular passage. Within the transcript numbers will occasionally appear in parentheses. These refer only to the tape counter number of that portion of the tape in case the reader wishes to find the passage on the actual tape. These appear sporadically and are not referred to in the paper.

In the transcript for the folk medicine interview, the three speakers will be identified as "I:" for Ingrid, "E:" for Edmond, and "R:" for Renate. Throughout the transcription, when two or three people are speaking at the same time, I have embedded this within the first speakers dialogue, setting the second (and third) person's words off with brackets. Other words which appear in brackets which are not attributed to a speaker are only for clarification. Lebanese words have been italicized as a means of setting them apart from the rest of the text. Also italicized are words which were heavily emphasized in speech, for example, "...very, very good...". Ellipses appear for pauses or hesitations. The names of certain people and all of the
places that my father has worked have been deleted from the transcripts and their excerpts in the text since I did not seek permission to include them into a public document. I have given some places of employment abbreviated names such as “Company A” in order to keep Edmond’s train of thought clear, especially since he discusses more than one place (or person) at a time in certain parts of his life story and in the directed interview.
APPENDIX A

LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 1, TAPE 1, SIDE A

(001) I: Today is the 28th of December 1993. I am collecting the life story of Edmond Bou-Saada [Tape turns off]

(003) I: What I'm doing today is I want to record your life story. I want to find out how you got to be the person you are today. So, start from the beginning and tell me how you are who you are. You can take your time, and you can think and pause, just don't turn off the tape recorder...I have plenty of tapes. You can make this as long as you want or as short as you want.

(008) E: Well...what I am now...is not exactly what I planned to be. Life changed....and sometimes you go with the flow....where you can make living or where you can...stand.

So....uh, I didn't finish college actually....for so many reasons....personal reasons I didn't finish college, but....my education was enough and not enough actually, it depends what you looking for. I couldn't... go to become a lawyer or engineer or somebody with...[clears throat] sorry with....uh four years college to...to start those things, but.... uh I had enough education to survive... in life.

(018) E: My parents didn't give me... or left for me any uh money--they....they actually from both sides, from my father's side and from my mother's side they were millionaires and they died hungry, as we say. Uh.....my grandfather to stick for the.... family name that he gave his word once and guaranteed somebody by word..... You know what I mean, like here in Texas, they have a shake hands uh guarantee, and uh...uh in Lebanon, people from a good family, they give their word....and even if there is death and they won't pull back. They gave their word and that's it. So, he guaranteed somebody supposed to be a...a good friend of him... of his, and that guy turned to be a crook. And, he went and bust himself... in bankruptcy, and since my grandfather, the father of my father, gave his word...he had to sell his business, his land. The land he owned two-thirds of the...the town, where we lived. Two-thirds of the town! He had to... just throw it for peanuts to cover up for 70,000 gold. That's before the...the First World War. And, he bankrupt.

(034) E: After the war...he still had some money left...and my father--here..there was no schooling in that time thanks to the Turk, the.... bloodthirsty people... they came and they conquered Lebanon. Lebanon uh....uh....dominated by majority Christian in that time and they were hated by the Turks because the Turks are Moslem. And in that time, religion has a ...still until now in Lebanon religion has a big deal...lot to say [clears throat].... So, uh...my father didn't have much left, but he could survive. He went to...uh very big, high place, and he learned how....about shoes, how to design shoes, and cut shoes, you know.

(045) E: And, he made it through. Uh....he start making uh....open a place and making shoes. He hired employees, and....uh actually he became....uh very big, and employees grow and grow and he...he...he became having a very big factory. Twenty-eight employees in Lebanon--that's a hell of a lot, equal to about a 150 in here if not more. And...he was doing very well. And then, he got sick. He got diabetes and...and then the Second World War came....came in that time, and we were French mandate. We...we were liberated from Turkey after Turkey....lost the war, the First World War. We were liberated by France, and France stayed in Lebanon... for al...almost forty years. We were a mandate, under France protectorate [pronounced in French].

(057) E: But, the Second World War.... . Lebanon doesn't have any production actually, no factories or anything. The only thing income in Lebanon was...uh tobacco, uh...tourist, lots of
tourists, we live on tourists--best place in the world to go and visit...uh for a while...best beaches. We have fruit and vegetables, actually, but it's not enough...uh for a war and the expense.... Since France was dominating the area and they were in a bad shape themselves, everything is imported from France... and nothing could be imported from anywhere else. So, you can imagine, people can't afford to make shoes anymore. And if anybody wants to make a shoe, costs a fortune. People can live one week...a week...one week, can live almost a week from the price of a shoe.

There was no more sole, no more leather, or anything...to be imported. Business start going down. My father became diabetes very...very much, and things turned very much sour. That's from my father's side.

(072) E: And my father, when he married my mother, he lived with them. They were very much attached to their daughter. She got married very young...uh fifteen years old or so. From my mother's side, her father... and her grandfather, they were a millionaire also. They had a schooner, each one of them had a schooner. A schooner in that time, you can... say like...like a boat, uh or a freighter in those things. And both of them they owned another schooner which they put their cousin to operate on it. They dominate the Gulf of Jounieh. They had uh... plenty lighter, they call them lighter. This is a big... uh....wooden ship that they empty the schooner, because the schooner is too big--cannot come to shore. They go with those lighter to the... close to the schooner..., to empty the goods. [sneeze]. So, they were doing great. They were millionaires playing with gold. And as I said, the First World War came also. The Turks took away from them all those ships...and specially they are Christian, uh...they don't have any right to own anything like that. So, they took their ships, and they start transporting uh...soldiers from Turkey, not too far from us, Turkey, actually,... and never returned them to them. And uh...the truth, one of my grandfathers died from hunger even, he didn't have anything to eat, period, for weeks and weeks and weeks.

(095) E: All the Christians in Lebanon at that time suffered--didn't have much to eat, they used to take the food away from them those uh...bloody Turks. And uh... as you hear and know, Turkey us...used to conquer anybody of their neighbors, anybody they feel like. They were bloody...thirst, bloodthirsty. Yeah, look what happened--they conquered Armenia, and destroyed Armenia, and killed thousands and hundreds of thousands--they slaughtered them. And, in a matter of fact, we had one in...in my hometown, in Jounieh...poor Armenian. They slaughtered twelve of his kids. Everybody knows the story about it. They slaughtered their...their throat in front of him. He lost his mind..., and he kept running from Turkey cross all the way the border, the land to...till he got to Lebanon. And, he spent the rest of his life...lost his brain, crazy. So, that's how...what happened in Lebanon. And uh...look what's happening now. The Turks conquered even cross the "Dautanel" [the Bosporus or Dardanelles joining Turkey and Bulgaria]. They conquered to Bulgaria, Romania, and to Yugoslavia. That's why you have Moslem in uh...Yugoslavia now, and everybody fighting in there. Actually, there shouldn't be any Moslem around these area, but they are all from the Turkish descent. Even conquered to Greece and to Cyprus.

(110) E: Anyhow, nothing left for me as...to start any business, and my education, as I said, uh...not enough to...become a doctor or engineer or anything. I start struggling and growing up in that time. It wasn't too easy. My uncle, the brother of my mother, lived with us. He...he used to be a...uh drug...druggist, and he owned his own...uh drug store, his own pharmacy. So, uh...he sold it to follow the politics. He was in love with politics in his blood. And that destroyed us completely, because his party never...never won. And, he got...deteriorated, and sucked completely...nothing left.
And, wherever I go to be hired, with any place in the government, when they ask....I belonged to the wrong party. They never hired me. They don't have... any foreign companies... to hire....uh some people with...without discriminating. And, even some small companies from across, they were under the government domination, the government would call them and...and order them whom to hire and whom not to hire.

(129) E: So, I had rough time. So, finally I wanted to... to get out of there. I....one of our friends, he put me....uh after I'd been out of school two, three years, he put me...in the St. George Hotel, to manage uh...the beach. That's a very big operation, and the guy who contract that place in there used to lose thousands of dollars every year by people stealing [coughs] and rob him. So, they trusted me. They know from which family I'm coming. They can trust me to...to play with their money in there and handle it, because they know nothing will be in my pocket. And, in a matter of fact, he got five times income the year I...I held that place for him. The...pilots from SABENA and Air France,...Lufthansa,...all those guys comes and lives in the St. George Hotel. They want to go down to the beach. They want to do ski. They want to do things like that, and I'm in charge of all those. I got to meet them and...sometimes talk while we...it's quiet, have a beer, and talk.

(144) E: I got the idea to...to become a pilot, which I wanted to...uh, but we don't have the money. The uncles and aunts...in New York, they would send us money as much as we want and whatever, fine, to live and survive, but not to become a pilot. They scared of it, they don't want me...to fly. And there was no...no way I can come to the States or to Europe to learn how to fly. We didn't have a...uh flying school in Lebanon. So, the head of the army, he's a cousin of my mother, General [B.], he's... the head of the whole army. He's the one who established the Lebanese Air Force and he got lotta Mirage from France, and lotta Hawker Hunters from England, and all kinds of airplanes in there. He said, 'Look, I made the rules, but I'm not gonna break it, and I'm not gonna...uh be shown uh...playing favorites, and I can't open the door to play favorites with government around. You have to have a college graduate so that I can sponsor you to become a pilot, because we gonna spend on you a hell of a money. All I can do, I can put you as a radio operator to fly with...in the airplane. We teach you that. That I am allowed to do it. For your education, you qualified. You become a radio operator, and meanwhile you gaining hours....and after you been certain years in the army, in the air force, I can give you... an opportunity to learn how to fly. But I can't do it from the beginning, and I'm not gonna break...the law I made.' I said, 'Fine.'

(167) E: But my parents start going up and down, and jumping. They don't want that. And my mother picked up the phone and called him and m....[laughs] mopped the floor.... mopped the floor with him. I....I never forget that. That makes me laugh every time. I had a crazy mo...mother. My God! You cannot touch her...oh, she get through the ceiling if anybody would touch her. Uh...she mopped the floor with him, and they cousin and they good friends, so they...they can take the crap from each other, not like... any foreigner(???????) even he is the head of the...the army. So, ....finally, I don't wanna break her heart. I changed my mind. I...even so, I changed my mind after that, and I was able to...to fly as a...a steward with uh Air Liban, a... private company. Just to get in, I wanna get my foot in and show them, "Here, I'm flying. What's the difference... whether I'm flying in the back or in the front? Give me the money. Help me out, and let me...do it." They didn't. So, I went to school...and I learned radio operator. And I moved quickly, and I moved to a...an airline from Quwaiat, Arabian Desert Airlines used to be in that time. And, I flew as a radio
operator. The company didn't last too long, and bankrupt, so I came back. And, I worked with Lebanese International Airlines, that was...small company established. I worked for a few months, and then I was able to get a ticket to come to the States. So, I came to...and lived with the aunts and the uncles in New York...and trying to induce them... to let me learn how to fly. Never succeeded. They wanted me to learn radio and television. 

(194) E: I went to school, I learned radio and television... prepared and all this. And, I made the impossible to keep myself in this country...impossible! The...the...law is very strict and whole Lebanon has... 110 people...to enter United States per quota. They are in debt, the Lebanese people are in debt for at least 15 years. Her people come to the States and get married to...American girl or things like that and stays. So, was under borrowed—fifteen years behind. There was no way I could get in... and my Visa was up. The Lebanese Consul, he's a friend of mine from our hometown, so he hired me at the... at the Lebanese Consulate, and gave me diplomatic protection. 

(206) E: Until I met your mother, she's German, she has a Green Card, and that time didn't matter much whether I stay or not. And... and lawyer told me, "Well, it doesn't have to be American. German is okay, if you want...." That was a good lawyer in there, "If you want to get married to her, stay here...." I said, "Well, I want to get married whether I stay here or not, I know I'm gonna get married, anyhow." He said, "She's a German and can pull you in through the German quota. You have to get married.... before I start the paperwork." I said, "Okay, I'm going to get married anyhow." And that's what happened. We got married, and I switched my Visa from the diplomatic to... regular. Was pulled, and had a Green Card, and we lived...in New York in that time. [pause] 

(219) E: And, situation in... in this country, particularly in... in New York, was growing so bad... unbelievable. Was a lotta... murder going on, killing people in the subway, and in the platform, climbing the fire... stairs to uh... to the building and strangle and kill somebody asleep for 50 cents, for a dollar, doesn't make any difference. So, the robbery and the killing... and the problem was growing so bad. And, the dopes... were uh... was introduced into this country. I told your mother, "No way! I'm not gonna let my kids grow up in here... in that kind of condition. And I lose them, because kids in here, parents not... don't have much to say for. And I'm not gonna... just... turn the other uh turn the other way... turn my face to the other way. 

(233) E: So, we... we left. We went back home. Didn't take too long and the civil war blow up. Yeah...[sigh], we decided to come back, but I said, "No New York! No way I live in New York." The weather, and what's going on... the big... big city... lotta crime. Told her, "Let's go somewhere south," and we came to li... to Texas where we are here now in Houston... for the past seventeen, eighteen years. 

(240) E: We... we were lucky... and... we... we met a Lebanese guy, he's a Lebanese origin, but American native. Uh... he's the... uh... what you call... the treasurer of [Oil Company A]. We met him, and uh... he gave... your mother a job. Your mother was American citizen meantime. I wasn't, so, they won't take me because I wasn't an American citizen. So, I was... on... with my Green Card, so he hired me with... [International Contractor Company], the... the biggest contractor for... uh for [Oil Company A] they sponsor them... to do the paperwork, to transport for them and... and all this. So, I worked there for a while, and then... [Oil Company A] took us over. Worked for a while... and uh... things... didn't go so well lately. We were 4700 employees, and they cut them down to 400, 420 and that's why I'm out of job, and it's finished. I am at home. Nobody would hire me with my age... my lousy accent... and I don't care what anybody says that there is no discrimination. Discrimination is openly in
here...and I don't care what.... the people, and the government, and this country would say. They pretend things....that does not exist, and that is a big baloney. It does exist. There is a discrimination. There is a discrimination for minorities, for foreigners, for black, for women, for... Spanish, even for white American, they are discrimination against them. That depend who is that bloody boss, whether he likes your nose or not, he or she. They sit down....there and they...they deal with the life of other people just because they have something to say.

(270) E: Yeah, I don't....I don't say much. I know that the economy is bad, very bad, but uh....still there's so many opportunities which they could hire me, but they won't take me....they would prefer having a young person--cheaper....rates than have me experienced(??), doesn't mean anything for them. This is what's destroying this country...uh Ingrid. People don't look anymore for experience, and when you don't look for experience....you get cheap quality....you get cheap results,.... and nothing lasts. You hire a....all kind of people that they don't know how to spell, how to...to add or multiply. They have no education, no skill. Just because they young....they hire them for the cheap rates. And you don't have to worry about production, about results of good quality or not.

(285) E: Yeah....well, honesty...in those days, honesty it's.....it's cheap, and nobody looks for it anymore. How uh....uh devoted you are, how honest, how good....person or not good person. People don't care anymore. They overlook those things. My God! When I worked in New York, I remember....I worked for [Steamship Company M], the biggest company in the world....has a steamship. They had 44 ships....freighters and two cruise. One time, the people [the dockworkers] went on....on a strike....and the manager there.... We were 70 people in that department. We were in charge of the billing and....uh the calculation, how much we have to...charge the....the shippers, and make....the cubics and calculate the measurement and the cubic for the shipments and....and send them to the pier to be shipped. They went on strike for a while--they were union, I wasn't.... and that's why I wasn't much beloved in there because the manager liked me very, very much. In that time, some of the managers....recognize who's good and who's not good, and he was a tough manager, and he was from the people that they do appreciate....the worker. Uh....within....year and a quarter.... he pushed me three positions up, and that made so many people hate me around there and jealous. But they don't deserve it because they sit whole day long do...and...doing nothing but baloney....an....and laugh at the phone and....and making jokes and slow down....the shipment--on purpose, some of them they....they slow on purpose just to get overtime. So, one time they went on strike, and the manager said, "Look guys, I'm not going to force you....to do anything and we don't have anything else to do anyhow, but do me favor, and pull out the old books....and review your job, your work, what you have done. If you have made a mistake, if you billed....underbilling...the...the customer, or overbilling the customers or whatever--check those bills, if you can find anything." People opened these books, and they sit on it. They don't want to work. Every once in a while they turn a page, every once in a while maybe....maybe one day, or every two days, somebody comes, "Well I found something [uses dumb-sounding voice]....there is here 500 dollars." And.... that's all....they go on. I have...discovered 780,000 dollars...underbilled for customers. Like....let's say, 35,000....dollars, they don't know....how to count.... zeros those guys. A bill of 35,000 dollars--they make it 3 thousand 500 dollars, and they charge the customers 3,500 dollars instead of 35,000. 350,000 dollars becomes 35,000--they don't know! They don't know figures! They don't know zeros! I had discovered 780,000 dollars!! I drove the manager nuts....he couldn't believe it.
(338) E: Few months la...later, we had decided to...to leave, to go back home, and I told him. He went crazy!! I never forget, and I swear it to God, I never forget his face. He hit the table, and he stood up, and he jumped. He said, "I never been mad in my life as much as I am mad now! You are stupid! And I'm sorry to say it, I would...I thought in my life I would never be able to talk to you in any bad way, but this is...you're forcing me, you are stupid! I pushed you already three positions, and I am counting on you that you will be a head...in there...very soon. You doing a great job, and I'm very pleased with you, and I'm giving you the...the every year the raise more than than people they there for ten or fifteen years." [pause] And he calmed down like that, he looked at me and said, "Please, change your mind. In three months from now...I'll give you the signer of the company. You will sign the checks. You'll be a signer. Mr Dough...Day [laughs, saying 'why'd I say Dough?']...Mr. Day, he's going to retire end of September. Stay till September...and you will have the job. I trust...that you will do the best, and I can guarantee that. And you get a good money on it. I promise you! I give you more than you deserving. Stay! Please!" And I said, "Well, I made up my mind...and...I don't think so." He said, "I'll let you sleep on it a week. You let me know." And he was going bananas. He wants to keep me, to be a signer for...steamship...for [Steamship Company M]. And in that time I be making...starting salary.....220 dollar a week. That is...that is a money! People stays there for twenty years they won't make 220 dollar a week. Said, "Starting 220 dollar a week, I let you start, and then you get lotta...profit from it, and I make it up, so that you go much higher than that, believe me." And I said, "No, I'm sorry." I wanted to leave. [pause]

(377) E: Yeah,..... That was the only good opportunity...somebody really appreciated people....appreciated their work and their honesty...and hard work. I never forget this man. Wherever I...I go...I look in the telephone...uh book...for Arthur [W--]. I can't find anybody. One time, I found somebody his name Arthur [W--] and I called him. And he said, "Well I have called...I been...I been asked about this man many people had asking me about him. No, I am not the same one. I am sorry." [laughs]. Yeah...I like him. [small pause]

(386) E: And here in [Oil Company A],...I was very much hated. Actually, has nothing to do with discrimination in that side. Uh...the last two three years, they gave me a position...to be in charge...inspect all the...commissary that [Oil Company A] buys and ships to Saudi Arabia--and we ship a lot...full 747 will be full of goods, or half a ship sometimes. Anything they buy from meat to potatoes to...uh...uh other uh containers and cans...anything that the...the canteen in there to be filled...for Americans and the Saudi people which 100,000...employees in Saudi Arabia need to eat. We used to ship that, like they order 75 thousand kilos of potatoes...uh and they would be ordered every six, seven weeks....every ten weeks will be ordered that much, actually. [short pause]

(404) E: Yeah [said with a sigh], and I go there and they want to send all kind of a craps, and they say, "That's good enough for the Saudis, or whatever." And to me, I don't care whether they Saudis or they are...American, or...or whoever they are. I am paid to...to do a job...and, those people paying me to ship them...and trusted me...and they're gonna get their trust where they put it. They gonna get what they ordered. They're not gonna get second...not even second...grade. They're gonna get the first grade that...these vendors had... bid on it. He bid for first grade quality and that's what the company's gonna get...first grade. [short pause]

(415) E: They try to...over...to underbid each other...figuring that they can ship...uh third or fourth quality stuff smuggled inside, and it makes up for the undercut of the price. But, it
never worked with me. I nailed them down to the penny, and they used to go
bananas, they drove nuts. They used to lose money. They used to undercut each
other, figure they make plenty money by shipping the lousy goods...I stopped the
goods. God knows how many times I have rejected goods. They...I...I...I made lots
of enemies, ...and lots of pressure piled up on me...and I told my boss. I said, "You
have two choices, either you sign them yourself, or you remove me to another
position, but I am not a rubber stamp. I'm not gonna sign just because you said...you
told me to sign, or because a buyer or somebody else told me to sign, and I am going
to sign it and I examine the goods? I don't put my signature just like that...unless...I
value my signature...where it belongs, I put it, that's all."

E: Yeah, they want to ship potatoes and some stupid guy make mistake in there and he leaves
uh...the...frigidaire on freezing temperature because before that was something to be on
very low temperature, and the potatoes freeze.... . Uh, people ship sausages and
meat...frozen meat, from one state... over... outside the state to come like from
Louisiana or someplace else to come to Houston where I have to go and
in...inve...uh...inspect them, where their uh... frigidaire is not... cooling enough...and
the goods start to defrost, half defrost, three quarter defrost. And the worst thing
you can do...is when you defrost the meat...and you freeze it again. You can't do
that. Either you freeze it and you leave it.... Uh, meat to last six months frozen has
to be at least 20 below zero...and this meat in this frigidaire there was 48
degrees...[laughs] above zero, and the sausage...they were defrosting slowly, slowly.
And they want me to accept them and sign for it...and I reject it. That made a very
big stink in the company. I brought the bo...big boss that he always uh yell at me
that...I don't sign so easy and I reject everything. I brought him down and I told him,
"Climb up! Climb up the truck...or shut up and go back. You have a choice, but
don't blame me, I didn't tell you. Now, I'm telling you. Climb up... and read the
temperature what it says." He said, "48." I said, "Above zero or under zero, I want
you to say it." He said, "No, above zero." I said; "And, what those supposed to be?
Frozen? Or regular?" He said, "No, frozen." I say, "How can you freeze with 45
above zero? Touch them!" He said, "My God, they are like a rag...so soft." I said,
"That's what it is." I said, "Don't you see the paprika...already floating?" He said,
"What does that mean?" I said, "That's what I'm trying to tell you people because
you don't know why I reject things. When you have this...paprika and all
these...colors all the way floating on top, that means this meat got too much frozen
and then got soft. And you know yourself when you freeze meat and you take it out
from the freezer...how the juice and the blood and everything starts coming up,
right?" He said, "That's right." I said, "That's what happened, and you see, and
you're touching them yourself--so soft. And you...w...forcing me to sign for it? Go
ahead! You have seen them yourself, why don't you sign on it?" [short pause]...

E: Yeah, so many...pressure...piled up on me...by rejecting frozen potatoes...and unfrozen
sausage...and uh....expired.......uh dates and cans and containers, uh... old nuts,
expired the date on nuts for God knows how long and that...that tastes bad. Cheese
was defrosted, and... so many things, and that's why...[deep sigh] I was laid
off...because the boss cannot order me...to do...what he wanted to. And they do not
appreciate... hard workers and honest and decent human beings, and this is the result
of this country...being wh...what they are in the dumps now. Quality disappeared in
this country. Honesty and...uh...and dignity and decency is dying out in here--
obody cares for that. All they care, how they gonna make a dollar to survive.
People don't care anymore. [short pause]
(509) E: Yeah, I'm stubborn. I'm not...denying that, but...why shouldn't I be stubborn when I am right? And...I can't just be like a...uh...with double and triple and five face, and being the man you wanted me to be at...at your uh...disposition, the way you wanted me...why should I? I've been raised...to live my own life...to be honest, decent, straight, because nothing will be...lost or hidden, but the things that never happen. My father used to tell me, "Look son,...nothing will disappear...nothing will be hidden and disappear, only the things that never happened. You lose all the money you have, all the money in the world, you lose it. Doesn't make any difference--you make it again. If you lucky, you make it again, or you make half of it, or whatever, you still live, still manage how to live. But you lose your name...once. And all the money in the world wouldn't cover it back. You lost your name. You lost your dignity. You lost your honor. And you lose it once, and that's it. You wouldn't have...that's the...that...this is one thing you never have a second chance." [pause] He said, "Never give your word...unless...unless you want to back it up. You don't need to sign...signature is they...they tie you up with your signature is...and to my belief, only crows can be tied in their horns, put a cord on and tie them. If a human being, his word is not enough to be...that he will be tied...tied up for it, he's not a human being anymore. He's just a piece of meat, living meat, that's all." [very short pause]

(545) E: All those things changed, Ingrid. Life is changing. The people are losing ground...losing uh...their dignity and respect, and decency, and they not looking back to pick it up. They don't look back to pick it up...they don't care. You slap a person in his face...and give him five dollars, it's good enough, tell you, "When you going to do it again?" Money talks, now. People kill and struggle and do the impossible...and load their...conscience...and steal...and scam, just to make money. And the more they make, the more that...they want. Look at the doctors...which...they earned...the least respect...of mine. I don't think I do respect doctors in this country more than maybe one percent...half are crook and the other half are crook and stupid. Look at lawyers what they do. They do things unbelievable. They go as low as anybody can go low just to win a case. They don't care. We are downward, and when you go too much up...there ain't any more place to go, you start going down. And this is what's happening in...in here, in this country. Politicians...are destroying the country, and the people are destroying themselves, they don't need the politician, because they put the politician in there. So...uh, you see that their...politician are crooks and liars, and all kinds of a problem--they destroy this country and they still go to the...to the poll and vote for them. And then go another four years, cursing and screaming and talking about them, how bad they are, and what they have done to them and all this, and when the four years comes again, they go to put the...the v...the vote in there and they come back proudly that they voted for their congressman or senator or whatever...[pause]

(596) E: Yeah [with sigh], well I...I personally didn't do...too bad, but I...I was lucky, Thank God mil...many, many times. I don't have enough time to thank God. I been lucky--I was able to manage and survive. Look, I came to this country...I didn't speak a word of English uh...uh...Ingrid. I'm a French-educated man. All my...my schooling in Lebanon in my time used to be taught in Arabic, plus to improve our language, got taught in French. And there they speak Arabic and French mixed, actually...uh...we been raised with two languages. And, I hated the English in that time. We didn't have enough opportunity to learn it the way it is uh...and all I...I hear is uh, "Good morning," and "Good-bye," and "Thank you," and things like that, and...I never paid any attention uh...I didn't wanna waste time, and sit down and learn it. [short pause]...
(622) E: Yeah, when I came to this country...I didn't speak English at all, and...uh....I went to...to school as my aunts wanted me to...to do radio and television and just...to drag on my Visa and keep me here...try to find a way. And, one time, a guy called me there, and he said, "Hey, you, son-of-a-bitch, come over here!" I said, "Thank you!" I didn't know what he wants. He did...and I saw what he wants. So, he came over and...he start talking....talking, I don't remember what it was, and it's gone, finished. A week later, I knew what [laughs] "son-of-a-bitch" [laughs] means and I went through his throat...I want to kill him! [laughs] Well, to...to us, we take it serious, but in here, depends on how you say it, he didn't mean it actually, literally son-of-a-bitch, "Hey, you...hey...hey you, son-of-a-bitch, come here!" [he says lightly], or things like that, they don't mean it, it's just a.... uh very lousy way of talking [laughs]...street talk. But, uh...after that, I went with a friend of mine...he had a visitor, she's American, and her husband, he's from...uh Argentina....[TAPE ENDS 654]
LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 1, TAPE 1, SIDE B

(001) E: Yeah, her husband is from Argentina. We were... piling like sardines in a small Volkswagen in Manhattan turning around, and whenever he wanted...that fellow wanted to tell me something, he's... he talks to his wife in Portuguese. His wife... translated it in English to... to my friend, and my friend translated it to me in Arabic... [laughs]. It goes around in circles... like that.

(006) E: Then the next morning I was in Woolworth's... I don't remember which... anniversary Woolworth's had in that time, 50th anniversary or something and they were making big fuss, and all those women were... uh they brought all kinds of actors and pretty women... and... uh... throw them in the stores ro... roaming all around with long clothes like what the people used to... to uh... to wear... uh in the 20's and 10's whatever, 1900. And, those women, they... saw that I don't speak English [chuckling] and they were hanging on me and teasing me more and more... [laughs] every time, and they used to send each other to come and tease me. Well... I was about... 25 years old, young man, and... my friend told them I am a bachelor looking for a... to get married in here. He was joking... just put me on. So, they start sending each other and coming [chuckles]... uh roaming the store, look for me and... and bullshitting. I don't understand a word... what they saying.

(017) E: So, uh... after that I got mad. I got so mad at myself, and I went and I bought myself a dictionary--French-English, English-French. And I got myself a pad, and I said, "That's it! I made up my mind!" I said, "If I'm going to live in this country, they're not gonna learn French for me... or Arabic. I have to learn English if I want to deal and talk with them, if I want to live in this country. So, I have no choice." So, I... I figure, let's say, "I'm getting out from the airplane and my first foot on the ground, what I'm gonna say to the first person I see?" I'm gonna ask him where I wanted to go and what I want, and things like that. So, I looked at it in the French... uh side in the dictionary, and see what it means in English, write it down, and translate it... to French. And every day I marked ten words, the most essential words that can be daily used, and some... uh primary verbs, like "I want," "I want to eat," "I want to drink," "I want to sleep," "I want to go," "I want to come," "Give," "Take." All those kinds of primary verbs that you would use them... essential. I used to learn ten words every day, whether I like it or not. Repeat it 50, 60 times until it comes out of my ears, falling down. Next morning another 10, and review the other 10, that would be 20. Then another 10 the third day and review the other 20. And, practicing, and listening to the radio, whether I understand what they saying or not, just let... let the tone of the words, let... the atmosphere of English... just... float around my ears, around my brain, like when you hear a song, and never... it stays in your... in your mind, you never can get rid of it and... and it sings itself by itself in your mind.

(036) E: So, ....and this is how... how I was able to uh... to survive and manage in that time... and believe me! I am not kidding, in school I used to understand the teacher explaining... all about a radio and television... by imagination--try to concentrate what he's trying to say by imagination. And, when we go down to the shop in the afternoon, to put together what we have learned in the morning... like building up the oscilloscope, the... uh the volt meter, radio, television, all those we have to build them up from what we learned... uh by theory... theory in the morning and do them practical in the afternoon. And, how to solder them together, how to connect them, how to... make the connection, and read the schematic on them... Believe it or not!
who finished... ahead of the others. We were twenty-seven students in that
class... your father always be number 3, number 4, and the best and the neatest
job... in putting those stuff together. Just... by being... watching the teacher
explaining on the blackboard, and that teacher was old and he talks like a machine
gun sometimes when he explains. He knows his job. He's teaching... for a long time,
he's about 65, 70... 68 years old. He was... uh doing that as a second.... secondary for
his social security, make few dollars on the side.

(055) E: [deeply inhales]... Yeah... and uh... I managed, and... I try to do my best, always use my
noodle... brain... Was difficult, many times was difficult, but uh... many times I
managed. A matter of fact, when I got my... uh my green card... I... I got married,
fine, but uh... I was based on finding a job. If I don't have a job, I wouldn't be able
to stay in this country. And, uh a friend... of uh your mother... an old lady—that's
where your mother rented a room over her place. Her son... was a big shot in one
company, and... uh, he called one of the agencies that they find a job, he called
somebody there, told them, "Please take care of him. See what's his qualifications.
Uh... there is no way... I... I have no place for him in my... in my company, but see
where you can put him."

(067) E: So, they... they hired me, he send me to uh... to uh... [Elevator Company S]. That was a very,
very big company in a... in Brooklyn in that time, in the early '60s. I never... know
anything about elevators by... but pushing the button up and down, and... know the
elevator will stop, the door will open automatically, and I don't know what the heck
is going on behind the scene—what machinery in there, what makes him... do all this.
So, they put me... at the workshop... to assemble elevators. Just imagine on
yourself... your father... being in a shop to build an elevator—he never knew
anything about it, but riding it up and down the floor. And, in that time, my English
was... really broken English. I could make myself understood... and understand if
the people would talk slow... to me and look at me, face me face-to-face, and I look
at their lips... and they speak slow. Uh... they don't have to spell it word by word, but
I mean slow, not sloppy. I... I could understand them.

(081) E: So, uh... they put me there and they were patient. I watched the people how they doing this
for two days.... while I'm working. Give me... they gave me some material to put
together. I said, "Oh, my God!" Just looked left and right... see how the other
people are doing, and I do it... slow, slow, slowly. And the guy said, "You doing
fine, don't worry about it. Don't be discouraged. You're doing fine. You'll be
okay." And that's all I needed... is the blessing that they not annoyed from me being
slow. So, I try to do more... and faster, because... I don't want them to... to be...
sympathize with me so much and take... my burden by being slow. So, I try to put
double my best on it, to... to go faster. Believe me, took me the whole week, and I
was on my own! I was on my own! I could read the schematic... for a bloody
elevator, and... and know about the relays in there, and which relays would open to
open the door; which relays should close now to close the door; which one is when
you push the button... to make the elevator move to which floor. There is a selector
in the bottom... uh in the middle of it uh... all those relays has to come to the selector.

(086) E: Everybody was doing a lousy job on the selector and messing up... uh putting the wrong... uh
connection in there. In other words, when you push for 17 and 17 has to come to
the... contact on the... uh selector on the 17 to make the relay close and close the
doors... the second relay would close the door and the elevator will... goes up to 17,
let's say. When it's at 17, the relay would open automatically, because then it open
the contact on number 17... uh the selector would make it open, and the door would
open, and the elevator would stop. And they all were messing them up. You push
17, it open on 22. You push 5, it open on 15. And all kinds of things. So, the man called me...supervisor. He called me over. He said, "I know you doing...a good and clean job, and that's what I need--a very sensitive and clean job. Here, you sit on that and do...the uh...the selector." I said, "You must be kidding! I can't take the responsibility for that! I can't do it! That's too big for me! I can't...I can't handle it!" He said, "If I say you can handle it, you can handle it. Now do it!" And he turned his back, and he left. I said, "Oh, God! All I need is the hand of God to be my second hand around." I did the best job [said proudly]. They never...they...every elevator left that place...never came back! Never called for any...uh servicemen to go and correct mistakes in there. Every elevator has been built for the past eight months I worked on there...never had any problem on opening doors or stopping on the right floor, or...close, or open, or light, or shut the light, or whatever. Every single button in there worked,...with the right connection and the neatest job on soldering...not sloppy and bulky and...bad looking. It's nice and smooth and...clean job. They were very, very pleased with me, and in that time, (121) E: we got married in November...period of November 1962, I remember...I was working with them. [short pause] In '63,...they s...uh used to see what I write down, and see my...uh my handwriting and way I do things in there...so, the...one of the draftsmen inside quit. And, the boss inside told them, "Get Bou-Saada over...I want him to...to take the position here." He called me, he said, "I want you to be...working draftsmen...here." I said, "I never did a draftsmen in my life! [said with high-pitched, incredulous voice] What you talking about? I can't do it!! [said like the boss is crazy]" He said, "All we need...is somebody with patience...good, very good and clear, legible...handwrite...handwriting. You have the best handwriting we ever seen around. You print...you...your print words is like a...like a printer. And, you are clean—that's what we need...in...in that job. You come...and you assist..."...what his name? I don't...I forgot what was his name, that guy...funny guy that was there. Said, "You will be his assistant. He will pass you the...the job to do...and you will help him out." I did the best job ever! Believe it or not...not one mistake. I may have asked a lot of questions in that time...to be informed, but I did...very nice and clean job.

130 (137) E: So, we got married in...30th of November '62. In '63, told your mother, "Come on, let's go on a trip I promised you. We went back home...went to Lebanon, and to...visit Jerusalem, and all this area in there. And while...I been gone, the company, they were dealing to...to be sold, and [Elevator Company T], the Canadian—that is the biggest...is the competitor...competitor of uh...of Otis uh...they bought the company. And, they had let plenty people go...from every people...e...uh every three people in there, they let one person stay. They stay by seniority, actually, and the most...essential persons. Uh, they got their own people there to follow with a job. So, I was laid off...without a job...for a while.

150 (150) E: Then, I got to [Steamship Company M, already mentioned]. Stayed with them...two and a half years. Oh, no...I got another job...uh I worked...the...the same man found me a job with...a...elec...electricity with a...a contractor. I looked con...contractor in Manhattan. He takes contracts like...uh anything happens in the Empire State Building...uh...elevators or others, he's responsible...he sends a crew there to fix the problem. And some hotels...uh like the Astoria Hotel or things like that. So, one time, they hired me. And, one time, I ha...I was sent...with somebody to work e...uh...emp...Empire State Building at the elevators that goes to a hundred and...and two, and eight...eighty floors, and 102 floors, and the big one in there—they had a problem. So, we went upstairs ... all the way to the top on the roof. You be sitting
there crawling like a little tu...to...like a...the turtle, a little...crawling to enter there in that place. And those uh... they call it the "jumper" [French word for circuit breaker] and...and relays, each relay is big as a watermelon—my God! I can't believe that. I never seen things like that in my life. So, they counted on me because I worked with [Elevator Company S], so I should know about the elevator. You should see when the elevator stopped!! It's like a...a shotgun next to your ear—it opens and it shuts...these relays. You hear nothing like...like somebody has a...a gun and is going "Tak! Tak! Tak! Tak!" next to your ear... explode, and exploding, and exploding and those elevators when they pull... the cable pull, you feel whole roof is shaking, going back and forth...and...and...and shaking! It's really scary!! Each one, I think.....something like.... each line something like...I don't remember, either 50 or 75,000 volts each line. You should see the sparks when that... close-lock to each other [claps hands together]. You should see the sparks comes out from...from there--like fire! And this... it is really scary! And you will make a hell of a money. You work... every night you have to work overtime, because you have a lot of work to do. Everybody is putting four, five, and six hours e...a.overtime every night, and it's a lot of money on it. I showed all kind... of stupidity and ignorance,... that can exist.

(184) E: [phone rings, he asks to turn off tape]... So, I had to play stupid...in that time, and ignorant.... of the job... to be laid off. I didn't want to be fired... to be laid off, ah... to show that I was un...ina...incapable of doing that, because I don't feel like working six days a week like the others... telling me, and every night spend four, five hours. It's... you are...forced to, you have to do it. And, besides that, it's a very dangerous job, uh... I never had any experience before, and....uh after a while you gonna be on your own and.... uh they not expecting me to be able to fix.... an elevator with that kind of a power.... pulling... uh forty people in an elevator to hundred a....to eighty floor--uh...a...Empire State Building. I can't do that! And it's very dangerous, I...I'm...I don't know much about it.

(197) E: So, uh, they let me go... after two days.... they said... uh, "I don't think.... you can continue. Your knowledge is not.... uh you're not qualified enough. You don't have enough knowledge to fill up.... the responsibility, so.... uh we try to see if we can fill you in another...place, sometimes, it's not guaranteed. We'll see. We would like you.... we like you very much. You a good person and we like you keep you...uh we'd like to keep you, but.... you don't have enough....uh...information...about the job.

(207) E: Yeah, I quit after that, and I....I don't know what I did, what kind of a j.....oh yeah! I went..... that was a funny job in there. I was working for [Electric Services Company T]. They called me to work for [Electric Services Company T] and they needed an assistant to the manager.... uh department. Uh...we were about--in the office--about 7, 8 people. Was a boss, and they wanted somebody to be the right hand..... uh of that manager in there, who has some knowledge of electronic and... mechanical, things like that. So, I had a qualifications anyhow. My only problem is I don't know how to type. You know, in...in my schooling.... uh course in Lebanon, we....we never pursue any typing because uh typing is the....the job of the secretary... and....uh people wants to learn how to type, they have to go to a special school. They learn nothing but typing and stenography and things like that, but uh... a man doesn't need it because in the office he has a secretary to type for him everything... he needs for.

So, I didn't know how to type. I had to write everything by hand....and, they were really amazed--everybody look at each other--to see me how fast I was in writing things and how...and how fast I was to calculate, even to calculate and add a lotta figures--a page full of figures from top to bottom. I ad...add them...add them by hand, because here again I don't know how to use the calculator without looking uh
...fingers go up and down in that machine, and the right figures without looking. I can't do that. So, it was easier for me to add by hand, looking at the page and add them and...I was so fast, everybody was amazed! They couldn't believe that how speed...how much uh speed I could do in there...and they never pick up one mistake after me. They never...they there trying their damned best to just nail me down, that I make mistakes. I never made one mistake.

(238) E: Yeah, here we go again! Uh, the manager was a crook. I had clashed with him many times--he was a crook. He wants to become a salesman. He makes a lotta money in salesman. So, this company, when it sells a machine...it's a big machine, huge machine, costs between 25 and 30, 35,000 dollars, some of them even costs 50,000 dollar. They are a heat-sealing machine, like...uh if you wanna make a life jacket...uh this the type of machine that put the...the arms, uh...and the shoulders, and pockets and all that from rubber or plastic, to seal them together with that machine, it's a seal-heating machine. They...they bust a...a lot--they break down a lot. Uh...the first year...is free. All the service and parts and whatever it is. And that manager--some companies, they have 2 and 3 machines, and some of them...a...are 3 and 4 years old, uh...these machines, the warranty is gone, and they just bought one, let's say, and...uh...the other one broke, and this man, he wants to be nice to them. He wants to send the serviceman in there and charge the new one, the new machine on the bust. I said, "No, that's the old machine!" And so, I had so many clashes like that, that...uh insist that this is...the call. I took the serial, and I called, when L...when they called, I call th...took the...the serial number and I find out which machine it was. And, I'm insisting of billing this vendor...for this machine, that was broke, and he wants to waive it, and put it on the new machine, because the new machine is still under warranty.

(263) E: So, uh...and he couldn't show it very much....uh...openly, that....uh I am right, and I'm arguing, so, slowly, slowly from behind my back....he tried to work...behind me to let me go....because I understood he's doing that, he wants to be nice to these vendors, because he wants to become a...a salesman. Salesman he makes....uh hundred times more money than what he's making in the office....because he gets commission on every machine he can sell to these people. [sniffs]

(270) E: So, I quit.....and then right after that I worked for [Steamship Company M]. Yeah, even there was some people didn't like me there because I did not join the....the union, uh...so, wouldn't take too much to be uh...looking in bad eyes. Lousy foreigner, and being advanced ahead of them because uh....the manager approved of my work...and then you don't the...the union, you won't survive among them happily. And, even so, I stayed....with [Steamship Company M] two and a half years. That was a good...good days, good time. [short pause and a sigh]

(281) E: So many bad things happening....we have a saying....it says, "Don't hate....whatever bad things come to you....it could turn to your benefit," which uh....which it is true.

Now, I...I quit [Steamship Company M]--which.....it is sad thing. I...I would have had a very bright future with them, but I went back home. I settled the land. I met my family again...my friends, and I worked in there with an airline company, where well, then I got a free ticket to come back in here af...after the war started.

(292) E: So, everything happen to me in the right time. So, I don't have much complaint to do....[tape is turned off].

(296) E: Yeah, I believe....I believe too much on the...uh old saying, and the....because every proverb, every saying....every example comes from uh...happening before, from practical happening. And, people take a lesson from it, and uh...they'll have a say....saying for that. Uhm....uh it is true, many times it says...uh, "Don't get upset or hate whatever
250 happened to you, could be turning to your benefit, could be a step uh... for
your(????) uh...good luck. Every thing, every move I did it...uh...it was for more-
or-less... beneficiary. I was in the right time in the right place... like what happen to
me in Lebanon, like when I come back in here, also. We were lucky, your mother
and I, we started... working where we worked at [Oil Company A] and others.

255 [short pause]

(310) E: Life is funny. It's full of surprises, Ingrid. Many times, it happen to you, the...the
unexpected. [pause] I would have w....liked.... uh.... to see more came up...came
out of me than what I....I have, but... I'm satisfied. Thank God million times, I mean
what....God gave me more than I deserve. Gave me good family, good luck, good
life... good wife....and uh good health. Could be...could have been much, much
worse than that. hmmmm...[pause].

260 (322) E: I build myself... for what I am on my own. My father died when I was young, very young,
....was 12. 13 years old when my father died. The last 5, 6 years of his life was
terrible for him, poor guy. He was diabetes....he had diabetes, and it hit his heart.
He...he never had a patient on him....the last few years of his life. It's all...he always
was upset and mad at....at the whole world, how the things turned against him...on
him, how he...he bankrupt, lost his work, his business. Yeah, before he died... from
265 28 employees he had 2 employees in his store, and he even let those goes, and he
closed the place and died. [pause], uh....

(337) E: Yeah, I had to do it on my own, uh.... our uncle, the brother of my mother... he was a good
person, and he had a personality, and...uh he was a wise man. He had a lotta friends
...in the country, also....very, very highly and very well respected. He gets
anything he wants. He put it through. He can...he can get through...with his head
and.... his stubborness....through the wall if he wanted to. [pause]. So, I
do...learned from him and from my father--my father was a very wise man, very wise
man. People used to come from state to state, from faa.a.r [elongated] hundreds of
kilometers. They having a problem...they come to him... to help them out... and
solve their problem. They go with his advice. They know.... they believe on him
like a second god on earth--whatever he tell them.... they believe on him, and....
then, believe me! It was nothing but the truth! The correct answer.... the correct
advice. And....... so, they both ver...were very....very wise, intelligent person. I
280 kind of.... practiced on.... from their existence...around me, the atmosphere around.

(359) E: My mother was a very decent, honest... person, very good heart. She was a very good-
hearted woman. She was.... very much beloved by the friends and neighbors, too,
because she was nice person. She had a personality, too, to be... to be loved. I...
had nice family.... nice parents to raise me. I was raised in the very, very old
conservative, strict... way [short pause]. And....uh, my father used to tell me, "Look
son, human being is not a suit or...a shoe, that you wear it today, tomorrow you
throw it away, or....change it, you look for something else. You change your...your
shoes and your clothes, this is how you have to change your personality. Your
290 pers... your personality is... one person. You got it once, and you gonna live with it
all your life. It's up to you...you to make up your mind how you wanna... form and
make your personality. And, once... you decided, and you make it, then that's the
personality you gonna live with it. Never change it! Never color it! Never pretend
it! That's what it is and that's what you are, and this is how you stay. Never be
double-faced, double-stand! Never give your word, unless you can back it up!
Never say "yes" or "no" unless your are sure... of what you saying. Never sign
before you read...what you signing. [pause]
(387) E: Yeah, they...there were lotta advice.... lotta sayings.... lotta examples. You...you see your parents... uh practicing the life... this...this way, and you follow it. It was good.... good time and...they were good people, and...and 50 and 60 years ago. They were good people. They were honest people.... they were proud. And, we didn't have many crooks around. If you see per... one per million, that's a lot. The whole town talks about it. The whole country speaks about it. And, this is the right life.... right, correct life to human beings...for human being to follow and...and live it. Why can't we live in peace? Why can't we live... and every human being, every person know his limit, know what he owns, and what he... he...uh... he owe. I mean, if a person owe something, he owe it! Why all of a sudden he wants to deny it? And, if he own something, why other people has the right to take it away from? Who gave them the right? If every person... on this earth... know his limit, his weight, and he would follow his conscience.... the way's supposed to, we never have war, we never have hate. Hate should never exist. My father used to tell us, "Son, never hate! Hate is bad! Never hate anything. Anything you hate is being created, or done, or sent by God, and if you hate it, you hate God, and that's not the way to be. Nothing happen without... God's permission and knowledge. So, don't hate. No sense to hate."

(424) E: Yeah, [pause]... I always feel sorry. I missed so many opportunities.... to become much better than I am now. When I look bad, that hurts... look back I mean, it hurts. And, then I turn around and I say, "Thank God a million times... for what I am, for what I have, at least. I'm not in jail. I never been indicted. I never been accused of bad things. Thank God, I raised a family, and nobody could say a word against my kids, but being flattered, and tell me, 'You should be fi... uh proud and...and be happy for what you have.' And, sure I am." At least, I succeeded in this way. It's very hard... parents to succeed raising kids... without giving them a headache and trouble..... without being told, "This is Sergeant so-and-so-and-so. Come on and pick up your kid. We have him in here." So, thank God, I didn't have to hear this, tones(????) and stories. Thank God, ...God gave me two healthy kids.... that they use their noodle, too. They trying to do the best of their....on themselves. I'm proud of you guys. I'm very proud [spoken softly]. [pause]

(451) E: Yeah, ...as I said, you always think... you could have been better. Too late now..... for whatever reason, it's too late. Neither financial to help, ...or age, ...or the situation, the economy, ...the... mentality of the people wouldn't help you either. I could tell you, I remember when I worked my last job with [Steamship Company M], people hated me there like hell. They hated my guts. How could I have promotion in there? How could I get that job that they gave me... at the end before I...I was laid off [from Company A]? And, they didn't get it... that they could travel.... take the airplane and go to some place and live in the best hotels and eat the best food, and all kinds of things like that, and play big shot. And, they have something to say... they don't have to be in the office. And, my big, big boss, the manager, not the director one, that.... stupid... jackass I had, the big one. He was one time talking to another supervisor, which he's a friend of mine, telling him, "You know, that guy Bou-Saada amaze me. Some of our people, they go on a trip, and they bring their expense trip.... expense for the trips--laundry... and this and that, and, the best restaurant, and... they pay for a steak 25 dollar, and they.... uh would pay this and pay that and bring a big fat...uh bill. Would you believe that sometimes I see... receipts from McDonald's for Bou-Saada...his lunch. And when he...he eats at the hotel... like in... in Philadelphia,--he says he has to be in that hotel, he has no choice, otherwise... he will be 30 miles from the job... would cost us much more to...to go to other hotel—he said the cheapest meal there is 12 dollar, and every time he is there, I
see nothing but 12 dollar for his [laughs]...for...for his meal. He always pick up the cheapest, and that other guy in there, I see 35 dollar, 22 dollar for a steak, ...and God knows what other things overnight.... he charge this, this, this."

(497) E: Yeah, well, doesn't... doesn't hurt, Ingrid. Yeah, I had an argument with my direct... uh boss, he say, "Well, when you go on a trip, you could uh... you don't have to spend a lot money. Save for the company. Go to McDonald's for that." I say, "Listen to me, Mister [said forcefully]. When I want to eat hamburgers at McDonald's, it's because I wanted to eat it in there, and because I fell for a hamburger at McDonald's, not because you and the company said that I should go and eat my lunch in there. Whether I... in that time I feel for a m.... for a hamburger, or not. I eat what I please.... and I eat where I... what I like, and I go where I want. And, if you don't like it, you tell Mr. O'Connor that I said so. But at... at one condition... you tell him word-by-word. Don't create stories! And don't tell me next time... what can I eat and what I can't eat." [short pause]

(517) E: Yeah,...the... I never... took advantage from my trips, uh Ingrid, and uh that's a good... name I left behind... in my files. So many recommendations from the big... big higher boss which spoke highly about me. that made me feel... proud and happy. Kind of shut up... I been laid off and I shut up about it. I heard after I left, that other people... are messing up in there, and one guy, he signed... --the first time I heard about it--he sign for 3000 dollar.... goods they were damaged! Apparently, he didn't go and inspect those... those goods, and he probably as usually... managed to put his expense. One time, yeah, I remember, one time the first trip I took him with me to... to show him how. On the way, we brought him from the air... airport--your mother came and picked me up--we brought him from the airport, the creep. What a creep! And we took him to... to his place, to his house, ... and he turned around and ch... cha... charged the company... for transportation. That I couldn't believe it! I was... waiting for him.... to finish what he was doing to call him to come downstairs, and I looked. He was marking transportation [laughs]... from airport to home. [laughs]. I couldn't believe it! He put 80... 80 miles. Oh... that... that is a lie to start with it. That's from Hobby to Memorial, .... uh 80 miles. That is the... the biggest lie ever. And we took him, your mother and I, we brought him there... to his house.

[short pause]...

(551) E: Hmm... I don't know.... [sigh]... what else I can tell you. [pause]... Just do your best always. Whatever comes out of it... be satisfied... always, and say, it could be worse. And, thank God, always. [pause]...

(561) E: I can tell you [said in a sigh]... when I left... when I left Lebanon, I had thousands and thousands... of people, good friends of mine. I know more than half Lebanon, more than half of the Lebanese people, I mean more than half of the Lebanese people in Lebanon, I know them, they know me. You go from one town to another from the capital to the biggest city... people know me. You could not... your mother used to... to drove crazy when I... she's with me and we go to town, we go to Beirut, or someplace else, other place. She never get... there... even she's in a rush from people stopping us on the way and talk... talk to me, and, "Hi" and "Hi" to left and right--people talking to us. She said [sigh] to me many times, "I hate to go with you because I come home exhausted. I'm never... I'm standing on my feet talking to Tom, Dick, and Harry, and trip takes 15 minutes take... takes you 2... and 3 hours. [pause] I had friends... by the thousands... and wh... when I came to this country... I thought I will have the same idea, and build up... my life with light... big... crowd of friends, and... and crowd of people around, and... know a lotta of people. That didn't work, didn't work at all. It's very hard to get friend around.... for many reasons. First, you
won't be much beloved.... as a foreigner, no matter what you do—you can paint
yourself yellow, red, and black, in any kind of... color—you can't change your tone,
your personality. You still gonna be foreigner. You can hand... carry with you ten
citizenship, not... one, and you still gonna be foreigner... all your life... in here.
Doesn't mean that you are American citizen and that's it. [pause] ...And... those
friends never last. [pause]... And, uh.... people you build a friends
between...between twelve and noon... you lose them. You have a friend, and you
think he's your friend for 2, 3 years, and all of a sudden he forget you and turn... if
he doesn't turn on you... or she... don't turn on you... they just leave you.... fla...on
your flat behind. People don't care for friendship anymore. People don't care to
have...to socialize on an honest, decent way just for the sake of being social and
friends, and spend time with friend. If they can get out of you something, you their
best friend--you good. If they can't, they drop you... like a hot potato. Uh... That's
why I don't care anymore... flatly I don't care for anybody around. I don't socialize.
I don't care to be nice... to anybody, or anybody be nice to me. I just... isolated
myself..., and I don't like to meddle because [was speaking slowly and reflectively
then speeds up] so many people so many times, you hear on the TV stories that
really bust your brain. People try to be nice samaritan... to help.... to be nice to...to
people, and then... [those other people] took advantage of them and then they be in
trouble... themselves. They get in trouble themselves by being nice... to other
people. My God, I....I never forget--last time before we came... before we came back
the last time to United States, the guy that he used to be the office... uh our office
boy, he used to be my uh....my personal uh...."body guard"--he'd kill himself for me--
Zahki, you remember Zahki yourself you liked him very much... and he used to love
you people and... loves your brother so much. He used to take you like you ...you
his own bro... uh...uh children, that.... [TAPE CUTS OFF AT 660].
LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 1, TAPE 2, SIDE A

(001) E: This guy, I used to feel sorry for him. He has a family... lotta kids. His salary wasn't... too big. And, uh... when... I finished, I wanna go home... uh from the office, worked whole day... and he should be working with me long. So, he... the company will provide him from the airport to... to town, free, with company car, fine. But from town, he has to take... and change bus, and God knows how long he has to wait, or he has to take a... taxi service... in other words, the taxi there, we have... two kinds of taxi, either you pay... for five passenger and you go... from one place to another, or you wait and they would fill up five passenger if they going on your way... to your neighborhood. So, he has to wait a lot in there in cold weather or raining, or whatever, and it costs him money. So, I used to feel pity... he's on my way, but I have to get out... a little bit out of my way on the way home... and drop him home. Uh... I forgot what was that [said quietly]... [long pause]. (I mumbled something in the background)

(013) E: Yeah,... [tape is cut off] So, on the way going... sometimes it's raining... and a lotta water on the street. Some of the cars are open in the bottom in there, and very, very shallow and small car or so. They gain water and shut off in the middle of the water. And, I used to be passing by and see that and go behind the car, and push them out of the water... Tak! Tak! Tak! one after the other, one after the other. Sometimes, I push 5, 6, 10 cars uh... in one trip, and the guy he used to say, "You crazy! You crazy! You gonna break something in your car! My God! You cannot see somebody in trouble without uh... killing yourself and jumping on..." I said, "Look, if I don't do that, nobody's gonna do it, and that guy, uh... whatever it is, he's in a rush, or he's sick, or he's tired, or... or whatever. He has to go, he has a family. He has to go home. How... how do I like if I am there and I need somebody's help and nobody... would give me a hand, but step on me? How do I feel, myself? So, this is how I am raised, Zahki. Just do to other people... what would you like other people to do to them... to you. And, don't do other... to other people what you don't like to do to you." I say, "Well, doesn't hurt me. Doesn't have... okay... something breaks in the car, will be fixed. It's not the end of the world. It's not a human being is gonna die. It's a part gonna break. Big deal! But, at least you help somebody to go to his family... get him out of that trouble. Every time... eh... during the winter there, it rain like a deluge. I never could see anybody... many times I get... stop my car, get out from my car, and I push... the person, push his car on the street... keep pushing, pushing until he be able to start his car. I can't see somebody in trouble.

This is how we are raised in there. Anybody in trouble--give him a hand--you know him or you don't.

(034) E: And, there is a saying, it says, "Always that one mountain will never meet another mountain, but a human being... always's gonna meet another human being, and that... the... that human being sometimes... someday... somewhere, and you help him now, and you in trouble, and God will send him to you... to pay you back." And, this is why we say... and this is true, "Have you ever seen... or heard one mountain met another mountain? They don't move, but human being moves around, and they always meet in some place unexpectedly."

(041) E: Many times I was in Paris or I was in Belgium, and I see... turned around and see... say, "Hi, Bou-Saada!" uh... unexpected... see somebody in there unexpected... in a place in Belgium which you never expected. Turned to be one Lebanese in there passing the same way I been there. So, this is true, uh... you never know. You help somebody, and one time you in trouble God will send you either that person or somebody else.
to pay you the...the favor. It doesn't hurt to be nice, to help other people. Uh.... this
is how I am, and I thought I can do it in here. In here what they do ma...most
crooks... they show themselves they in trouble that they get you out of your car
either to steal your car or to sh...sha...shoot you dead and rob you. You can't help
people here without taking a chance.... and taking chance on your life or on your
family life. You never dare to open your window to....to check on that other person
if he needs help, or what can you help him or whatever, ....not to push him or to get
out and help him with his car, or her car. You think, "Oh, she's a woman, she won't
do that." Baloney! Now women....uh can do more than men, they can carry guns,
they can rob, they can kill. I'm not saying all women are crooks, but you have some
women.... you would love to....to meet a man than meet that woman.

(057) E: So, uh....
the whole world is out of....uh focus, The whole world is gone... uh berserk, and it's
the end of the world. To my belief it's true, 'cause if you just...just sit by yourself
half an hour.... and really think about it from one place to another, think about the
whole world from one country to another, what's going on, what's happening. Think
about the mentality of the people in here, that this country here, the United States is
number one country in the world. They gave.... the style, the....the symbol.... to
everybody and they pretend to be number one in the world, which they were. And
now look what they doing to themselves, not to the other people, to themselves what
they doing. They killing each other! They killing themselves, either with guns or
with drugs or with scam, or with anything! or with drugs, medicine.

You...you...your dumb government here is not...uh any government that you be....uh
proud or brag about it anymore.

(068) E: My God! Police in.... my aunts and uncles used to tell us about the police in.... in her
neighborhood--is like God in earth! He knows every person, he's very polite, he...he
would greet you before you even say, "Hi, officer!" You need help, he's there. Two
people dispute and argue... whatever, he will settle the problem, and if you don't
listen to him.... you...you better see...don't see him in court, because he's gonna be on
your case in court, and the judge... will be two times on your case. And, now if the
police doesn't....uh won't be more crook than uh....than the other
person....uh...Huh!!...I...I [snort/chuckle] don't know what's going on anymore. I
don't know what's going on. [short pause]

(076) E: Yeah, it...that would change your...your person, your personality. Uh, you...would change
you as a person....uh... you have feeling for....for others. You...you should feel and
think of others... and you change your personality completely from uh....from being uh.... a human to being a...just dry, like a wall--don't care anymore, losing sensitivity.
[pause]...I can't be involved anymore... with other uh... people. I can't be involved
with any friend. There is no friend that you can rely on anymore. My God! I got it
uh....uh....in....on my behind from friends in here I thought of them.... they are, I said,
"Thank God, I don't have any family in this country--no brothers, nobody--I'm
building up, and I have a friends around here--friends that I been with them 4, 5, 6
years and 10 years--they turned on me." I can't...you can't trust... much anymore.
[passage spoken very fast]

(089) E: [speaks slower, more hushed] Uh.....yeah, there ain't much left of...of my life, that I can build
on my....on my own to do....uh something, or not to do something.... just gonna retire
and...and now you lead the way, you and your brother, you gonna take over, and I
hope... you would achieve what I missed..... twice as much, and you go....uh
hundreds of times further than what I went in my life. And, I hope you be
successful. [short pause] And, I'm sure you will, because you have the intention...
you have the quality... you good people.[pause]...
(098) E: Believe me, Ingrid, uh...a person... when he build... his personality, he builds with it.... attitude, character, manner.... behavior.... meaning. He would fill himself with all kind..... Now, you have to put it this way. You don't buy something, because you don't want it. You buy it because you want it. You don't eat something you don't like. You eat something because you like. And, this is what I mean. You look around... you think of it, and you... form your personality. You form what you are, ....because you thought of it, ...you like it, .... and you study it, and you think, "This is... the way I should be, I suppose I...I should be,... and I wanted to be." And, you work on it because you want it. You were agreed to that.... you were convinced because.... your brain... thought...thought that over, and over, and over.... either from practice, or theory, or... from happening before you, you saw that that this is the right way. And, you... guide yourself to be....uh to take that route, that...that way, and not the other.

(116) E: Why do you have to change? Just because your neighbor changed? Or...or the...the society is changing uh... towards other, but don't....don't think if the society is changing, they are right. Look at the society now, and the television, and all those. They changing for the worst... and they were seeing themselves they changing for the worst, but that's where the money is, and the business is. They don't...didn't care. Now they waking up. I been saying that for years, and years, and saying, "Where is the family value? Where is when...when the parents raise their...their kids? They raise them in the behavior that what God wanted them to be... in a decent way, an honest way, to feel proud with decency and dignity and pride. Where are they? We are losing ground. 80, 90% of this society now moved to the left, completely.... out of the system.... that it was build years, and years.... and millions of years. Just because that's what it is, I have to change?! No, I don't change with the flow. I don't change... I don't eat because my...my neighbor like that food, or he wanted that, and I have to eat, or...or he think this way, I have to think the same way, or dress this way, I have to...... They like red, I like blue. And, they want to do this, I don't like to do it, I do something else. So, don't change your...as a person what you are, just.... to please other people. That could put you sometimes on the odd....with the odd, I mean, in the...the... questionable chair, being questioned, and...and trialed.... this way--why you are out... of the... right stream what's going on....what's going on in the...the society. Don't care! Don't change it! Why don't they have to change, that you have to change? I don't care. This is how I am. When I was built this way, it was the right way, ....and we were convi...convinced this is the right way, now I am not going to change it! I don't care how modern... things they want to be. Modern is...is just false. The modern... modernity and what's going on, all those balones is nothing but just a show-off and false. It's nothing with base in it. It's changeable. Every year change to a different frequency, [begins speaking very softly] and I'm not willing to listen to a different c...frequency every time, different....uh frequency. I don't care.

(148) E: [speaks normally again] I'm satisfied of what I am. And, as I said before, I may not have achieved... much.... --this is how much my...my luck was, and I run out of luck. And.... this is how much God wanted to give me.... and I believe in God. I believe in one person. I don't care to your belief what you want to call Him, but I believe there is something much more powerful than I am.... much... tougher than I am.

And, he's able... to give me misery... and good things, luck and bad luck, and he can take me... anytime. And, if I am...don't care for...for that power, and I don't believe in it, how come when my time comes, I can't hold myself and I go...[snaps fingers] like nothing? How come I can't hold myself when I want to go to sleep? And, that
person that he makes me go to sleep, and make me wake up on time, when I had enough sleep... to wake up... every day, and make that sun comes up and go down, up and down, the whole world moving.

(163) E: There is a power behind that... a respected power. you can call him anything you want--the word of naming things isn't what it is, it's just... for identification... to identify that person from that person, that thing from that thing. People call Him in Arabic "Allah," and in French, they call Him "Dieu," and in English, they call Him, "God." [begins speaking rapidly] Who...who...who cares? If they didn't in...in English... if they did not get to a conclusion to give him the word "God," they gave him the word uh..."shit" and instead of "shit" they gave the word "Shit" instead "God." Would that make any difference? Would that made God bad... for nothing, and made the shit... the blessing? It's not the words, it's not the identification. It's that power... behind the life and the living... human being. That's the creation... you call it. And, I thank Him. I didn't give him anything. He's given me pleasure, life, good family, gave me wealth..... and he didn't take me early enough. He took some people with the age of 10, and 20, and 30, I'm on....I'm 60 years old and I'm still around... still kicking, thanks to Him. If I'm still having some gas to...to go. That's....that's how much he gave me. What did I give him? Look at the people in here.... [speaks with a disgusted tone] which it makes you sick whole day... they don't say a word, one sentence, without saying "God damned it!" I mean, this is the respect, this is the thought of God? My God! We say in Arabic, "My God" million times eh...uh...uh a minute, but we don't say it in this way. We say it with... calling on him... for his blessing, for his help. When we say in Ar...we say in Arabic, "Oh, Jesus," and here when they say Jesus mean...mean...they mean insult, they mean to curse, they mean... God knows! And when we say "Jesus"... my people, they mean Jesus, and they calling on Him... to bless him, to give him luck, to.... defend or whatever. And, when we say, "Oh, God! Oh, God, please," we saying "Oh, God, please"--we begging Him. Here they say, "God damned it!" I can't believe this! And when we say in Arabic the, "God damned it!," we don't say it in this way, the "God damned it." We say, "God damn," in other words, that person, that thing, or whatever. We ask Him to damn... that person or that thing... or that bad luck. This is what we say. We don't talk on God "God damned it!" "God damned Him," In other words. What's damned God? Who...who has the.... I couldn't understand how they have the...the intention, the...the sense to say... to damn God.

(201) E: [pause] Can't believe it! Be walking on the streets many times, and I see people, they call their...their children, "Come back here! Come here!" "Oh, go drop dead!!!" Oh, my God, here I say it again, I say "Oh, my God!!"--I'm pledged to him. I would say that to my mother in Lebanon.... I wouldn't have one inch in my body left without being kicked on it and hit. To tell my mother "Drop dead!" I never remember once in my life I have dared to say that. Tell their mother "Drop dead?!" Is that the...the price they paying for raising him? for bringing him to...to life? Suffered nine months... of him. Changing his diapers, and smelling... wake up at night, for two years waking every night for his screaming... and his... wetting pants to change..... Is that the price you pay for a mother that spend half her life... taking care of...? that goes from the parents themselves, that when they were raised, they were raised this way. And, I never been raised in this way, Ingrid. I was raised in the tough way... to respect my... God, my parents, ...family, ...each other, ....the neighbors. [pause].

(220) E: I don't know. [pause]...I do... agree in this country... here... that religion and...and politics should never mix. The truth, the right, but to tell you how your government has a double stand. They have the right, when they open the Parliament and they open the
Senate to have... they paying fortune for one guy, a so-called priest, (?) or whatever in there, to come... and open the ceremony with... with prayer, but you cannot pray in school [animated voice]. Why you cannot pray in school? Why you are depriving me... from praying... before I start my ceremony or whatever it is in school. Just give 1 minute, or 2 minute to everybody silent. The silence goes to everybody what his... he believes or she believes to their religion, their religion and to... whatever they believe on. Give them the chance that minute... to think of it..., and that what is missing from the society, to bring back.... those kids... to the straight, to the mainstream, to let them understand... what is their duty—to be grateful and thankful and think... of God giving.... their... grace and life and... they used to give us morals... in school, and religion, ...and without that... you will never survive outside and behave, Ingrid, believe me. I don't care what religion you wanna follow, but religion is nothing, but a belief... and so far I haven't seen one religion... doesn't have any good beliefs, except those cults and whatever— that's something else I don't wanna even discuss it, I don't wanna even think of it [spoken with disgusted tone]... But, whether the Moslem or Christian.... or..... Jew, or whatever. There ain't one religion without... a good belief in. What's wrong with that? Let everybody... follow any religion he wants... as long as he thinks well, straight, honest. [pause]...Huh...

(252) E: Can't believe these creeps because few guys there they wanted uh... their way in, now they are forcing the Boy's... Scout to take the word God. I mean, it's that how far went? What's going to hurt? I mean, is that how far went to be ungrateful.....? To be in these attitude, in... in this, and forcing everybody,... you want to believe that there is no God, that's your belief, it's your problem. But, don't force it on... somebody else. Now, whether it... it... somebody be pleased or not, that's their problem. I'm talking in general idea, in general principle. Now, one person does not believe in God, and he doesn't want to believe in God, he is forcing on the rest of the Ba... Boy Scouts... not to believe in God, or mention God.

(263) I: They didn't win.

(264) E: They didn't win, fine, but... I'm telling you about the ideas... about the ideas. Now, I'm not the... a trying to... to be a.... miserable in this way, and uh... uh neglect the women's right, or the Black... right. I'm not saying that the women, she's not worth anything, or not worth as a man is worth. [pause]... I'm not saying that... but there is... too many things in... in... in this country, they took it, [hits table with each point he makes] they build on it, and they fouled it up. Now, you had two things—you had the Russian.... you don't have any free... freedom, you have in this country too much freedom. And, once you... you have too much freedom... it's unlimited. You open the door to... to the sky... to the open sky, and never have any end.... never have any base anymore, never have any law, or any... any border, and you call it freedom—that means you can do anything—freedom. No! It has to have a limit! I'm not sign... saying to deprive... of a human being his own personal... freedom... of life and living, but there is so many things has to have a limit. I'm not saying that a Black... person, he's not a human being, and he shouldn't be treated well. But, I... in my book, no one deserve to be treated well or respected, or be loved, whether he's black or white, unless he earn it. I respect Black if he do... if he wants to... behave as a decent Black he's... decent human being... then he respect... I respect him and he deserve the respect, the standard of a human being. The other, he is not... to be respected, as a Black, the one, the one that he went to school... he behaved well, he's honest, he's killing himself to be... become somebody to join with one(???) that you call him a "Nigger." That's why they call him a nigger. And, some of them they don't even deserve to be a nigger. He want to be respected..... act... and behave like
250  a human being. Like those other Blacks, they earned it, and they are in the standard of society. And, that goes for the White. I don't... until now I have not... found... a word... to call a White that he doesn't deserve to be a human being. The others, they may have found the word nigger, if they wanted to... but I haven't even found a word for some of those Whites... they don't even deserve to be a nigger. They don't even deserve to be a pig! Those guys here, that they... found a word for them they call them "redneck"—they don't even deserve to be a redneck! They need 500 hundred years to become a redneck! They need 500 years to become a pig, or a jackass, if you want! And you want me to respect them as a human being, just because he's white??! No way!

260  (311) E: This is where... the...thing went out and fell apart... right away they scream for discrimination. A decent White, he's fighting for the Black. She... he should fight for the Black that he deserve [raps table], ..., and those White...uh those Black... do not need anybody to fight for them. They fought for themselves, and they became where they are. Whoever... is left is those crap from the White and Black they are making the misery, the robbery, the killing, and everything, and you want me to give them the same respect? the same adjustment? just... because he is Black and minority? Or this person because he's white "Oh, Bro."—he's your brother? No! He's not my damned brother. A white, miserable, filthy, bastard! He should be rotting in jail!! [short pause]

270  (325) E: Long time ago... we used to respect... a woman, because, in general, they used to behave... as a I...like a lady. Now, if I speak against women, .....it doesn't mean I'm speaking against women in general, and everybody just because she is a woman—she's terrible, she's bad. No! I have a wife. I had a mother, God rest her soul, and I don't think I have seen any more decent than she was, and thank her million times for what she made of me... and I have a daughter, which I am more than proud.... I don't think I am proud enough! I should be maybe... uh God knows how much... more proud of what I have. So, I'm not speaking against women as a feminine, because she is feminine. A few of those creeps, they leading and taking advantage... of the women and making... and... and giving bad...rap... for the feminine. We used to respect... the women before, because... they were...acting, and behaving like a ladies. And, you not asking me just to respect a woman just because she's a woman. A broad on the street—she's a woman, and I'm not going to respect her as much as I respect my wife... or my daughter... or my mother. I do not respect a woman just because she's a woman—the hell with her! And, any woman wants me to respect her... she has to deserve it. She has to earn it... This is how I believe. I... respect... a woman... for what she is, ...and how much she deserve to be respected. As for the equal, ...I don't go 100% for the equal... because there is something in the women is missing... and something in the man it is missing, or more. Now, you cannot give the women... truck, let's say, truck driver woman. Cannot give her the same thing as a man..., if you want to load the truck. It takes a man... let's say 5 hours, he loads his own truck. If a woman, she's not built... for that kind... and... she wants an equal right... it would take her about 10, or 12 hours to fill up the truck. And, you want me to give her the same equality...equal to the man—the same pay? No! If a woman... does... the same thing as the man is doing with... hundreds percent, she deserves one hundred percent... the job, the equality, and the pay.

(368) E: I remember... UPS when I worked... for [Medical Supply Company X]... they used to send a woman—she doesn't even weigh a 100 pounds, she wants to carry boxes. Many times I had to help her—"No! No! No! That's my job!" "I know it's your job, but I want the goods out of my place." I used... even la...leave... my...my job, and my place, everything, to come feel pity...sympathy for her, give her a hand to let these

300
boxes goes on her truck. you can't ask from a woman... there is a man in her size and he doesn't deserve either to be, just because he's a man! No! I don't...I don't agree with that either. I mean, I am not going.... if I am the boss, I am not going to give her... the same pay, just because she's driving the truck.... the same as these man... built with 250 pounds, he can lift up the truck, and he can pick up 20 box within 2 minutes, put them in his truck and he's out of the place, while she needs half an hour an hour to... pick them up. That, I don't agree with equal women to men...

(385) I: Yeah(????), I'm asking [laugh] you about your life, this is not your life...

(386) E: Yeah, I understand... we start with one thing, and go...go further with... Now, I know,
for...for my.... person now, what I'm trying to tell you about my beliefs and my....my self, and... we widen, we went... a little bit further and wider. But, this is...this is my belief and my person, my personality. This is how I believe in life... and...and the world and everybody. [pause].

(392) E: I'm not... trying uh.... to be one-sided, but I am not going to get out from the center, I'm not going to go to the right or to the left. I'm not going from the center. This is how....how I am built.... I been raised all my life, and this is my belief, ....and....uh I wish I can do better, and go further, but I don't see anymore luck... for me. [pause] And, I don't know.... for you what you expect from me, that... more than what you see. You lived... that many years having a man.... next to you... called "Daddy"--I don't know what else you expect from me, and.....uh I be glad if... if I am, in some way.... uh... didn't fill up.... to your uh...'imagination, to your uh...hope, uh...let me know.

(411) I: That's not what I was getting at. I just wanted to get back to the interview.

(412) E: Yeah, I know! Okay, fine, but tell me what else uh...you...you want me to know from....uh you want to know about me.

(414) I: (?????) I wanted to know about your life, that's all...

(415) E: I'm trying to dig more, and I don't see anything. I mean....

(416) I: No, that's fine, I just... it's just we got way off the subject, that's all.

(419) E: Okay, put them off the subject... when... you passing through. If you wanna... uh go
to(through???) my beliefs, and my personality beliefs, this is what I believe. All what I have said.... other than that I don't have much to say. I don't....I....I....I had so many.... uh surprises in my life, I'm not... saying no, but.... It's very hard to dig them... uh it's been years, and years gone. [short pause]..... Maybe, sometimes with a question.... uh.... it may strike a...a memory back, or....or some.... event, some instance of things happen. It could strike a.... back memory. [pause].... Unexpectedly, that's...uh how much I....I know about myself. I don't know what to say more...

(436) I: I didn't mean to...to shut you off [chuckle], or anything...

(437) E: [interrupts] No! You not...you didn't...it's not that, it's not that you shut me off, but.... I'm trying to think, to... uh... even squeezin' and draggin' myself to give you more, but....you...

(439) I: [interrupts with some simultaneous speaking] Whatever you want... whatever you want.... whenever you feel like your done, you done. I just didn't want you to feel like I told you you're done....

(441) E: [interrupts and speaks simultaneously with last sentence of I:]...There...there...it is...is the problem, I spoke for God knows how long and the question is one...one...one question and it...was just a few words as a question. "Tell me about..."....It's not the question that the.....the.....the interrogation is...uh going on and on, and there is always different question, and that, as I say, that will strike... a memory again, or strike another memory. There is so many memories been dead in my...uh back... uh mind,
uh... there is no subject or no discussion for it to remind you. You know from
yourself sometimes...uh...if there is no subject for it....
(451) I: [interrupts, speaking simultaneously with last few words]... And, I didn't want to ask
questions... that was the point. I wanted you to come up with what you wanted...
otherwise it would be... my questions would be telling your story, you know...
(455) E: No! You don't have to...uh...to tell with your... question, uh... still you can tell, "Tell me
about this, or this, or that." So,....and this I can uh...
(457) I: [interrupts]... Yeah, ther...you'd only be telling me the things that I think are important, and
we're two different people. So, I mean, you're...if you feel like you're done, then
that's fine, I'm not trying to...
(460) E: [interrupts] Yeah, so far I think... uh that's how much I remember.
(462) I: Okay, then that's fine. That's perfectly fine... no right or wrong way to do it. We were just
going off the subject.
(464) I: [simultaneously]...Maybe I shouldn't have said something...
(464) E: [interrupts]. It's a funny...it's a funny life... Now I think of myself... I'm on the...the edge of
being striked any time—who knows. Uh...it's true, some people dies at 40, some
people live to a hundred, or whatever, and... a man like me, hitting...hit the 60s
now... uh, is being threatened and...and how much uh... further he can go, who
knows? It's up to God—how much he wants to give me. And, now uh...... all I feel
myself—I'm lonely. I feel lonely, and I'm finished.... like person... was...uh in a big
position somewhere, and he got retired, and he's doing nothing but sitting on the
shore... fishing. And, me, too. I could say that is my... future, my personality, my
person, my... aims—everything is ended, and I'm sitting now, and.... uh who knows?
Every time I get up in the morning, I thank God... that I'm awake, and who knows
how long I'm gonna go? I just lost two brothers with....uh within eight months, uh...
between each other less than a year. And, uh... nobody left from my family and I'm
the only one around. I lost... through the war... lots of my friends—hundreds and
thousands of my friends disappear. My neighborhood vanished. My brother told
me that my neighborhood—all what...what I know 90, 95% of them they're dead,
whether killed of died... and they gone.
(494) E: And, uh... that react on me so much uh...recently, and... I sit by myself in the morning when I
get up... so smashed at night, not sleeping well, put breakfast to eat—takes me half an
hour to chew. I have no feeling for life anymore..... no...no taste. I have no taste
anymore in my...in my mouth or in my...in my body for...for anything—for life or for
the enjoyment, or anything. I'm just disgusted... and I figured and I see that... my
personality ended. My mission ended now, and,... I'm just counting days. [short
pause] Whenever it comes now, it comes, now. Who knows? I don't have any aims
anymore. I don't think I can go any further, or do anything, now. My role ended,
...and, that's it.
(512) E: I don't know what...what I can... make out of myself anymore. I don't see anything because I
have the feeling anymore for anything. I got disappointed with so many things, and
there ain't much outside.... uh in this world, but would... roaming around and... bad
economy, and...and this is how I figure. It's not much of me... anymore. You wanna
tell me that's a bad attitude... if you go through what I went through in my life, and
what I'm getting hit, and what disappointments I'm going is...ain't much left to...to
think about, to make out of it. There is lotta competition outside—they... take it
away from you before you even...uh walked out that...that door. And, this is why I
come... nobody believe it, tell me, "That's a bad attitude." Nothing much left of my
life, ...but be thankful to God and... for what I have left, and... to sit and enjoy it with
my family. That's why I don't have any feeling left. Your mother wanted to go to
the movie, or... to go socialize here(???), but I don't have any feeling for any
so...uh...uh...social life with anybody anymore. I don't enjoy it. I got so much...so
many hits, so many disappointments from my best... people--from my neighbors.
Uh... I don't...I don't enjoy anything anymore. I don't see anything outside
anymore... would nourish...nourish my personality, my person... as a human being,
and what I used to be.... to make out of it, to take advantage of it and...and enjoy it.

(545) E: This is why I don't have much to give you....uh, anymore. This is....I'm...just...dry uh....
(547) I: You gave me a lot already....
(548) E: I don't know what to say anymore...

(549) I: You gave me a lot...
(549) E: And as I said, uh...from my youth, there is... a hell of a lot.... left. But.... it's in my back
brain... sitting, stored in there, needs to be stirred. Yeah [SNIFF OR SIGH]... need
to have some.... occasion, or something happen to strike it out and bring it...

(557) I: [interrupts] I might.... I might come back and ask questions later, I just have to let this sit for a
while.

(558) E: Uhm-huh... anytime don't...don't worry about it, ...but try to understand one thing from me... I
always say what I mean, and I mean what I say. And, that I'm not going to change it.
I'm not going to have two face. I'm not build this way to have two face,...and tell
you, "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. You're a nice person," if you not. "Oh, yeah, yeah, I
love you," if I don't. I'm not gonna to do that, and I never did it...done it in my life.
And, when I don't want to give compliments, I shut up.... than give a false one,
because that degrades me. That puts me down. That makes me a liar. So, uh....
always believe in me... what I say, that's it, and nothing else. That you have to make
your friends believe... on you this way... that you mean what you say, and what you
say, you mean it. And, once you say something, stood up for it, and fight for it...
regardless what it is. You were convinced... that this is the right way, the best way,
and don't let people change your mind. This is how I am. I don't change my mind
so easily.... just because... so-and-so said that, or....he knows more, or he's.... more
philosophy.....has more philosophy than me. I don't...you not gonna to convince me.
I have to convince myself. This is how I build on my personality. I have to believe
in myself first. I have to know... myself.... first. And, if I agree with other people
just because they said so, that is less personality, less... knowledge of mine. I do
agree with other people and believe.... when I don't know something, and I want...
their help, I call on their help.... to explain to me.... about something I'm ignorant
about.... like an engine mechanic, electric, something.... and I... pledge on
something, or I'm taxed, or.... medicine--something I don't know. And, this is one
ingthing to know about me.... uh, Ingrid, this is how I am. If I... don't know, I don't go
ahead and start talking and put....uh...stuff... uh...and...uh....and sauce and all kind of
things on things... and...or icing to make it look nice and give you some kind of
baloney to show you how knowledgeable I am, and how... good... oh, my God, I am
so...somebody special. I admit. I would say, "I don't know, and I'm sorry. Ask
somebody else." Because you and everybody that the person that he think himself
or herself that they are the smartest on earth... they still have something they don't
know. So, doesn't mean... it's shame, or bad. So, this is how I formed myself this
way. If I don't know, I ask, but I don't give a stupid answer... to get you off my
back. And, this is... what I would expect anybody to be this way... and, when...
everybody will... will take this type of...of attitude, then the lies,...and the scams,
...and the double... face, and double... the...the things that it isn't true, will diminish.
(638) E: The more you cut on double stand, double face, double talk, .... the untrue things, the better is for society. And, I live comfortable with myself... that... uh I never gave anybody chance to say, "Ah, Bou-Saada said that, ok yeah... he talks a lot, a lotta bullshit, lotta baloney, and... that's not true, he creates things [spoken with a funny voice]." They cannot say that. No one can say that, and if... anyone will say this, ...he himself, or she are liars, ...stupid, ...and... people they should not be respected [thumbs table with "liars," "stupid," "people," "not," "respected"], because they have no attitude, no manner, no character. They are liars. [TAPE ENDS AT 659]

[NOTE: SIDE B OF THIS TAPE HAD TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES, SO THE NEXT PART OF THE TRANSCRIPT IS PERFORMANCE 1, TAPE 3, SIDE A, WHICH IS THE LAST TAPE OF PERFORMANCE 1].
LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 1, TAPE 3, SIDE A

(002) E: [After we realized much of our conversation had been lost, Edmond tried to pick up a thread about people he does not trust] Yeah,...I know... I had some people, they do that. They like to go and brag, and they... tell all kind of baloneyes and... it's not true... just to... show off and make themselves... very popular. That's not a... thing that you would like to brag about yourself will be that (????). This is...this is a bad habit, a bad personality. These...this kind of people I don't trust, and I don't like to be... uh... called their friends. And they say something,...and they mean something else. That... there is nobody can do that about...say that about me, and if they say something, they be liars, not me,...because, as we say, "Nothing... will disappear [pause]... if it is true. Only the truth... is gonna show, and nothing will be hidden or disappear, but the things that never happen."

(014) E: Person... should build in himself... a principle... a base... that he would follow... in his life... that he has... would become like a routine with him. Once you try something and it works, why change it? [pause]

(020) E: Yeah, I have... something I inherited from my parents... I build it in myself... my personality. And, when...yeah when... when I grow up, I... I built on it. I... I may have changed something, but uh...nothing drastic, but I talk about...change it...to my way... to my ease [passage is confusing]. But uh... the basic fundamental is still there. You can build on them, but you can't change them. And, this is what I'm proud of... of me... of myself. I have some good... habits... got it from my parents. I learned it... with experience in life.

(030) E: You live in Lebanon, believe me, most the people lives on base...on proverbs, and examples... and once you try something and it works, and it's... and it's working, why change it? It says in English--American people have a saying--they says, "If it ain't broken, why...why change it, why...why...why fix it?" [pause]

(036) E: There is a lot of things... found in my life, happened to me... made me a better person, built up... my personality stronger, specially when I worked at the airlines and I used to fly. Those pilots, they're trained, and they have a principle to follow... in their routine flight, like they have to check... list... and, uh if the copilot is reading to the captain... a list, the pilot has to demonstrate... like what he... uh learned. He can't play big shot, even if he is a check... training pilot or chief pilot, he cannot cut... short. He has to do the same as the small guys, ... and when they reading the list, if they tell him, let's say, "Flaps," and he... he can't just look up and see that the light is off and tell him, "It's off." He has to put his finger on... and tell him, "Off." That tells you already... that he... already checked on it... by indicating with his finger... that he did not miss... he didn't look for something else, and took it... that this is the... the light for the flaps. he indicate on it. He put his fingers on it. Tells him "autopilot," he has to put his finger... hand on the autopilot and tell him, "Off." In other words, he indicated, he responded to his question on the... autopilot, and he put his finger by it, indicating what he's answering.

(056) E: So, when I saw those things like that... I listen, and I say, "My God! You can't be one day like this, another day changed." You have to have principles in your life. You have to have something... that you do and you don't shortcut. You have to do it. It built in me a better... personality. And, believe me, uh... and when I see... a captain and... with his copilot, they buddy-buddy, they go inside in uh... in the evening to the bar, a restaurant, they drink and have su... uh best lunch... uh... best supper, and... you look at them--unseparable. They... they really good buddy-buddy, but once they are on board the airplane flying together, they go through each other's... uh throat,
because there is no shortcut, there is no negligence... no negligence at all in there. You have to do what you have to do. And... those uh... you know wh... with time goes on and every time -- all you need is one incident... and it change your life. Gives you... gives you different uh... personality, different feeling, different thinking. That... that really... helped me so much, uh... that flying with the... uh with the crew... at the airlines. They built on me a better... style of life. [pause]...

(075) E: Yeah, when I used to be... I suffered a lot... uh tell you, when... when I was in my... under my... teens. And even under my twenties, my 20s... 20s. I suffered a lot... a lot. This is... was the Second World War... my parents suffered a big loss... lost the... their business and money and everything. Not much you could... you can buy in Lebanon at that time, ... because we were under... France, as I said before, under France mandate. And France themselves, they were in the war... they not... they weren't in a good position themselves. They need the goods and things like that, so they not gonna ship it for us. They need it themselves, so... I had suffered. I didn't have a good life. I didn't have a good youth in my life... like everybody has all kinds of toys, all kinds of things... around them. I wasn't surrounding with that. I never had a toy... and even when I grow a little bit, I never had the expense... uh that I can go and come, and do whatever I please... in my life. I had very rough time. My father died-- I was 12 years, 13 years old-- suffered the last... uh age of his life, being diabetes... with diabetes. And, it hit his heart, damaged his heart for the last 5, 6 years he was in a miserable, terrible shape. [pause]

(096) E: Yeah, ... once you build w... you build in yourself, in your personality something... useful, something you like, something... respected, respectfully... uh by... something... you can really count on it and brag about it, something good for you. You build it in your personality. You don't change those... just because the world... outside is changing, the society changed, ... your friends changed. You were convinced... for you, you took it as a habit, or as part of your life, and your personality, that kind of... style. You don't change it! Those they don't change with the style. Those are the fundamental... fundamental... things in life, in way of a person... feel and live. You don't change them... every day. They are there to stay. You earned them, you liked them, ... you liked that way, because you felt... that you are a better person... by using these... these habits, or this... understanding. Why change them just because somebody else... he lives in different style? God-- that's why God gave each one... an individual brain-- to use his own brain, not to have that brain conduct with somebody else. That I call it brainwashed when somebody else's brain is going to conduct my own brain. Why should I... change? There is a lot of things unchangeable in life-- once... you earn them, once you... you use them, is yours to live with, ... is yours to stay with. [pause]

(122) E: Life is full of surprises. [pause]... And, every time... you gonna see... that... pressure is building on you... top change your style... you can change... dealing with society, but you don't... you shouldn't change... your own style. Dealing is something, and acting... about something is something else. [pause]... Never change your style... because of society. That's nothing like a model... you have to go with the year, every year is a different model, you use it differently... different... model-- no. Your personality is there. It is from s... there... and it should never change. I'm having... [coughs]... sorry! I'm having rough time... sometimes, because my... personality clash with others, and as I said, they have different style. Must that(???)... their style-- they have their own, I have mine. I don't live with them. I don't live for them. They don't live for me. So, each other... each one has his own. So, ... I... I don't change easily... easily, and... I'm not intend to. I learned a lot from my
parents.... habits, that... should stay... with me as long as I live. I can... build on it..., but... but like I said, the fundamental should never changed, basic fundamental should never change.

(152) E: There is a lot of things that... comes from... grandparents to parents, from parents to children, from children to grandchildren--should go on and on. They shouldn't be.... like a... life shouldn't be like a suit..... changeable every day. You havin....you put on you different face. You have one face, and never change it, never alterate your face. I don't...I never put on my face another face, as long as I live. I never imitate anybody else. I looked somebody....on somebody else, and I avoid.... what I should avoid, and I pick up in the rest what I...I didn't avoid, made me f...feel a better personal...better...better person, like I had a better personality(????) then, because...because... uh...what I avoid, I avoid it, and I don't have to.....to imitate or...or do...what somebody else(????) And, ...what is left, if I agreed with it, I have the same. Why should I change? Nothing... to change in there, I figure. The things that you agree with, that's what you have. You agree to it, because that's what you are, that's what you...you feel, that's what you do, usually. And, the things that... you don't agree with, this is the...the... there is(????) my point--you have to avoid. That means they're not in your.... person...personality, and uh...you don't have to adopt...adopt them. This is what I mean don't have... put another face on top of my face.

(180) E: God create the world and create too many people, ...and create to everyone... individual brain, individual personality, individual......uh attitude and way and style for him to...from her...for her... to live. So, that's...that is given... to you, your right and it's given to you by God. Why should you change? for somebody else wanted you to change. That means you're not satisfied with you, with yourself, with your personality if you keep changing. You don't have a personality... then it doesn't matter what you change, because you don't have anymore personality. You keep changing. That's not your own. You adopted somebody else's personality. [pause]...

(193) E: Yeah, I had rough time to build what I have on me.... Thank God I'm... pleased and satisfied. And, if I ever gone one day, no one can.... quote me on something I said bad or... I did bad, or think of me in a .... such a shameless... way. Wherever I...I'm gone, I gone, and where I....I lived, I left my marks in there.... good marks--to be remembered. And, I can bet you... for 24(????)....for 40 million... many people.... had adopted... many of my style, ...of my belief, of my behavior than I adopted of theirs. [long pause]...

(211) E: I don't know what to say anymore. I keep repeating myself, but I have a lot.... what(????) needs to be struck, every once in a while... to be struck and stirred, but as long as sitting in my back mind lying in there dead.... I...I may think of it.... some other time, probably.

(218) E: Yeah, I was trying... to pass to you some of my... beliefs, my habit which I earned it from my parents... and it's given to them by theirs, ...or something that happen to me....uh in life... and I learned from it. Try to help you avoiding the costs, or disaster, or problem, or headache.

(225) E: You know, we have a saying in Lebanon, and it is true. They say, "Long time ago, the advice used to cost a camel, used to cost a person a camel, now it is free and nobody wants it." And, it is true. You try to give somebody else an advice, and they get... through your throat. They will be insult...you...you... they get mad at you, and that you teaching them, you interfering with their pers...personal li...life, their civil rights. Uh...people they translate things... too much in the wrong... uh dictionary. Whether this person mean it or not, doesn't make any difference. They...they reject you.
They reject your... opinion, your advice, even for their own benefit, just because it came from you. And that shows... to me, that... uh shows and indicate that uh... this person doesn't have a personality... that person doesn't have any... uh... he has an inferiority in his person, in his personality, I mean. He has a big inferiority. He's... he's... uh... uh he feels like... uh he was undermined... by... uh advising him like that. That's... that's a bad indicator... a bad uh indication about that person. He doesn't have a personality, it means. If you have a personality--strong personality--nothing would uh... would react or shake your personality. If anybody advise you, or tell you something, or... or preach you on something, it shouldn't shake your personality if you have a... a very strong personality. You... you shouldn't feel inferior to... to him because you don't consider him... uh... a better person than you or has a better personality than you. So, why... why should you shake or feel bad about it? Take it with grace... and be glad that... it may strike you, uh... for something better. It may avoid you one day from being... in trouble. It may help you... to... to achieve your goals one day. Take it, and "Thank you!" and big deal--so? Now, nobody wants free advice. We... we used to give them in Lebanon--my parents and before them, they used to give advice left and right to people. People take them with grace and being happy and grateful... to that. It saves them a hell of a trouble or headache, ... or accidents, ... or... or uh cost, ...lotta expense been saved... by giving free advice. I don't... I don't care if anybody give me an advice. I be very happy, very grateful to that and take it with grace. Who knows? It can be useful to me one of these days... even if it's bad. You, if you think you have a good personality, good person, very much intelligent, better than... --you turn it to your benefit, you turn it around, ... and profit from it. So, that tells you how... small-minded other people are sometimes. Uh... that's why I... uh I'm trying to tell you, I... I don't like to... to have any more friends. I don't interfere with anybody. I don't bother with anybody. It's nothing but a headache. I don't want... even bother with my own people--if I want to say that uh American people has a different mentality--my own people now changed. They changing. The war change them a lot, uh... and now... they right away, the moment you open your mouth, uh... it has to show whether you are with them or against them, whether you are with Moslem or with Christian, or wi... if you are against both... of them, or... So, uh... people don't... don't uh... socialize anymore on a friendship... socialize on... There is a benefit... fine, there is no benefit, dash off. Turn your back and leave before you get hurt. You walk outside your house, you in trouble. You looking for trouble. Become... life very... sensitive. Life become very... dangerous outside. Once you... leave your house, you have to count yourself that... you are looking for trouble. Any moment, any time, you gonna have... something to argue about it, to fight with... or you skip a... an accident from some drunk driver, or somebody shooting... Life become very, very difficult...

(296) I: Can we please do this some other time? [MOM AND TAREK CAME IN WITH GROCERIES AND IT IS NOISY]

(297) E: Yeah, okay aihny [in Arabic, equivalent to "honey" or "dear"]. [TAPE TURNS OFF AT 297]
LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 2, TAPE 1, SIDE A

(001) I: Today is January the 2nd, 1994. This is the second performance of Edmond Bou-Saada's life story. [tape off] So, is there anything else that you want to tell me about...what we were talking about the other day? Can you tell me how you got to be who you are today?

(008) E: Well...I...I had lotta obstacles in my life, (muffled--so that I became of one mind????)...had lotta good opportunity...opportunity, and I missed it, but, uh...I wasn't too, too lucky in the sense....luck wasn't my friend all the time.... (pause)

(015) E: When I quit school, I quit it for so many reasons actually. Pressure...of my uncles and aunts was uh tremendous. If you fail in your exams, God help you--that's the end of the world...and when the test comes, you be shaky not to fail...your exam, and for that, for sure, I do fail my exam. And, uhm, finally got to me so much, and I start getting kind of little bit old like that in the age of six...seventeen, or so, I put in my head--that's it, I don't want to go anymore. There was a professional school I could have gone--agriculture, but in Lebanon, politics is everything and as I said, we were in the wrong side of...the...the party. We...we were in it--never won...that was a decent party for the good country actually. Well, didn't work either, so I gave up. I want a job. Friend of ours, he said, "Look, it's not a big deal," but, uh... later on things come up in front of you. He gave me that job--I told you about it--the St. Joseph, turned to be in charge of the plage [French for "beach"] and the...the dues, and the renting and everything. He was being cheated every year by thousands of...of dollars. Yeah, and I was decent and honest like him, gave him two times as much as I...he was expecting...in money. And then I started meeting other, different kind of people, and...that was the opening of my future...

(044) E: I came to this country...to become a pilot, and...changed my mind. Had a lot of struggle in here for a visa. I don't wanna break the law 'cause I know...nothing illegal is honest and can be awarded. So, uh...I struggled with them. Finally, I made it.

(051) E: You know, when you listen to your parents when you are a teenager, there is a lot of things bugs you 'cause you think you always know better and is not to your convenience...whatever they say is not to your convenience, because you want it different. You always want something different than what they preach you and what they tell you. But they always know the truth, and know...(your job?) and their duty as parents and what to do with you. Many times I never listened to them, but...as we say, always there is a back ear. When the parents nag you enough and repeat the things more than once, you have to figure...sooner or later, some of those repeats is gonna stick in your mind, and sometimes--would be very useful. I feel sorry I was young and dumb, I didn't listen for so many advice and so many good things my parents tried to...to teach me, to let me know, but uh...as I said it's the repetition of their advice and their nagging--once in a while, it's gonna hit. I always, when I'm in trouble, I try to review what I heard, what I know. And, you know, in Lebanon, we have lotta proverb and example and there is always right to those proverb. Most the time, I follow them, they can...be kind of helpful, very nice.

(075) E: As I said that before, I was short on money, because I don't like to do illegal things and funny ways of making money, so I had to suffer for it. I suffered the consequence, but I was happy about it this way because I'm not going to change my mind, and that's not the...the...the way I was raised, and I'm gonna make it in...the right way.

(082) E: People once they...after being short in money, they start making money, they go crazy and bananas. They start spending money left and right as there is no tomorrow. And they wanna buy everything they missed. They wanna...be ahead of everybody, and
they wanna show off, and they wanna, you know. And at the end they get a little bit...of a hit, would destroy all their dreams, then they start suffering and paying the consequences for that. To me, I said, "Forget it! I'm not gonna do that. I have to look for my future, not a band-aid, a temporary pleasure and forget about it."

Uhhh... I didn't do these crazy things. I calculated and balanced my budget, never spend more than I making, never borrowed if I can't pay back, never counted on plastic, always the right...color, the right money, that's the right (good thing???). So, I calculate my future and my...my budget, that's...this is the way it's supposed to be, the way it's got to be. My parents...had lotta money and land, and they got hit and lost everything. So, we suffered. And I figured I'm not gonna suffer anymore. I'm not going to let my kids suffer. And if I'm gonna establish a family, I'm not going to let them suffer. I want to be prepared and let them be in a good terms with life and have what they want.

(109) E: So your mother and I, we worked very hard. We never planned on going, like others they do, to nightclubs and just spend it on drinks and crazy things and baloney. We wanna have a drink, or we wanna have a good time, I used to go and buy the booze and buy the meat and buy everything, have friends and come here. It's still better, much nicer, much easier, cleaner--have all the good times than blow all your money in the nightclubs, that I'm (muffled...????). So this is...this way, I...I calculate and figured. You can be happy while you're young--fine, but what about when you get...you get old. What about your future? You have to build your future--that's when...where life starts...that's where life demand of you much more than when you are young.

And this is...this is very interesting, very important that

(129) E: the person use......we say, you know we say in Arabic, "Don't extend your feet further than your carpet,"--you...you suffer the...the cold. And this is true, this is what they mean by that. In other words, don't expend yourself, don't spend more than what you have, or what...what you can...you can get. And, you always have to figure for your future. (muffled: And...I counted that?...). I picture life is...sorry for that expression, is a little bit, uh...stinky. They say, "life is a barrel--half is shit, and half is honey. They both are yours, and depends where you wanna start--which side you open." When you want to open the honey while you still young, then you gonna suffer the rest when you get old or you gonna have the other and get over with it, and spend the rest of your life in a nice way, relaxed and happy. That's your choice. This is how we programmed, your mother and I, we planned for our future. Not to buy more than you can pay, plan for the future and our kids. Takes lotta planning to eliminate all these stupid unaccounted consequences. Yeah......

(154) E: We got...I got a job, and I was very thankful, very grateful to the people who helped me. When I was here there were many people around, but nobody wanted to help, nobody cared, nobody would have the feeling to say, "Hey look, those people are coming from...a war-torn country. They need some...some help," ...which I'm not looking for somebody to give me some charity or...or help me in a charity or in a charitable way, but to be little bit decent, honest, kind--back...back up. (muffled: Take away "oh...?????) that lousy foreigner, or whatever. Give me a chance--I didn't see that actually from many, many places, many times I haven't seen that--give me chance. Until...thank God turned to be a nice, decent human being and he gave your mother and I chance. We were happy and grateful to it...for it, and I was...way of being raised by our parents to be loyal, to be honest, to be decent, to recognize your friends and appreciate it if somebody does something good to you--don't just turn your back on...and sta...sta...stab these people in the back, just be grateful and thankful if they were (muffled...?????)...and they need help, or they need you for
whatever, just don't forget to be there for them, the same way they been there for you. So, uh...I pray for that guy the best...future for him and his family. They were nice and decent people.

(185) E: Yeah, I tell you....many people around me, they never wanted to give me the opportunity or the chance just because...they don't have the...I don't know what...but they don't have any feeling--they could...couldn't care less. And many people they have no...no sympathy and...toward their conscience and understand..."Hey, hey look, if I be doing this, or I be doing that, I could be hurting somebody's future, somebody's family, somebody's need." Those had never occurred to many of these people...they don...they don't care. They don't have any sensitivity. They're not raised this way. They had to earn, probably their penny in a hard way, so...they figure, "I earned it in the hard way, why should I be soft for somebody else?" Which, that...this is the wrong attitude, the...the...the wrong...muffled:??) . I don't see it this way. [phone rings, but he continues for a few moments] Is that being...being a Christian? Baloney, that's not the...the...[pauses, tape turns off]

(212) E: Yeah, you have to figure, there is two kinds of people. You have the kind of people that they suffered, they got hurt...or they know what they went through, and that teach them...a lesson...and a mark in their...in their mind, in their heart, and they don't like to see other people suffer the same way...give the same hard time. You have the other people that...they have...have no attitude. They didn't get raised in what they...they claim, "That's the Christian way...and we are Christian...." You don't see many people...uh...preach and do what they preach. "So, if I can't have mine, I don't care, I'm not gonna let anybody have it easy...they gonna suffer the same way as I did." See...see in their...in their mind and in their attitude, that kind of...hurt cause your...your life, your future, your family life, everything depend on that person whether he or she would say yes or no, and they are creeps. They don't have any...any feeling for humanity and to my book they don't deserve to be where they are. I kind of suffered a lot from so many of those people, (wouldn't help us through ???). Really, it hurts to see that they still exist. I could have had opportunity earlier, to do something about my life, but never the opportunity...never been given to me for many reason, of race or being foreigner. Sometimes people don't like each other from...coming from another state, coming from a foreign state is even worse.

(249) Well, I thank God anytime, a million times a day that I got what I got, actually more than I deserve. [pause] Life is not easy....and....with all my heart I'm ...trying to....to give my...my kids a better future, better than mine, because I know the value of life, that the rank that you have to be in and survive among other people....has to be very high, so I'm doing all my best for my kids...to achieve.....the best. I don't like that they suffer and miss the opportunities like....like mine. [pause] I have a beautiful country, nice people, but it changed a lot, the hand changed a lot in there--the government, everything start to change slowly, slowly, and uh...I never had the chance there because, as I said, my family were from the wrong party to be as...to advance to be....much better. That's why I came...[sigh] I came to the States.....and it's very hard in here. You have to always think, plan, work hard, watch yourself to keep your head above the water. And I don't think I can go any further than what I am.....with the advanced technology and culture, education. That's a different world for me. I believe what I am...I'm gonna stay what I am if I don't...even....lose ground, I hope not. But I don't see any...any more progress, any more (line????) for me to cross, go any further than what...where I am now. This....this is for the young generation.
(304) E: I have one advice for the young generation...that they don't care for the elderly, they never think of the elderly, but one of these days, they're gonna be old themselves, and I would like to see their faces, their feelings at that time. See how they're gonna be treated. And (while I???)...there was a big discussion now in Europe. They trying to...to put all together and do something about it, they said that the...the elderly generation is being neglected and unnecessary, and they are trying to...to have the new generation think twice that they gonna be there one day. And it's not everything the new generation anymore. Without the elderly the new generation wouldn't be anything. They were nothing and...they...they won't be anything. I'm from the elderly, and as I said, my mission is ended...that's how much...I have. [pause]

(337) E: I don't know, maybe I am too much pessimistic, but I don't think so. Just facing fact, reality. If you want to escape from the truth, you can translate it and call it anything what you want. The facts are there, you are there, and you can't escape. That would give me the image of being pessimistic. (muffled???)...can't change the world. [pause]

(354) E: I don't think there will...uh be too many people from my generation these days, these way they still exist. Even many of them is changing because the...the life is changing, the world is changing, they changing too--they want to survive. I'm kind of stubborn, bull-headed. I admit it, and I'm proud of it. It make somebody else mad and take that...uh in the wrong throat, and think that...no good to be that bull-headed. To me, I would say that is wrong....and no...not that many people can be that bull-headed and they right....because they think wrong. Bull-headed comes from if you think that you are right because you have discovered something, you know about it, you heard about it, and you have all the facts and this is the truth, and you stand up for what you believe, and what you think is right and the correct way to...believe it. Other people call it maybe bull-headed, either they change opinion...they would change opinion or....why should they. They want to call it bull-headed, then call it bull-headed. This is fact....that comes from the image, from the person himself whether he is changeable, flexible, or....straight, honest what...what he's supposed to do (be???). I believe myself I'm a...I'm bull-headed because I'm not changeable, I don't put ma...many faces, I don't carry many. The only face I believe in is mine, and I put that face in something which I believe in it. Certainly got to be the good quality, the correct uh...way, and I believe in it and I stubborn to back it up...to back up my belief.

(400) E: Why should I change? A person who change a lot has no opinion, and his opinion should not count, because when he change, he change based on somebody else fact. He doesn't have an opinion, he has no....no right to give opinion or to say....anything anymore because he's....he became an image of somebody else. I refuse to be....an image for other people. I'm created like everybody else...I have my own mind, my own dream(???) And why should I be changeable...change because somebody else has a more convincing way of....give me a sales talk. He has to change my life and my opinion? I don't do that too easy. [TAPE TURNS OFF AT 424]
LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 2, TAPE 1, SIDE B

(001) E: Yeah, I don't change so easily...I stubborn for what I believe on, because I believe that what I thought is the right way, the correct way. So, why should I...change my stand? Anybody would change too often, is just listen...listening to other people's opinion and be so much convinced and change....he doesn't have a personality. He doesn't have his own opinion. He doesn't have anything to say or complain, or....or brag for. Yeah, I'm stubborn and I'm proud of it... and I hope that I am 100% correct when I'm stubborn.

(014) E: My father used to tell us, "Ask too many question, and give your own answer." So when I want something and believe on that, I ask so many questions and sometimes you get a stupid answer—that's where you have the goodies in. Because you get a stupid, ignorant giving you his opinion and brag about and make...make of it big deal, automatically if you have a little bit....of a vision, you just have to take the opposite of that ignorance, of that stupidity and build on it and make it right. That's where you find the truth, from the opposite of the stupid answer you get from some people. Therefore, I ask many questions, and I be fulfilled with so many answers, and the funny thing is, not one match the other or very close.. All I have to work it out on my own. I have my own opinion, my own feeling and I do my own decision on it. I don't do the decision of other people, what other people want. I decide my life. I learned to decide my own life, my own way, than being an item of somebody else's head.

(035) E: Yeah, always when you...you get stuck, ask too many questions. Don't be afraid to ask questions, because nobody is 100% smart to brag about himself or herself, and look at you down. Nobody is a computer. Nobody is smarter. So, don't let them...uh...tease you or look at you down just because you asking. They think themselves they smart in what they thinking, and anyone who would think himself he knows everything, he doesn't know ANYthing. He's just roaming, running, crawling in his own circle. That's all. He doesn't know any better.... Anybody's smart they would listen to other people, and then decide what he wants to decide.

(048) E: Yeah, I kind of struggled in life, yeah. It wasn't too easy for me. And I always looked...searched for the truth, for the right way, the honest way, the correct way. (muffled:???? Life, too or that too .......??).

(053) E: My father used to tell us, "Look, son, you lose all the money you got, you get it back. And, if not, too bad. It's not your luck, it's not your...your money. But, you lose your name once in life, and uh...all the money of the world won't get your name back. You lose your credibility once, and that's enough for you to...to call yourself dead, you finished." And this is why I always like to...to be honest, credible, give my word, back it up, stand for my word. Believe me, you were too small, but in Lebanon, I go to anybody, any of my friends, and I ask them, "I want thousand dollar, I need thousand dollar now, for a week." Everybody would run like crazy to give me thousand dollar, and don't I ever dare to sign a paper for them because they smack it in my face. Because they know, my word is my word. I say that I'll bring it one week and I'll bring it one week. This is how you have to...you have to build your personality on credibility, to be credi...credible, to be honest. No matter whether you succeed or not. This stays with you...that's a fortune, to me this is a fortune. I'm still from the old-fashioned way, and I'm not going to change, it's too late for me to change. And I'm not built or raised to change anyhow. [pause]

(079) E: Yeah, sometimes I feel I'm lost. I'm living in another world, and I have to be here, whether I like it or not. Until I be called one day. Meanwhile, I have to struggle. Sometimes,
I'm happy for what I get, sometimes unhappy—not much I can do about it. Take it one day at a time.

(087) E: My father used to say, "Look, son, nothing will disappear. Nothing will be forgotten. Only one thing." I said, "What?" He said, "The things that never happened." And this is true. Whatever you do, good or bad, will never disappear, and you will never be able to cover it up. It's there. It's been created. It's been done. It's been said and done. So, nothing will be disappearing or...or get hidden, cover it up, only the things that never happen, and this is true. That's why I don't like to lie, I don't like to...to...to take the wrong...road. It's not worth it anymore, not much left in my life to start new system. I'm pleased and happy for what I am. Sometimes I feel strange...in my neighborhood, different--too bad. I'm not going to change my life, my personality, just to please my neighborhood. They are raised from a different parents, I am raised from a different parents. Certainly going to be different mentality, different behavior...different...different way of life. So, therefore I am not gonna change just to be like somebody else. They can change and be like me if they wanted to, I don't have to change my personality, my life, my style just because this is the...the fashion--No! I don't go with the fashion, Ingrid. Fashion pass, comes and goes. You have to figure, those people that they follow the fashion, and they run to be with the fashion, they stupid! Those fashion, as I said, change, and comes and goes before you even dream of it, before you even enjoy it. Where the fact is...is worth it to run, and change your life, your style of life, you personality, just to be fashionable? Who cares? I live what I please, what it...what it makes me happy. I don't live for the fashion. If the fashion makes me...happy, it makes me happy for a day or a week, then it pass and it goes. What about the rest? What did I do? Gone nothing...for nothing. You change your life, your style of life, your personality just to be fashionable, to be....I...I don't believe in this. And that fashion now it is a fashion, next year, or next month, it's not fashion anymore, it's no good? People laugh at you if you still with it? So, that tells you the small...the small mentality, the small thinking of those people that they laugh at you that you still in one fashion behind them, and you should be the one to laugh at them that their mind and their brain brought you the fashion—change, change, change, they have no...no basic, they have no base in their life. They don't have any...any foundation in their life. They just flying—flying in the air. Those kind of person, or person...persons, they don't strike me as...anything to worry about anymore, because I don't care! I follow the fashion I like. The fashion keeps changing. I follow the fashion maybe three, four, five times when it comes and goes, comes and goes, I take one of it which I like, and I stay with it. From that fashion change two, three, four, five times, I don't care. Let it change. Then, if I don't like them, I don't have to change, just because this is the fashion. It's not, you can't change me so easy. You can't change me so easy from what I am, uh...uh, I mean change me easily from what I am. I am what I am. I created myself. I'm gonna live and stay this way. As long as I'm happy this way, why should I change? I don't change to please other people. I am not living here to please other people. I'm sure many people not too happy to see me, probably. Why should I kill myself to please other people? [pause]...

(166) E: Easy come, easy go. Nothing lasts forever in this life. You see people go fight each other, go and rob and kill, and make a scam. They never have enough. They always....the more...they want some money, and the more they get, the more they want, and they hurt other people. Why? Life is too short, ...and nothing lasts forever. All those guys that they do this, they never (muffled:???take it from anything). They just hurt other people...for nothing. It's nothing worth it, nothing valuable in this life. One
thing, is to leave behind you a good name, that people would think of it and remember, "He was a good man, and he's gone." There is two ways saying it, say, "He was a good man, and he's gone," or, "He should have gone long time ago." There is two ways of...of saying it. [pause] uhm...

(191) E: You can afford to lose so many things, but you can't afford to lose yourself...[pause]

(194) E: I believe so much in proverbs. People had, to my belief, people should believe in them.

They should believe proverbs. Proverbs are based in practical, based on practical happening, incident happen, or story or whatever happen. This is the first time the theory is built from after the...the technique. Usually there is the theory, and then they apply a technique to it. The example, the proverbs, are correct and very valuable. They can be a very valuable lesson to a human being, if he would think of them and (?????), because they are based in fact, something happen. [pause]

(213) E: Believe me, the old life, the old-fashioned, those old people, they have a lotta prior knowledge, lotta valuable things in life that the new generation don't have, those crazy new generation, crazy—they going with the wind. They not appreciating what they have, and what they can...could have...until those...old generation gone, took with them the good lesson, the valuable lesson that nobody wanted. Eh...[pause]

(225) E: What makes me laugh sometimes, of those guys, they think the old people are...they lost their mind, they stupid...they think themselves are smart, the smartest people. My God, who built this world? The whole world has been built from those people that they are old now, and in the eye of others are worthless. huhm...[pause]

(237) E: I don't know what to tell you more, I don't know. So much on my mind that...making me forget so many things from my past. Sometimes, as I said, I be sitting by myself, alone, and I think of it. It's a LOOtta...lotta years coming through, lotta incidents that happen to me. I lived in fear many times. I lived in happiness many times. I saw too many...many world, too many different people, travelled a lot. I can say I saw more than half the world. I know I have...I can... I can say I met more than...than million people, different kind, different mentality, different thinking. You learn from them a lot. [pause]

(260) E: Life is changing very rapidly, very, very much changing. There is no...what I would say...I'm looking for the word for that is happen. There is no...no easy tran...transition and slow transition. And see that things are fading slowly, slowly--no. Things are fading faster than you even can think of it. Every day is a new day, every day is a new life.

(271) E: Yeah, my father used to tell me, "Look, son, there is no two days alike." And this is true, there is no two days alike in life. Especially now, life is changing rapidly, and without any...any comparison or...or slow transition. So rapid is changing. [pause]

(282) E: You know they used to laugh before, and give an example, and say, "Yeah, the difference is between twelve to noon," which is the same, twelve o'clock or noon time is the same...just...just for a laughing...laughable matter, say, "Yeah, from twelve to noon." And you can be sure of it, it never become...never...it's never...anymore a laughable matter. It's a FACT! Life and everything is changing between twelve and noon...from twelve to noon. It's...it's...un...unbelievable how quick life is...is turning around. And this is scary...this is very scary, because not many people can...can or will accommodate these fast changes of life. Could create a clash...between two people that they living in the past, between two people live yesterday cannot live today together anymore the same...the same life. That's dangerous. Thinking and mentality is changing so fast, that not many people can...can keep up with, or...or go up with it. [pause]

(318) E: Huhm...[pause], hum...[pause]
(324) E: I don't know...I trust so much on it... and I'm learning, a punch in the face from it...the (?) from...from trust is...is very disappointing. Let's say I get sick and I go to a doctor I trust, the doctor which I believe the doctor is...representing the decency, the humanity, the honesty. He believes in God, and they honest. I got cheated, and you don't get the...the service you looking for. You go and deal with the person for...for days and days and days, and all of a sudden, you deal with the same person and you see you got cheated....he turns on you...because business is bad or whatever, or life is changing bad...turning on business. That...that can be very dangerous. People has to struggle...to survive, so then dignity, and honesty, and pride does not exist anymore which the (???)world passed). This is what bothers me...bothers me so much. Because this is the only money I have, and I got rich with it, and the only money I can pay with it, and I can deal with it, and it is a dead money--worthless. That hurts. [pause]

(366) E: Used to be with friends...of my age, and we be talking what's going on this world, the changeable life, the change of the world, and I say, "Well," tell him, "Shut up! We still lucky. Thank God million times we still lucky, but God help our kids! What they're gonna go through!" And this is true. This is true. Look at yourself, you guys, you, you barely finished high school without the problems, the problems started the same year you finished [gang problems started to get bad the year I graduated and thereafter]. And you lucky you got out fast. God help your kids now, when you want to send them to high school...go to high school. That was not...wasn't like that in my time...was not like that at all. And that hurts. When I look behind....for the years...I had, I look behind...and I turn around to look...look for the future, I get fear in my life, in my soul. I don't know what kind of a future. I don't know what tomorrow is gonna bring. Long, long time before, used to worry about five, ten, fifteen years from now, what's gonna be, what you gonna do, you plan for the next twenty years...now we can't even plan for tomorrow. You sit in the evening, you plan your life, you plan what you gonna do tomorrow, and by the time the sun is up, completely is a different world. That really puts fears in your life, in your soul...when you don't know what you gonna...how they gonna deal with it...what you gonna do. Damned if you do, and damned if you don't. [sigh and pause]

(419) E: Yeah...nothing is easy, nothing comes easy. It's getting harder and harder every day, and the older I get, the harder life I see it...because that's not...that's not what I...my st...style of life, lifestyle, what I wanted to say, my lifestyle is not based on what I'll be expecting tomorrow. It's gonna be hard to swallow. It's a lotta hard change for me.

(451) I: The tape is almost over.

(452) E: Shut it. [TAPE TURNS OFF AT 454]
LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 2, TAPE 2, SIDE A

(002) E: You know what is damaging...life and society, what is reacting to people like me...(??????) people?... The computer. There is always good things and bad things. Every time there is something there is the good and the bad. Every question has an answer...you say yes, there is the word no. There is white, there is black... up there is down. So, everything has... a face in the back which is the opposite. Computer has good things, fine. Can bring you ten...ten years ahead, put them in front of you in one...one hour, and you can have ten years ahead. And this is what is...uh what...what is scary. This is the good thing about time...and this is what is scary...in putting...in putting you on the fast...on the faster belt. On the fast belt you're running life...you are running your life a year and five and ten years ahead. What should be ten years (??????) you'll have it now, you'll have it in front of you now. People are putting their lives in the faster...on the fast belt. That's scary!!! She's (??????) not...giving chance..., as I said, for the transaction of life to go slowly, slowly and everybody get adjusted to it, and live with it in an easy way. Many people fall behind in this fast life because they cannot keep up with it...too slow for that kind of life. Computer is too fast for this type of life. There is no more concentration...no more... what I'm trying to say...bringing things closer together. How are the older people like me going to adjust to the fast life...without having any knowledge about it? This is a knowledge being created now from the youth.

(033) E: [clears throat] And the youth are learning different mentality, different thinking on. Changeable...very much changeable. There won't be any coope...cooperation between the old and the young. They'll never get any closer to each other anymore...it's finished. That's scary...very scary. [pause]

(044) E: I don't know.....not gonna be.... I'm not gonna worry about it. I'm going to keep believing what I believe. I fell...fall behind...at least I be satisfied with my....my surroundings and my atmosphere, the kind of life I'm living now. I'm satisfied with it. [pause].

(053) E: People don't want to understand...any engine, fast engine has a shorter life. It's been known mathematically, and everybody learn about it and everybody try to ignore it. Every fast...faster engine has a shorter...the shorter life than other slower engines. (??????) The younger generation are happy going so fast. They gonna feel older than what they are...much older than what they are and they not gonna be happy with it. They not gonna be satisfied...with themselves. They gonna find.... deep trouble for themselves. See themselves (??????) troubling which side they gonna take...which way they gonna... pursue. [pause].

(069) E: Hmmmm...[pause]. I don't know five years from now whether I'm still around...whether I'm gonna be around. It's very interesting to see five years from now...how the whole world is going to be. Very interesting.... it's gonna be a completely different world...

(077) E: [pause] I don't know what I can tell you more about my life. I can say I had my ups and downs... my good and bad... my disappointments... and my good luck and bad luck. And I thank God for it a million times.

(088) E: [pause]... I never dreamed...I would be what I am, but I always looked for it...forward for that kind of life... or even better.....[pause]. I don't know....[pause]

(097) E: I left my parents behind me long time ago. Never thought of anything but... getting myself out of misery. And then it wouldn't take too long and I start losing my...my parents...my...my...every related person to me is popping one after the other. It's kind of sad...it makes me sad. Nobody is left from all my family from my...my parents time. Kind of made me wonder sometimes..... I'm the only one left... the only...thinking one in the whole family left.... Have nobody left to ask any question
or to answer to anyone. Only surviving person...that I think in what kind of life I lived with these parents (?????), with re...related brothers, cousins, only one think with that atmosphere from that world of my family (????????). Sometimes, I'm feeling so hard to believe(?????) [pause]. When you wake up, you turn around, and you have nobody left, ...and how much more for you to go? [pause]...

(129) E: Life is full of surprise... You grow up slowly, slowly with...all the surroundings around you--your parents, your rel...re...relatives, brothers and others, and you would see them fading one after the other, one after the other, and by the time you look around, you are old yourself... and you are on the list next. Time flies. You forgot (?????) because years and years and years--all gone like a dream........ It's tough...very hard to swallow, can't digest it (??????). That would make you sad--feel bad about it--you have missed a portion of your life (???????) with it. (??????????)

(149) E: You have the feeling sometimes that life goes faster than you think. By the time you sit down and start thinking about it, life passed too fast. Won't give you chance for a minute (??). And I would say--all the time I think(??????), that's why nobody had found a solution or an answer for it, 'cause by the time you finish thinking about it, you not around anymore. Life beat you up faster than you thinking. [pause]

(165) E: And sometimes I...I don't understand life at all. Sometimes it doesn't make sense...just like a movie, like a film. By the time you gonna start enjoying it, it's time to go. [pause]

(176) E: You see, that's why, Ingrid, I told you....not worth it to be changeable, to change your face and your personality and every day be a different person. It's not worth it! Not worth it. Be what you are and enjoy that personality that you living in. Say, "That's what I am, and I am what I am!" Why should you be a different person and enjoy somebody else--could enjoy your own person, your own personality, your own life. Don't change it. Not worth it. [pause]

(192) E: All I can say is, "I wish you the best of luck in your life. Do what you have to do and what comes is from God...that's...that would be the...what's written for you--the good or the bad. Tomorrow is another day." One of these days, you gonna think of me, and you gonna sing the song "I Got To Be Me." Why should I be someone else, I got to be me. And please do it(?????). That's the only way you can enjoy life is to enjoy yourself. Be what you are. Got to be me, to say it always...not somebody else....personality. I'm one like the others--they're not better than me and I'm not better than any other. One number for me, and I'm gonna keep that number, why change? That's my lottery, that's my luck. [pause]

(222) E: Not much I can tell you, believe me--anymore. I wasn't expecting you gonna ask me this...unprepared. And even I want to be prepared, would take me days and days...to dig in my brain...far back. So many of my past life...most the time and many times--pops in front of me and makes me think of it...and remember it. Sometimes I laugh and sometimes I cry, sometimes I feel bad...sad. You can't think of them all at once.... They pop in front of you, depend on the...situation, the demand, what was.... the incident, the...the demand...the question. That's how they pop. They pop on occasion. [small pause]

(243) E: I had a chance (clears throat), as I said, to travel a lot, and I have seen a lot. I have...I have wen...I have gone...through...through a lot. Some are good, some are bad, some are terrible..... [pause].

(256) E: Yeah, I don't feel...I can be any better or any... go any further.... There is no cha...chance or luck anymore. I'm finished. There is no...no more room for it... future, what is left of it has been taken...be satisfied for what you have. [pause]

(270) E: Sometimes I...I get argument or blame. People tell me, "You're stupid...it's not worth it. Doesn't pay to be too much fanatic, one-sided. Just brag about dignity, honesty and
devotion and all that. Those...tha...they don't exist anymore. They are in the past, they gone, we live in a different world." I can see that.... this is true. That's why I lost my job, because I was too much fanatic, one-sided, never...never been a, or accept to be, a rubber stamp... for anybody. Never like to lie or...or scam, or fiddle around....so, cost me my job—that's fine, but it did not cost me my integrity, my honesty, and that's what th...makes me happy—not even be sad I lost my job, because that's what I have got left, and I'm gonna enjoy it. I'm gonna have the best of it. This is what...what's gonna be...lasting forever! Nobody gonna take it away from me. [pause] And everybody would get his...his shares. Those people they have done to me what they have done, because I was in their way—they gonna pay for it.

(305) E: I personally believe....here we pay--in this world we pay—for what we do, good or bad. And I believe on it—they gonna pay for it dearly.... and I'm still the winner. I still have my integrity and my honesty.

(314) E: My father used to tell us, "A human being works hard enough to earn money, and the decent penny... does not... rest with him in peace. He spends it and it goes. So, an honest penny," he said, "it goes with him. He would lose it and most likely he would lose his life with it too." So, if the honest penny, you barely can hold on it, because you have to spend it to...to live, to survive and all that. So, the honest penny barely... last with you, barely be enough. So, you can be sure the unearemed...unhonest penny earned, that person is gonna pay his life, he's gonna pay dearly, he's gonna pay something for it, very dear. Those guys, I'm not wishing them bad, but I said clearly--here on earth, we pay for our behavior...for our acti....activities, our motives, good or bad. They all will be paid and judged here and now, while a person is living. [pause].

(346) E: I could have done much better in my job....for me, for my future, for my family. They forced my to...to end...end it this way.... I'm proud of myself. I left a good name. They still shiver from it(??????). [pause] They gonna pay for it. [long pause]....

(370) E: You see, before....when I used to go to school....and come home....and I used to have a judge and no lawyer to defend me. I had to be lawyer for myself and defend myself at home for the good and the bad. I had parents watching over me....watching my steps. Don't I ever dare to have a wrong step. That's what they (?????) me....put me on the right track...on the right road, and once you have that road...you hav...you ride straight on, all the way through. And I don't see that education... is being practiced often enough anymore around. This is why we having rough time and trouble in life.... People take everything for joke, never take anything serious, any honesty, or any decency taken serious. All they care is television, booze, screaming and macho. Don't care for anybody else but themselves.

(410) E: "Care...caring." This word is missing from our society. And this is how the people become vicious, selfish... everybody for himself. Nobody cares for anybody else. Kids don't care for their parents. parents don't have time for their kids. And all what they brag and say is love is all...superficial. There is nothing serious about it. The street is the best school for those kids. That's why we're paying for... this kind of society. When I look... behind and I look.... in front of me and I see what kind of a difference in how I was raised--care for other people, care for the elderly people, respect the neighbor, respect other people because this is how I wanted to be respected...[TAPE TURNS OFF AT 441]
LIFE STORY: PERFORMANCE 2, TAPE 2, SIDE B

(002) E: I mean, this is...this is what you see now, it's completely a different world. This is why I...I feel myself lost... (?) between myself and the new society. Everybody cares for himself and herself... that's all. People became selfish. People walks on corpse to achieve that...what they want. No more feeling, no love, no caring. You see that (?) (?) (?) that they took from me... when I act in my old-fashioned way, I see the (?) (?) from other people, it hurts... it hurts. Try to care for other people like you been raised... for, you...you been living all your life this way. You try to care for other people, other people call you a sucker and they take advantage of you... uhn... and look at you like you stupid and coming from the moon... form another planet. this is true. It did happen to me many times. I have too much of a good heart, try to be nice, to help other people, and I always got it up my behind because those people take me for a sucker... too stupid. [pause] That hurts. [pause]

(029) E: Yeah, many people are suffering from their past, and barely waiting for the future to enjoy... or whatever. Myself... it's completely different. I think of my past. I'm proud of it. I enjoy it. I enjoy thinking of my past. An' I'm shivering for my future... because we are entering a different world, different disgusting world, and I love my past. Led a life of decency, and dignity, honesty. People loved each other. We enjoyed life... in a good way. Nobody care to live anymore now. Life become too cheap. [long pause]

(045) E: Yeah, it's kind of... some kind of uh... really... eager... eager to know... (sigh) two years, five years from now, seven years from now if we still around, what... what kind of a society, what kind of a life, what kind of... future it's gonna be for this country, for the rest of the world. [pause]

(056) E: To my belief, I think... the future generation, they're not gonna enjoy life at all anymore. Because no matter what they do, how they do, they're not gonna to be able to move (?) their demands, their own demands, they're gonna be falling behind. Life and society are running so fast, people not gonna able to keep up with... with the trends. I don't see the future generation gonna be happy any more... at all. All these kind of invention we getting, like I said before the computer, and the television, and all these machinery, that's making life easy, that's gonna make life miserable too, in the same... in the same token [clears throat]... because they're bringing life to a faster... frequency. They're not gonna be able to keep up with it, it's gonna make life... much harder to... to live with. It's gonna be... human being's gonna find... himself very hard to live with other people. They're not all gonna be... talking the same language, the same... singing and the same frequency (???). There gonna be lots of ups and downs, lots of different views... we didn't have them in our time. We lived good, we live... lived well, we enjoyed life, and we were able to meet our... our needs... our... our needs. [pause]

(087) E: Well [sigh]... Yeah, they're changing the mentality, the thinking of... the future generation more than they'll be able to think about it, faster than their brains can... can handle. That is gonna create a... a crisis (???????) and misunderstanding (????). Some people may not believe me now, think I'm... I'm crazy, what I'm saying is crazy, or I am behind the moon. We should appreciate the faster... life, the faster invention... You have to figure, everything has two edge. A sword has two edge-- one for you and one for your enemy. Never forget that! Don't think you have a sword in your hand, and you are a winner, and that's it. You can fight, you can do... a sword always has two edges, one for you and one for your enemy. No matter what... what you do and how you do use it, you not gonna be hundred percent winner. You
always gonna lose, also. In other words, damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Take it this way--you have a gun. I give you a gun (??????), what I'm trying to say, tak...get yourself a gun. If you shoot somebody, you in trouble, and if you not going to shoot that person... they gonna shoot you and kill you, and you in trouble, also. In either way, you are in trouble. So, this is how the sword gonna get back to you. You gonna hurt your enemy and by hurting your enemy, you gonna get hurt coming back...result coming back to you. So, this is how life is. I'm trying...to compare, to give you an example. This is how life is. You think you are above... the water, you are sure of yourself, you have achieved what you want, and you strong enough, you have the sword in your hand, and you are a winner--you can fight anything. Never forget...that the sword has two edges. Never ever forget that! Always be prepared to face the consequences. Never take anything for granted. There's always surprises. [pause]

(128) E: There are always--try to deal with your (??????) disappointments more...spend more on your disappointments...of something--how you gonna deal with your disappointments, than being busy preparing for your celebrations, because usually celebrations doesn't need much. You can celebrate if you're lucky, you got what you want, you can celebrate in an easy way, you don't have to put too much effort. But if you don't succeed, a bigger (??????) disappointment, that's the hell gonna...loose... break loose on you, and it's gonna be very hard to deal with it simply (?????). So, always be prepared... yourself, prepare yourself for the disappointments, not for the success, because if the success comes, as I said, it comes in your luck, and it's easy, and enjoy it. You don't have to do anything about it...but if it doesn't come, that's where the disaster is. Prepare to see how you gonna manage and live with it, and how you gonna handle it.

(145) E: Part of my little success, I won't say I've been success in life... successful in life, especially all the way--part of my little success, I used to take this philosophy always, to prepare myself... for the disappointments--how I'm gonna deal with it. More than (????) expecting the...expecting the good of it. [pause]

(155) E: Hmmm.... I never took a...anything... for granted. [long pause]....

(165) E: Sometimes I sit down and I...think to myself and I say, "I wish...70% of the world...of the people...in this world thinks... and feels the same way as I do." The whole world would be... in peace, in happiness...success.... This is why I...I always brag—that's the only thing I have is my...myself that I can brag about it—the honesty, the decency, the dignity, my...my dignity, my...my pride comes above everybody, above everything. My pride comes... under God by one inch, I would say, above anything and everything. It comes before my...before me, before my family, before my friends, before anybody. That's my pride...and who ever thinks of that like this is always having his head up...proud, honest......., because that's what... every human being should have—is the pride. That's the only thing he can brag about...and it's priceless. You can't lose it. That's your life. Can't lose it. You have to always keep it respected, well-prepared and up (??????). [pause]

(197) E: My pride comes first. That's why I'm proud of what I am, and I think myself too much of a pride I have....and a good one. Never been insulted, never been (??????), never been sold...or pawned. All my life I preserved my pride....(????) better than anything. That's what's keeping me going, keeps me proud of myself. [pause]...And I would say always, a person to be proud not for what he is—a big shot, president, or king or whatever. Those is...those are nothing! Those are nothing. Those are artificial. A person can be proud of what he is...he has a pride...preserved...respected pride. That's what he can feel proud of. He can't be proud of...of being a crook president,
or a crook king or a crook millionaire or whatever. Those are, as I said, artificial. It's nothing to brag about...to be proud of. It's not any...any person would like to be proud of it. A person wants to be proud of himself...is if he has a clean...respect, proud of himself, with his pride respected, still intact. [pause]

(229) E: Yeah...not many people...still preserve that... they (????) themselves their pride, their respect... for the (????) which it doesn't last. [long pause]...

105 (243) E: I feel really... bad about it and sorry that... my past is...very far behind. It can never be again. It can never be repeated...for many reasons--the age, the society, the life.... the life we're getting to... never be applied anymore. My past could never...can be applied anymore... to any future. (?????) That's sad! It's sad! Life and time (????) is changing so badly (?????) so fast. Sad. [pause]

110 (268) E: Well I wanna tell you...you think I'm wrong... by being...too much conservative, too much in what I am. That's wrong? It's out of fashion, cannot be used or applied anymore? I would tell you, "No." I would tell you, "No, I'm not...I'm not." And old money cannot buy anything for the future. Too bad old money now is worth fortune. Everybody works (looks???) for old money. One of these days, those guys that they think...only good brand new money, the only money...are gonna find themselves they're wrong. They're gonna look for this old money which is a fortune. My old-fashioned...my old-fashioned way is not gonna change. One of these days, they'll see, the new generation, that... the old-fashioned... used to be good, is still good, and they're gonna come back to it, and they're gonna adopt it. They're gonna find out...nothing would last but the truth. Nothing will hold, but the truth. They're gonna come back to the old-fashioned way... and adopt it. So, I don't have to adopt it--I have it, and I'm one step ahead.

115 (306) E: Yeah...[pause]. Time will prove I'm right. I hope I'm still around to see... that the day will come...and I still have a turn and chance to sing... my song... in my old-fashioned way. Probably (?????) that I have a... place in... society. [pause]... which is a true society...the real.... [pause]...

120 (332) E: Yeah......I don't know what else I can say. [pause]...I can't tell you everything now at once. They have to go every day different...in stage. Depend on every day. Tomorrow, I'll have a different...motive to...to remind me of something that I haven't said. The day after there's going to be another motive... to remind me on something else haven't said, that depends on (?????).....the incident, the happening. I believe that's all I can...I can say for the time being. [long pause from 354-362]

125 (362) E: Yeah, I always think of my... my poor parents...I didn't have a chance to enjoy them too much which hurts a lot. It hurts me very, very bad. I never had the chance to enjoy them. And every once in a while.....I get some incident in life or something and all of a sudden the buzzer in my mind comes and says, "Hey! Wait a minute! Wake up! You're mother said so, and so, and so," or, "Your grandmother said so, and so, and so," or, "Your father said so, and so, and so." So, then (????), I do... remember their advice...I do remember their nagging. Nag...nag in the same subject. They mean well. They mean to nag for our benefit, to warn us of life.... It was annoying maybe to hear... any of your parents nagging on the same subject in that time, but now you find it is a pleasure... that they have nagged in your...in your ears. If they did not nag, you wouldn't have...profited from their advice. While you are in trouble or... you need an advice or whatever. So, the old-time nagging... rings well in my ears....it's a pleasure... to listen to....

130 (403) E: Funny, (????)...that the same annoyance is a pleasure to listen to. You can't be more grateful (????)....God bless their souls wherever they are. They were good people...all they cared is their kids, their benefit (????), their future (????), protection (?????)
Believe me, many, many of my parents advice... is partial of mine.
Success in living and being around. Can never be too much. It helped me a lot... because they were pure and honest... [TAPE TURNS OFF AT 441]
APPENDIX B

FOLK MEDICINE: TAPE 1, SIDE A

(001) I: So what were you telling me earlier?
(002) E: Let's say you get a corn in your feet, and you can't wear any shoes, the best thing for that -- you get a tomato, has to be real ripe, completely ripe. You slice it, you put it on the corn, and you wrap it very lightly, otherwise you squeeze the juice out, you wrap it lightly all around, all around to make sure the piece of tomato stays on the corn, no place else, and you change it every couple hours for at least four, five times a day. If you can do it longer, will be better, better if you don't walk on that foot because you squeeze the tomato and you let the juice go away. The whole day you leave it on. If you can sleep with it, will be even better. And you can be sure the corn will go away. All you do is you take a tip of a fine knife or whatever and you pull it out and it comes from the roots. That is the best we used to do, and if the corn is very deep, for long, long, time, the crust is so thick, you may have to repeat it for two consecutive days or more slice. And you have to keep changing the slices because they squeeze out and they dry. That is the best for corn. I remember my old aunt in New York used to go to Manhattan, from Brooklyn to Manhattan, to a best doctor, and give her Doctor Scholls' medicine and an... donuts, and all kinds of a crap, to put in her shoes, and nothing happen. Used to scrap it with a sharp uh blades to calm it down and chop it and chop it and never go away. When I came to the States I told her, "You should remember that from Lebanon." She tried it and all the corns from her feet disappeared. [tape turns off]

(029) E: Now when you cut you finger, or any piece of your body, and you bleeding, the best thing we used to do--we put Turkish coffee--the, the coffee itself, raw, why I say the Turkish coffee? Because the Turkish coffee is very fine, fine grounded, and it stays. You put it on the wound, where you bleeding, depend how big is the cut, you could put from a teaspoon to half a teaspoon, to two teaspoon, whatever to cover the whole wound. And make sure you make it little thick. The coffee will be created with the blood like a crust, and would block the bleeding. You leave it on as long as you can--few hours or over night. And the you can wash it with little bit of cold water slowly, slowly, otherwise you may irritate the wound, and it start bleeding again. Just wash the coffee with water, and is fine.

(043) E: Now when you get burned, we...we peel potato, we slice it, and we put the slice of potato on the burn. And you keep changing that every half an hour or whatever, 'cause potatoes--why I say half an hour because potato dries fast. There is something in the potatoes, in the starch or whatever--it absorbs the heat from the burned place and would heal faster and the pain dramatically will be cut down when you put the potatoes on. It cool it off and it helps. [tape shuts off]

(051) I: I was just wondering if you knew why the...
(051) E: You not gonna...
(052) I: ...coffee works...
(052) E: You know, you're not gonna...uh...
(052) I: I was just wondering if you know why the coffee works?
(052) E: Like I said, the coffee works because, uh, they are too fine. When they mixed with the blood, they become like a crust, and you look on the wound in your body without the coffee after the blood stops, the blood itself will turn to crust, and will...will cover the...uh...the...the heal and that's what it is actually, it's nothing dramatic on that. I presume is nothing...uh...chemically or scientifically, is just because it's clean and it
right away turn to crust, and will dry the place and block the uh...the bleeding. Nobody had figured why, if there is something in the coffee itself also, because they didn't put flour or something else. They could put flour and flour would make a crust, but they choose coffee. Probably unknown, chemically, scientifically, there is something, maybe the oil of the coffee itself, it could help. You know the beans of coffee has oil in and when you make Turkish coffee or espresso, you turn everything out you would look on your cup, you would see kind of oil on the...on the cup. Probably that oil of the beans will...has something to do with healing.

(068) I: Do you know any others... for burns maybe, or...
(069) E: Now my old aunt, you know when people gets old, very old, over seventy or so, they get so often diarrhea. My old aunt, the same one with the corns, when we returned to Lebanon, they gave her all kind of the best medicine ever to heal her stomach and stop the diarrhea...for old people you can't let diarrhea goes on, that's very dangerous. We have the best medicine that's called [muffled...????], that's made in Europe and is well-known the best sophisticated medicine ever for [muffled...????] and Ressec, did not help... [I: muffled...????]...I'll tell you later...did not help. So my brother from the old-fashioned he heard about it, he put a table, a table and a half, of flour, of regular flour you make bread from. He put half a glass of water, he stirred them, and gave it to her to drink it. She drank them and bye-bye diarrhea. And it help like...like crazy.

(083) I: Do you know any others for that?
(083) E: None that came on my mind, no.
(084) I: What about sumac?

(085) E: Yeah, also when you have upset stomach, not completely diarrhea, but upset stomach. Stomach is kind of upset and irritated. The best thing we used to do, we used to fry an egg. We put sumac on, and that helped. There is something in the sumac, it helps. Now you have to be careful. In Lebanon, there is one kind of sumac and no other. Here in the United States, I have heard there is plenty different kind of sumac, and many of them are dangerous and poisoned. You can be dead within...within an hour. You be careful to choose the sumac in this country.

(094) E (cont.): Now, when somebody has kind of virus inside the stomach, also in the stomach is upset, or light sore of throat, and it feel kind of itchy, we squeeze pure lemon, two lemon or three, depending how much juice is in the lemon, and you drink it slowly slowly and you make sure that the...the throat is being getting wet with it, not like when you drink medicine and you hate it and you just put it...dump it in your mouth and swallow it. You sip it in quantity and make sure that you closing your throat on the medicine and...sip it through. You don't drink after, you don't eat, and if is...it is better if you take it like couple hours after food. And when you take the lemon, do not drink, do not eat, do not put anything in your mouth for at least forty-five minutes to an hour, if possible. It's well known that the lemon would kill germs, and particularly this kind of germs for uh virus or flu or whatever you want to call it.

(111) E (cont.): Now when we used to be kid, we play, in Lebanon we not protected like here, too much uh central heating. We wear jackets or sweaters or whatever and go outside and we play like crazy in cold winter. Houses aren't tight--very humid, cold. We sweat after the play. We take the jacket or sweaters or whatever out and we keep playing, because it's too hot, getting hot. Somehow, being sweaty and from being hot uh body you undress yourself to the cold and humidity, you "catch cold" we call it. After a day or so, ninety percent of the people gets kind of cold in the chest, and will be stuffy chest very heavy to breathe. There is one tree in Lebanon, it's called "TZYSPOOHN", I could not find it in an English translation to know what kind of
tree is that. It makes a flower in spring, blossom or whatever you call it. We take all this out, we put them in the sun for couple days to dry, and we keep them for the winter. So as "BEBOONISH". "BEBOONISH" is not tree, is like a little bush. It makes kind of flowers also. We take those out, we dry them for few days in the sun, and we keep them for the winter. And either one or mixture, you boil them like you boil tea, and drink that two, three times a day, as much as you can drink, and that help, believe me, it relieves the pressure from your chest, would open your chest nicely, you can breathe easily, and you feel much more comfortable.

(137) E: How long do you have to boil it?
(137) I: You boil it until you make sure it...all the color is getting dark in the water. That means you have everything came down. And is better if you drink it while the stuff still in but the...uh...we usually drain it like we drain the loose tea.
(141) E: Now to go back to the lemon, it is confirmed, and many people had tried it and it is confirmed, including me, the percentage is about ninety to ninety-five percent result. Some people does not react for that, I don't know why, because there is many medicine help one person, does not help the other, is the chemical in the bodies. [tape shuts off]

(148) E: Now there is another bush, is called "MARTKOUSH." This "MARTKOUSH" we used to boil it when somebody has kind of a cramps in the stomach, and it does not go away right away. Is been there for half an hour, an hour, a couple hours, and person is suffering from cramps in the stomach. We boil the "MARTKOUSH" the same way you boil the tea, you drain it, and is better if you put as minimum as possible of sugar in because sugar gives you more gas in the stomach, so if you can drink it without sugar, it is the best. We drink, we make a cup of that and is well known it helps.

(157) E (cont.): The same as the "YENSOON." "YENSOON" I presume is called in English Anisette. This is how we make the liquor Arak or the Greek makes the Ouzo from is Anisette. We boil a little bit of Anisette, same way, and it helps the cramps, but "MARTKOUSH" is much more effective.

(163) I: How much do you use for each of those...and... [muffled...????]
(164) E: Well, the how much you use for each one of them is just you grab with your five fingers from a bunch and you ah...uh...put in there. Like for the "YENSOON," you put about a tablespoon full of the...uh...uh... full tablespoon of it. From the other, you grab with your hands, your five fingers as much as you get on, a bunch, and the main thing is to let it boil nicely and make sure all the ingredients comes down in the water. [tape shuts off]

(172) E: There is an old-fashioned way, nobody is using it anymore because the medicine now is easier, the modern medicine. When somebody gets a deep pneumonia in his lungs, cannot breathe and really sick. You take a glass, empty glass, cleaned. You burn...put a piece of paper, you burn it and throw it in the glass and you put it on the body where it hurts, when the person feel hurts in his back. The glass when you burn the oxygen, the glass will suck the body and it hold on the body, on the human being body. It holds in there and it keep sucking as a pressure, it suck, and suck and you will feel that the blood and this uh...uh...eh...in his body is all accumulating and coming toward that glass. You put six-seven-eight—ten times, twelve times of that glass all over the back of the human being. Sometimes, that is enough, but when the problem is very, very severe, there is a small animal, I don't know what they call them in English—they suck blood, they put them in there to suck a little bit of blood from that, we call it the "infected blood," and we wrap the human being not to catch cold, and do it in...in a very warm atmosphere, and the person does not get any...any draft. Dress well, and lie down, and within twenty-four hours he should feel eighty...
percent, at least eighty percent relief. And with a time, three, four days or a week, he's already okay. There is another way, they used to take a blade, a sharp blade and in the back just a scratch his back with a blade to let the blood come out. We call it "relief of a...of a blood." They don't do that anymore, you have all kind of antibiotics and penicillin now, is easier, cleaner and faster. [tape shuts off]

[NB: From this point until quotation marks are used again and the speaker is again identified with an initial, the transcript is a paraphrasing. There will be embedded direct quotations within the paraphrasing, and these will be clearly marked with quotation marks.]

(203) For not enough urinating for whatever reason, take cherry stems, a bunch are dried in the spring for the winter, boil like tea, "over boil" it, drink 2-3-5 times a day instead of water. Will get person to start urinating. Helps 80-90% of the time. Though not everybody would react the same.

[tape shuts off] [Edmond brings out a book whose title is loosely translated to The Dictionary of Medicine for Household for any Disease or Treatment. This seems to me to be a collection of home remedies or folk beliefs. He uses this to supplement his own knowledge of the "old-fashioned" medicine [primarily because I am working on this project, NOT for his life], but expresses his lack of trust in it by saying, "...some kind of bullshit--I don't believe in that." When I asked why he doesn't believe in it, he responded that he never heard of these specific directions, and also that some well-known remedies are never mentioned in the book.]

(220) Urination problems, especially with some "kind of sand" in urinary tract or kidney. Some plant or fruit SHALESH EL HANZABIEL (or HAZABOOL). [he doesn't know the language this comes from]. Soak in 1 liter of water [note: he now uses metric instead of his own practical knowledge of what the measurements translate into for the American measuring system. This reinforces the fact that he has no direct experience with the few recipes which follow which he read out of the book]. Stay as long as can and then let the person drink at least 4 oz. of this an hour [here he translated measurement]. [tape shuts off]

(235) For "sand" alone: Take Turkish coffee cup 4 1/2-5 oz. BARDAOON (seeds of onions, [says he never knew onions had seeds]) put into 4 glasses of water--boil it 50% down to 2 glasses. Drink one glass in morning and one in evening, warmed. Each time person urinates, collect urine. When enough--turn through cheese cloth and will be able to see sand. If nothing there, then it didn't help and the problem is bigger. [tape shuts off]

(260) Talks about a monk whom people would travel hundreds and hundreds of miles from all over to see him. Even from Syria they heard about him. Came to take advice. When something he never heard of he would dig in that book, big as a Webster's, he had the best advice from years and years. All those advice we're doing are from him, best experience and results. All went crazy when the monk died, nobody knows what happened to the book. Couldn't find that book--that is a shame. [tape shuts off]

(277) I ask him when that was.
(277) When he was a kid [anecdote about his family talking about the monk]--so, about a hundred years ago. [tape shuts off]

(288) Goes back to diarrhea and says if he previously said Tahini (sesame seed sauce) it was wrong--it should be TEHEEN or flour. [tape shuts off]
(292) Talks about the sumac you can buy here, it is "phony," doesn't have the right taste. [It can be bought at local Mediterranean import stores]. 30% sumac with seeds and dye and lemon to make it sour. They are crooks. In Lebanon the sumac comes like a corn cob or pine tree cone. It is picked, dried in the sun for winter, put in cheese cloth bag (to prevent humidity). When want to use it, soak it in water for a while, and then squeeze as much as can, all sour stuff down to water, add water to cooking or fried egg. For use against diarrhea, irritated diarrhea, the ones with microbes. [tape shuts off]

(335) This diarrhea is called TSUMTARI, that means there is a bug in the stool. The sumac kills that bug, heals. [tape shuts off]

(343) Something else he presumes was for diarrhea, but not as strong as sumac, is the carob. Used for desserts and molasses also. Left on tree very long, until September, before the rain comes, take fruit when ripe, crunch down, process, boil like distillation, and molasses come out. Well known help against diarrhea, it helps thicken the stool, that's all.

(364) Not sure, but if somebody can't go, is constipated, yeah it is for constipation, sumac is for diarrhea, the molasses of carob, yeah forget what I said, when someone is constipated, fill a half a glass and takes it in the morning and usually 80-90% of the time can go. It breaks the stool.

(380) I ask if he knows any others for constipation (No), or for diarrhea (No), upset stomach...

(384) Usually most of the time for upset stomach, fry eggs, put lemon on it helps upset stomach, because it is very well-known lemon kills bacteria and germs, that is very well-known, and besides has a lot of "goodies," in it--vitamins. (393): Personal Experience Narrative: when family exchanged ideas he never paid attention, but somehow some stayed in the back of his brain.

(402) I ask if he knows anything for gas.
(405) For too much gas in stomach, people here don't like it and make fun of if, but now, they come to it and even advertise about the garlic. For gas, (describes that in winter charcoal burned and people sit around and put chestnuts in the sand) and also put garlic in the sand by fire until ripe, and eat them, sometimes with food and it helps people release gas. People used to laugh, all people Jewish people, Arab people, all people around Mediterranean learn from each other, and eat a lot of garlic. The best thing for them is olive, olive oil, and garlic. They eat these in lots of things like salad, and they put olive oil, lemon, and garlic, and they are healthy like hell. Now lots of people, including Dr. Mathis, well-known in this nation, and esp. in Texas, had mentioned on the radio about the Mediterranean people and their food. Olive Oil is very good for the stomach.

(446) Remembers, neighbor said when someone had a little trouble in the stomach, or in the kidneys also, they used to tell him in morning when gets up to drink a cup of coffee [size is measured] full of olive oil before food, and repeat 2-3 days and the person feels fine. It helps so many things in the body. Olive oil is the best thing for the body--it may be high in calories, but it has been mentioned, and even Dr. Mathis himself has said it that the best thing to eat of all the oils is the olive oil. Now, forget the smell, if you can stand the smell, eat the garlic, it helps you for so many ways in the body.

(467) I ask what other ways.

(467) Gas, stool, high blood pressure...they cut raw garlic into small pieces and put "special alcohol" on it, [like Everclear], and then he describes the distillation process, whereby the "special alcohol is the second step, and Arak, or Ouzo for the Greeks is a drink with Anisette, and is drunk with food...the Ouzo is sweeter." Then he says that if you drink everyday a little Arak with your food it is very healthy. So the garlic is soaked
with the alcohol and every day they put some 6-7-10 drips in a half a glass of water and they drink it and it used to help them for high blood pressure.

(499) He notes it is funny, nobody wants to believe it, tells of going to the dentist, then talks about how dentists are—-all doctors here [in USA] want to make money, “They make a big camel from an ant running.” The dentist told him he has gum disease. He had an appointment a week later for more work, and in the meantime [as was done in Lebanon, and the dentists there advised that], he put about a teaspoon or 1 1/2 tsp. of Arak in his mouth and let it stay though it burns a lot, leave it in as much as can stand it. He swished it around his teeth and gums, and then brushed at night. When he went back to the dentist and asked how the gum looked then, he was told, “Oh, your gums look good--whatever you did to it right now they look good.” It’s well-known in Lebanon to soak your gum for 2-3 days and it helps.

(529) They used to shine and clean teeth with bicarbonate soda [baking soda]. In Lebanon they used to make own charcoal, not from chemical and gas, but from especially oak trees because it lasts, -so crush charcoal and add baking soda and squeeze lemon juice with and use a rag to brush our teeth. It whitens the teeth, shines them, cleans all the bacteria, takes all the black stuff out, and really cleans the teeth.

(558) E: I wasn't expecting you too much to scratch my memory for so many things, and I don't know much because I never paid too much attention--I was dumb, and you bum, I'm trying to at least pass to you certain things I know and you never have any interest, you never give a damn, those...[I do now]...yeah, too late maybe, probably I have forgot a lot of things. Those things it's value in families, Ingrid, and it goes in generations from grandfather to son to grandson and all the way on. There is so many things in Lebanon, I feel sorry now I lost my mother, my grandmother a long time ago, I never had any dumb brain to to fill in a lot of advice.

(580) Talks about their cooking and pastry. [tape shuts off]

(588) Lists some of remedies, flour, olive oil, tomatoes, and said some of those don't help everybody a hundred percent, but generally, very close to 100% it did help, and 100% esp. 100% the tomatoes on the corn, that's for sure 100% it helps. Why tomatoes? Tomatoes when they get ripe they get acidic, and it kills the corn, which is like the back of the heel, a very heavy build-up of meat, of crust, the corn is the same, heavy and hard skin and it hurts the tender. The tomatoes turn to acid and slowly tenderizes the skin so you can pull it out. The flour for the diarrhea has been very well respected and it helps 100%, and the lemon for the virus and the sore throat it is guaranteed 80-90% depends on how severe and how the body would react to it. And the sumac on fried egg, it helps 100% guaranteed if it is a light case, not severe, then need medical treatment. Many people got result from garlic for high blood pressure, and many people got result, that's how they pass it on, garlic under the fire in the sand until cooked and eat it.

(640) I ask about fever.

(642) Put ice on the person, on the head, that's the only thing to bring down fever, but you have to be careful on that, sometimes is dangerous to bring the fever down rapidly.

END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE
FOLK MEDICINE: TAPE 1, SIDE B

(001) Speaking about fever, rub feet and head with Everclear (Alcohol Spirto in Lebanon), because it cools, heard not supposed to break temp. down fast in some cases. Wants to inquire at the doctor why and when not to bring the fever down fast with ice. [tape shuts off]

(013) Usually people eat grapes or an apple after food when you can't digest or need to burp. Like me it helps me a lot, a lot, when I eat grapes after food, or without food. Releases all the gas and upset stomach, feel bloated. Well known in Lebanon that grapes help a lot for so many things, are very healthy, figs also, and dates...the carob.

(028) I ask what they are good for—is it general health?
(029) General health is what they are good for. The truth, forgot what dates are good for, maybe cleaning your stool when you don't go easily, when constipated. The carob and carob molasses too. Also the dates have some kind of vitamins in them, forgot what, they were talking about it on the radio call in show "Ask the Doctor". That they have a lot of good ingredients. they're good health-wise even though they have a lot of calories. The carob and all that aren't as bad as calories from frying and fat from meats. These are light calories, go easily like with walking. [tape shuts off]

(044) I ask him about stuffy noses.
(044) Remembers they used to boil water but forgot what, used to boil water and cover head with sheet, inhale the vapor that comes out.

(050) I ask if they put something in it.
(051) Sometimes they use it without putting anything in the water, just the water, the steam helps—opens your nose, the muscles, makes it tender and let things run down. When severe, he forgot, maybe boil mint or basil or MARTKHOOSH. "That's why you should check with your A&M people up there—if they would give a permit that they would need these for experiment in here we can enter it easily to this country. They very, very helpful, those things—the mint, and ZHYSSPHOON, MARTKHOOSH...."

(061) I ask if there's anything else for congestion.
(061) They put on the chest Vicks and vaseline, or something like that, doesn't remember much, and the steam from a pot helps a lot, it doesn't kill the bug but it helps very, very much. He personally (because he can take a lot of pain) puts everclear on cotton and puts it in his nose and sniffs it and then this makes him sneeze which opens his nose. He says he doesn't remember many things.

(074) I ask him about coughing.
(074) For cough and sore throat... [then, he can't remember so he shuts off the tape.]
(076) For sore throat, there is a rock sugar—it's a temporary relief, like... [he asks what we call them. I ask cough drops? Yes, cough drops] so they suck this rock sugar and eat licorice with it. And he has heard here in the US, some medicine has licorice and probably if I read the drug labels, I would see a lot of licorice in them. It's relief, not a cure, but it helps.

(086) I ask what about coughing itself.
(087) There is... [he shuts the tape off]...can drink lemon and there are some who use honey or rock sugar or licorice to soothe the throat.

(090) What about earaches, I ask.
(091) For earaches he remembers he hated this as a kid, but his mother put olive oil on a spoon and warmed it over a candle to be just warm—you have to be careful not to heat it too much or it burns the ear inside. Touch it to make sure the temperature is okay. Fill the ear and let it stay inside for a few minutes, then turns over and lets it drip out. Do this 2-3- or 4 times, and sleep on that particular ear so that the oil comes out and it keeps the ear warm. It helps a lot unless there is a really big, deep infection behind the bone for which they would go to the doctor for injections and all kinds of medicine. Kids have a lot of pain in their ears, and this gives relief.

(110) I ask about insect bites [he thinks and sighs] I suggest snake bites, animal bites...

(113-118) [mostly incomprehensible, though I hear him say most people do... they do this here....in westerns on TV, and I say that it is okay it doesn't have to be...?]
I ask how you can get sick from sitting on cold floors [he always yelled at me for doing this, esp. because I had recurring kidney problems] or being in a cold draft, what does this do to you, or damp.

E: Yeah, here not many people here believe this, but it is very well known that if you sit in the winter on a block of concrete, the houses in Lebanon made from concrete and stones, not like here of wood, sit, gets too, too cold if you sit on it on the ground or barefoot standing for a long time, the body is like a sponge and absorbs all this cold and humidity and, certainly, you get sick. Same way as I told you in the beginning when we used to be kids and dress up warm and go outside because of the north wind, the north wind in Lebanon is very critical, many people get pneumonia from the north wind, get really sick, that damn wind comes from Turkey and Russia and Baltic air from the Black Sea. It is cold—miserably cold—it goes through the bones. So we used to dress warm and go outside and play and play so much, and overdo it, and you sweat, and you feel hot and warm. You take your clothes, your sweaters and jackets or whatever out, while your body is sweaty and hot and you get a draft by this cold wind and many, many cases, 90-95% of the time a kid gets sick, gets a stuffy chest, pneumonia in his lungs, can't breathe, can't talk, real stuffed. We used what I told you before, we used glasses and put paper in to burn the oxygen in, and it makes pressure in there, and it grabs and sucks the body...

I ask what else does cold and wet do?

E: You get sore throat from it. You could have damage if you have weak kidneys. People used to get sick in their kidneys and get sick in your urinary tract. Many people have a weak body and they run barefoot in the cold, humid floor, gets wet and sits on it, never take care of themselves, they get what we call it like, albumen, yeah, good I remember now, in Lebanon, we treat albumen by drinking lots of milk, and the acid uric, we drink lots of lemon, and this is very well known. It breaks your acid uric 100% cure it, because this is how... My uncle used to be a druggist, and when we test our urine to see if we have acid uric, he boil in a tube the urine and he used to put a drip or two of lemon, and it breaks inside, you would see inside the acidity itself inside is breaking. So, that was... used to be long time old-fashioned way, now they have medicine, chemically they put drips of chemical in it, they test for albumen and acid uric. But we treat acid uric with lemon juice and the albumen we drink lots of milk for it, that is the best thing to help. Somehow, they have some reaction on it, they break it down.

I ask how else the weather effects [people????].

E: Usually, the weather is very healthy, good healthy body will be well taking advantage from the weather and the air there, is very clean and healthy, but a weak body will in the winter get lots of sickness like pneumonia, and stuffy chest, and cold, things like that, and sometimes trouble in the kidneys and urinary tract because lots of humidity. We close by the sea. You know, you travel in Lebanon, you go and make a ski in the ocean and you take your car in twenty-five minutes you go up in the mountains, you go and make a ski in the mountains, you know that, within twenty-five minutes drive. The life up in the mountains—completely different, it's much drier, even it snow a lot, the air is much healthier, than by the Mediterranean Sea in the winter, because of the sea. We gets lots of winds comes from Turkey and the Black Sea which is cold and humid. The sea blows all this cold mixed with water from the sea—it's not healthy.

I ask what makes a person sleep poorly.

E: Well, I don't know, being tired, not eating well...

I ask what else keeps you from going to sleep [I know from past experience with him that he believes the moon will make a person sick if it shines on him/her during sleep, but I didn't want to lead him too much].

E: Keeps you from going to sleep? Being tired, sit and drink coffee, and things like that.
(195) I remind him about cheese and ice cream, and ask what else (he often has told us not to eat cheese at night for that reason).

(196) E: Oh that's here, the doctors in here said that. I never know it in Lebanon. Dr. Mathias said that. At least an hour, an hour-and-a-half before bed don't eat particularly any ice cream or any dairy stuff, or cheese, and if you have to drink milk, it is known that if you warm the milk it puts you to sleep, well it helps, but not always the case.

(207) I ask what causes light sleep and bad dreams.

(207) E: That is something in the mind, I think, it is something in the mind which a person during the day thinks of it, worry, or load his mind with things. His mind is working on that particular subject and nothing else, so while he sleeps, his...his tape is still running! (laughs). I can't tell you anymore...

(212) I ask what does the moon do?

(212) E: Some people say that the people start dreaming or having problems like that when they eat a lot at night, stuff their stomach and they do not digest it, and they go to sleep. They have a loaded stomach, but I don't know. I don't believe that.

(216) I ask what about the moon?

(217) E: Yeah, that I can tell you 100%--it is guaranteed and it is known. People in Lebanon [are] close by the sea and they don't go up to the mountains to... some of them they don't have a house up in there or they do not... or they cannot afford that, or whatever. Or they work--some there they don't have the opportunity to go up in the mountains, so they sleep outside either on the terrace of their house. Most terrace in Lebanon, they're made in concrete because they accumulate the water and they have a big tank somewhere, they sleep up there. Or that's how they make the crushed wheat--it's made those kind of things for particularly they make the... They crush the wheat for the winter--we call it in here "wheat germs"--to make the "kibbe" and make the "tabouli" and other stuff, and that's where they put the Sumac to dry. And they put all kinds of things for the winter--they put them on the terrace in the sun to dry. Or they sleep at the balcony also. They have to put a cover when they sleep there at night because if the moon hits them, you can be sure you have a stuffy nose, and you have some kind of cold in the morning, and it's been well-known, and take my word for it, your father had it. And two weeks ago here the moon hit me, [muffled: ?????], hit me, and I had it too. I was fine, everything is fine, and I woke up after midnight with a stuffy nose, and I feel miserable, and I looked--it was the moon on my pillow.

(239) I ask if it has to be full or if it is pretty much any time.

(239) E: Any time it shines, but usually when it's full, that's when it's hard and strong; otherwise, if it has 3-4-5 days old it doesn't harm because it's too weak, not enough of power.

(243) I ask if there is something that you can put out in the moonlight that the moonlight will help it...like certain herbes or something?

(244) E: No, it goes by itself, it stays a day—it bothers you a whole day in that time, and most the time... most likely...most the time it goes away after, but don't repeat the same every night.

(248) I say, no, is there something the moonlight is good for...like putting something under the moonlight will help it.

(249) E: No, I don't remember anything like that. But, believe me you wake up in the morning, the moon hit you for quite a long time while you quiet and asleep, and it hit you—you get stuffy nose and you get a cold in it, and you get up in the morning, you have a headache, your head hurts. Take my word for it, it hurts.

(257) I suggest muscle aches.

(257) E: Yeah, we make soap, local soap in Lebanon. That's the people in north of Lebanon, they make them in there because of lots of olives—the best olives, and the best olive oil is in the north of Lebanon. And, when they make the olive oil from the olives the left-over, the mud or whatever left-over, they put some kind of a plantation [a plant] with it, I don't know, they call it ggharr'd, I don't know, that business here. I remember my mother used to put that ggharr'd also in the laundry when she boil the laundry—it help to clean
also. And, I don't know...I heard here one time they have it here, and it has a name. So, they put the leaves of that gghard plant with the mud—the leftover, the residue of the olive oil, and they make a soap of it some way, some kind of way they produce...[my mother suggests something in the background] No, I don't know, I'll check, maybe it's in the dictionary, shortly. and that is good soap. It clean laundry, it clean dishes, and it makes lotta bubbles, it clean very—very well. So, what we do if somebody twists his ankle or his foot, what you call that? [points to arch, and I tell him] The arch of his foot twisted somehow, or the ankle. So, there is a special people they learn from father and grandfather how to to take care of broken bones and, uh, and twisted ankles and things like that, so they take this soap, dry, before it's been used, it has to be completely dry. So, they take that soap, and they take that...uh...damn it! I never remember [everclear], everclear, they take everclear and that soap, and they massage the foot with it to make little bit of bubbles and, being a little slippery, will get slippery like that, and they massage it with the hands. They put some kind of cardboard, uh, against each other, like from the bottom and the top of the arch or whatever, and they wrap it around nicely, in a nice way with a bandage, and, uh, usually it help, within two days it help.

(295) I ask if there is a time when you would go to that instead of a doctor?

175 (296) E: Most time, most time people don't go to doctor for broken bones or twisted ankle, or twisted foot if they have the real one well-known in town, that he knows it from his father, his father was good, very good, and the grandfather was good and all that—it's in the family learned, uh.... 90-95% of the time people do not go to a doctor, they go to that particular practitioner which he is practicing that for, for...[I say something unintelligible] because he knows how, and is helping people, and is very well-known—people are getting result from him. And, in matter of fact, one time when I was a little kid about 6-7 years old, I was on—trying to jump on a mule, a big high mule, and the guy on top of the mule, his hand slipped from mine—couldn't pull me on. So, I fell kind of down on my feet, and the mule moved, and he stepped his heavy foot on the arch of my foot. I counted the stars in the middle of the day, you can believe me, and the foot started to get swollen and hurt like hell—it was very, very bad. So, I came home, barely could walk, and they brought one of those—even my uncle, he is a druggist, and he knows a lot about those things—he believe on that man, and he brought him over, and he let him massage my foot, and, like I said, with a dry soap, with Everclear, and massaged it nicely the way he knows how to put the muscles and veins back, where to massage them, which, which side, and which way. He did take care of my foot like that, and gave some cardboard in the bottom and on top, and wrap it with a bandage all around, and believe me it healed fast enough, faster than if you want to take it in a...in a modern medicine.

195 (328) I ask if there are any other kind of people that people in his town would go to instead of regular doctors?

(330) E: For that kind of problem?

(330) I: No for any problem, I mean would people rather have their kids born with a local midwife, or [...???] a regular doctor?

200 (332) E: Oh, oh... usually, the old-fashioned people that they...[in] my time, people that they really old 50-60-70 years old, and they believe in those things, and they know they have been cured or whatever, they know most the time they do go to those people. Uh, now with modern medicine, people don't care for it, they just go to a doctor and have the antibiotic and penicillin and all kinds of a crummy things like that, and take care of it. They have the money and they have the doctors, and you know the doctors in Lebanon aren't commercial like in here. You go to a doctor in Lebanon, he put all his effort, and he listen and you can be sure he gives you the right medicine, and he diagnose you very well, not, "I give you —try this medicine, and I want to see you next week, and I want to see you next week," and you keep going back and forth and you have no result, just
to keep milking you. If a doctor in Lebanon will do that, keep letting you back and forth, back and forth, he is finished because everybody knows everybody in Lebanon, and his reputation is ruined, that he is a commercial, and he is finished, he better pack up and leave town.

(350) I: So, if people still believe in the doctors there, how come they still go to the other practitioners?

(352) E: Oh, well, because some of them is closer to him, or they believe on him a lot, or some of them they...they, uh, they don't have the money to keep going, or they don't have the transportation to keep going—whatever—because the modern medicine takes longer than those things.

(356) I: It takes longer to fix?

(356) E: To, uh, yeah, to treat and fix, and you know how. So, in...in, believe me, those people that a practice broken bones and things like that, they don't need X-rays. They can touch your arm or your foot and you...they can tell you on the millimeter where it's broken, or if it is broken, or if it is hairliner broken, like what we say in here, hairline crack, or just a bruises from the touch where it hurts, and where—what happened to you, from the touch and the look of it. They always diagnose that, and they are 99% right. Many times people don't believe it, they tell them, "It isn't broken, is just bruised or whatever," people don't believe it and they run with their kid, because they love their kid, run to the hospital, to the doctor or whatever, and take X-rays and all that, and the man was right 100%.

(370) I: Are they usually men who do that?

(370) E: Yeah, usually, I'm sorry, usually men. Yeah, it's always a man. Women don't have any interest on that, and usually the women in Lebanon have very, very soft heart, right away turn their face and cry or whatever, they can't see bloods.

(376) I: What else do the men there do that aren't doctors? ...That take care of health problems, what other... you have bone specialists, what else do you have?

(376) E: Like I said, some of them they have a few ideas like that health-wise, but some of them, they act like chiropractic, they know about the bones, I told you broken bones, and bruises. They do take care of [muffled: ??], like I said, how to massage it and how to use these kind of, uh...

(384) I: What are they called?

(385) E: I don't know, jambha, jambha... in other words, when the bone is broken, you put it back, you heal it together, we call it in Arabic, "jambko" so we call the man "jambha," that's nothing...

(389) I: What about delivering babies, do they...[unintelligible, he starts talking...]

(390) E: Yeah, they used to be midwives in Lebanon. We have many of those midwives, and, as matter of fact, myself I was born with a midwife, and my brothers with midwife, they were very, very good, very well-respected. So far, as long as I lived in Lebanon, and I remember they had, they had them in there, not one incident had ever happened, and the women in there never become a midwife unless she had learned from her mother, or an aunt, or somebody in there they learn from each other, and they 100% safe.

(402) I: Can they take care of a sideways baby?

(403) E: Uh, yes, uh, most the time the did that, very, very seldom when a midwife gives up and tells the woman, "You have got to go to the hospital," uh, very seldom, and it's not because she is incapable, or she doesn't know. It's because the case is very, very big case to be handled. Uh, I never heard any, any accidents so far, and that diminish at the end. You won't... you won't see from them many, maybe in the high, high mountains when they too far from hospital, uh, they do exist every once in a while somewhere.

(415) I: Was that everyone who used those before, or just the [...] unintelligible...], I mean the poor...

(416) E: Well, uh, long, long time ago, uh, they used to be more or less, more or less... I would say 80% of the people used them because they don't like to go to the hospitals and...and let doctors struggle and bullshit with that when a woman would like to have another woman take care of her. We didn't have many, we didn't have any doctors women in
Lebanon so the women there would like to have another woman take care of her. And since that woman she's really professional, she knows her business, so they trust her, they let her do that, they don't want to mess around in the hospital. But, uh, then things changed, because, uh, of complication. And life is changing—believe me. There is lot of complication it's happening in Lebanon we never heard about it before, not because we don't know about it—it never existed. You see in here you have now... You hear about lots of disease never existed before, not because the modern medicine doesn't know about it. It did not exist before, and uh, this is how things are in Lebanon, a lot of things never existed before and a lot of changes in life, and things it's really...it's really changed. We have a hell of a change now.

(440) I: What else can midwives do?
(441) E: Nothing, I don't remember...

(442) I: Do they take care of the woman all the way through pregnancy or just at birth?
(443) E: Well...eh, women during pregnancy they don't, uh, take care of themselves or anybody take care of them. The woman there pregnant she works like a, like a horse—whole day long household and a lot of things, and people are poor, or they have farms, or up in the mountains, uh, they... they work their soul to the last minute, until they collapse and say, "That's it, the baby's coming!" So, uh, that's why I told you, everybody was healthy before. Uh, I never heard about cancer in Lebanon. We used to hear somebody died of cancer maybe every 15-20 years, one person gets cancer and the whole doctors and everybody stunned, "[?????] got cancer, how did that happen?" Now we having it, eh... they tell you now that it runs mainly in the family, it never runs in my family, and look at my brother, your uncle now, has a cancer. So, we never had anybody in my family had cancer. So, things is spreading in Lebanon, uh, it's unbelievable what's going on in there with all these chemicals. Before in Lebanon, they never use any chemical [????], they never import any chemical, uh, they p... the most chemical they used to use is the cow manure in there, and things like that, and eh, the fruit and vegetable was healthy, and big, and nice, and people eat it with a smell in it and a taste in it, and freshness in it. And now the things in there are riped and grow against the natural, and they putting chemical like crazy to those things. We never had a cucumber in January and February. If you wanna, if you want to wear a women's clothes, uh, if you want to run naked in the street, you will never get a cucumber in the end of January or February. Now in Lebanon, you get a cucumber in that time—and that is not healthy. You put all kind of a chemical in it. And many of those bloody chemical here in Dow Chemicals, I have heard last time, they stop them in here for this country, but they say it's all right for the third [world] country, which that is a crime from your government to let like the DDT, you can't buy it in this country, but you still can... can ship it to the Arab country, to Egypt, and all over to Latin America. That's all right. This is bad. So many of those chemicals they stop them in here, I heard about them two years ago, uh, from Velisco [????], Velisco, that's a branch of Dow chemicals, they stop them in here. United States' government finally put his hand and say, "No more!" But, those, it's all right to ship overseas to the third [world] country.

And we had Velisco in Lebanon, and your mother worked for that son-of-a-bitch in there who cheated her on... on a salary at the end when she got pregnant. That's Dow Chemical in Lebanon, putting all kind of a chemical to the fruit and vegetable, that's why people are getting... getting sick. The water in Lebanon it...it's getting sick. We used to have, you know, people have trouble in their kidneys, in their stomach, yeah, that I forgot to tell you. There is certain places in Lebanon, the... the water comes from the ground as usually, you know that, some places they discover, there is special water some places has lots of iron in. And people have some problems with their kidneys or with their urine problem, or stomach. They get up in the morning and drink about a...a...a glass or two of water, 15-16 ounce of water, uh, early in the morning before food, and believe me, stomach, or the kidney, or whatever, or the urine, all those used
to be very, very well, uh, back to normal. Used to help. Now, most water in Lebanon is infected because they using on...on the earth for vegetable and fruit and all that—they using all these chemical things, and the earth is absorbing that, and it's going down to our...to our water.

(521) I: So, does it help your health to change locations between seasons?
(522) E: Yeah, well, some people, uh, would, eh, would feel better because the most healthy place to be in the spring and the summer is up in the mountains, at least from 500-600 meters and up. The air is clean, cleaner than you can believe. We have lots of forest in there, and the, a lot of pine trees there, and those very well-known pine trees, uh, has a good result of fresh air, give you good fresh air, and...and the air is very, very clean and dry and thinner. It's not like by the sea where is the salt from the sea flies with that wind when it blows, uh...uh it's healthier to be a little higher from the sea, and sometimes, uh, people would love to be by the sea in the winter because, uh...uh in the summer, spring and summer [a correction of winter], because they go to the beach and enjoy it, and that is very, very nice to be on the beach. Our beach used to be very clean before, and a people, uh, used to go to the beach, especially, uh, my uncle and our cousin used to be the top doctor, well-known around the world, Dr. Khamsa, used to advise us to go to the beach. They say, "Take your kids to the beach and let them go underwater and open their eyes—it cleans their eyes." There is something in the salt of the seawater there, and it is clean water, it cleans your eyes nicely. And certainly it goes through your nose, and all that—it is very healthy, and it clean whatever you have on any, uh, craps on your skin outside—it clean them up, and wash them and, uh, used to be very nice. Now we have the sewer coming from Israel, they built sewer and put it in the sea.

And the way we are situated, we get lots of west wind, it comes from toward Egypt and Israel, and push all these craps to our sea, and it's not anymore healthy as it used to be, not clear anymore. Yeah, the seawater in Lebanon was great, we used to go under the water and open our eyes, all these irritation in the eyes get cleared. Here, you have to use bicarb...uh...uh soda to...baking soda to, baking soda to [mother in background talking to him] uh boric, uh boric acid here, we use, we use boric acid sometimes in Lebanon, but boil, boil the boric acid and wash your eyes with a cup. So, main the time, most the time in the natural way people go to the ocean, swim and open their eyes.

(584) I: Who in your family was trained [he says, "huh"], who in your family was trained in medicine? You mentioned your uncle and your cousin.

(586) E: Oh, my uncle... my uncle, the brother of my mother, he was a druggist, and uh, believe me, long...long time ago before the second world war, in Lebanon they used to mix medicine form herbs, I don't remember much about those herbs. My cousin used to be a dermatologist. Believe it or not, he was the best health doctor, also, medical doctor in the same time. He was genius. He used to create medicine. In...in 1967 when we went back to Lebanon [he and my mother], he had to go, he was called to represent the Mediterranean and Europe, he was chosen to represent them for dermatology and [?????] and all that, they had a meeting in Japan. And this man was a genius, now that hurts me. Why do you think I am so much eager to you to catch every single thing? This man he...he create one time a medicine. I lost my hair behind my ear. I don't know what they call that in English, in Arabic they call it trhyby, and it...it become like big as a pecan in size, big pecan size, all around, and behind my ear on my hair, I lost this hair in there. Nothing would help. I went to a doctor in here, "Try this medicine, and try this medicine, and try this medicine," and nothing help me. And I know very well about him. He had his own medicine, and I didn't figure he can, uh, his prescription will be, uh okay in here. So, when I wrote to my brother to Lebanon, I told him, "Tell Dr. Khamsa I have that trhyby—I lost my hair behind my ear, and my problem, this...this...this..." And he sent me the prescription, and the...the druggist here, he...he was a Lebanese druggist, but born here by, from even grandfather, he has
a drugstore in...in Brooklyn. He looked at it, and he said, "Gee, how did you get that? That is a good thing. We never have that around here. I never heard of it." And he fixed it for me. He mixed what he had to mix, and he gave me some liquid to clean it on a Q-tip before, to clean the skin very nicely with that liquid, and put the cream on it. Three days—I didn't need it anymore. My aunt looked in the back, and she said, "Your hair is growing." Believe it or not. My brother.....

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO
FOLK MEDICINE: TAPE 2, SIDE A

(002) E: My brother, he got in the bottom of his foot, I don't know—close to the heel like a little pimple. He scratched that, was bothering him and hurts all that, he scratched it. And all of a sudden, it start getting bigger and bigger and bigger, and start having the meat, not only the skin, not only the skin, but the meat of his foot was start to getting eaten up. You can take an egg and put it on that hole and the egg will stand up from the big hole in there. So he showed it to the doctor and he told him and it pains like crazy—he used to scream from pain. He showed it to him, he looked at it and says, "It's all right, no problem, but it's gonna take time because you already lost time—you should have came earlier." He made some cream and ah...uh... and some water. I don't know what was the water, maybe ammoniac or something, special ammoniac mixed with water, or so. He washed his foot with that liquid, and he put the cream on it, and believe me, after 4-5 days, no more pain, and the...and the wound start to heal. Took him about three weeks, it close up, built up meat, skin, and healed completely with less than a month. All those medicine is his creation, because we never had any capsules, or tablets, or things like that coming from uh...Europe like now—uh...antibiotics uh...or others. In those days, long time ago they used to put herbs, and mix them together make a cream of it, or whatever and put them, and that hurts me so much because the...the druggist was an old man and they don't keep those uh...prescription for long time. I bet you they all been destroyed, gone, and nobody remember anything from it, and I don't. I wish I had made copies of it—they were great. The man died in 1968, 69, the doctor died...from cancer in his pancreas. That hurts—really that bothers me now [?????] he was a genius. [pause, quiet]

(029) E: Yeah the same way my uncle, the brother of my mother, here in the States, he had something in his skin, not as serious as my brother Antoine, but he could not wear anything in his foot. The skin was peeling, he had kind of a disease in that skin and...eh...an... in those...in...uh...in his feet, unusual. He used to go to the the dermol... the dermatologist in here, an... from Brooklyn to Manhattan, every...uh twice a week, for weeks and weeks and weeks, "Try this medicine, try this cream, try this... and try that." For six months—never helped him a bit. He wasted his time, money and aggravation, and it was irritating. He wrote, they wrote to my uncle in Lebanon, the druggist, and he discussed that with Dr. Humsuh, our cousin. He said, "Look...uh how can I treat him from here to United States? I need more descriptions and everything that happened—full description 100%. And, if possible, the names of those medicines that the doctor gave him that didn't help him. From that I can imagine what the doctor was thinking up there." So they sent him all these descriptions. He created the mixture of medicine and sent it to uh...to my uncle. Less than a month, nothing, no trace left on his feet anymore and he was permanently cured. And he advised him in same time, "Do not wear any...any plastic or rubber uh... stockings. You something from these chemicals is reacting on your skin," and he...create...he create him and he cured him with less than a month from overseas, just by descriptions.

(051) I: When I was born, a bunch of the people in town gave you little blue stones, well what is...what is the story behind that?

(053) E: (sighs) I don't remember...

(053) I: Who does that, is it just Moslems, or...?

(054) E: Well, you know these, some people, some old, old people believe on the ...on the ...let me think. [tape shuts off]

(056) I: Leave it...

(056) E: But I have to prepare...

(057) I: Please, leave the tape...

(057) E: You know, some people believe that there is some women, there in uh...Lebanon...uh, or even men, but mainly it's women, they have some, they believe on those women, they don't
exist many of them, but some of them, they don't trust them that they have so much, they call it like magnetic in them, some...some uh I don't know, magic pressure from them comes, and they can react on babies, they can react...react on babies from...

(063) I: These women can react on babies?
(063) E: Yeah, from the look of them. Here you have a people, they believe on...uh reading the palm of your hands, and...uh people they call it uh like Nanc...Nancy Reagan...what you call that...astr...astra...

(065) I: Astrology...

(065) E: Astrology, and uh and uh psychic and things like that, so that exist all over the world these things, so in there they believe on those women that they have some kind of magnetic in their eyes, strong looks from eyes, and they can react on that baby, and hurt the baby, physically can get hurt because the baby would be effected with that. So now what they do, they put some kind of a stones hanging on the baby chest or...or...uh...or in the forehead or whatever when they are too...specially when the baby is too pretty, good-looking, that when they look, their look would come straight to the stone, and the stone would [laugh] prev...prevent that [laugh], that's bullshit [laugh] kind of a bull...

(073) I: Who keeps the stone, the people afraid of these women or [?????...]

(074) E: Yeah...uh...yeah the...no...the...the...mother or whatever, the parents of that baby, that's just a...a bullshit, I mean the same as here you believe in astronomy [astrology] or...or psychic, uh......not everybody in Lebanon believe that, maybe...maybe...maybe one old woman, still from old-fashioned, one of a million, or one of five hundred thousand people would believe on it, I mean, it's nothing. Nobody use that and nobody believes in it.

This used to be hundreds of years back...

(080) I: Is there anything else, anything else...like [?????...]

(081) E: That's hundred of years, you have to mention that hundred of years, we're not behind the moon, I mean we not people...

(081) I: Everyone has this, this is interesting why...

(082) E: Yeah that's why I said is one person of a half a million...

(082) I: It's interesting how it sticks around that long... are there any other beliefs like that? Like being able to tell if a baby is going to be a boy or a girl before its born?

(084) E: Uh...I...uh...I don't know those things...eh......[tape shuts off]

(087) I: Where were you born?

(087) E: [in animated, high voice] In Jounieh, Lebanon!!

(088) I: I don't know how to spell that [laugh]...

(088) E: The best place in the world!

(089) I: [mother spells it in background] ...Huh! that's how I spelled it...

(090) E: The best place in the world...

(090) I: When were you born?

(090) E: [still animated] I was born under the name Edmond Hannah Bou-Saada...

[background noise, mother in kitchen cooking]

(091) I: One more hour [laugh], one more...

(091) E: [normal voice] Thir...thirty-one [1931]

(092) I: [clears throat] who lived in your household?

(092) E: Mother, father, mother's mother, my uncle, brother of my mother, and two brothers, a cat and a dog [laughs loudly].

(093) E: And the only people around you who were in medicine were your uncle and a cousin?

(098) E: My cousin wasn't living with us...[?????]

(100) I: Was there anyone else who lived there that practiced any kind of medicine at all?

(100) E: No...

(100) I: Besides that not even unofficially?, like no one lived near you who was a midwife, or who was...
(102) E: Oh, there was a midwife, she's the one she delivered me actually...[some unclear in this statement]
(104) I: When did you first...
(104E) I: I have many cousins—doctors and dentists in Lebanon living in the same hometown, they live a few blocks or distance away from...[unclear]...that was the only one who lives about half a mile from us, little more than half a mile from our house, a mile maybe...

(108) I: When you first...when did you first go to New York?
(109) E: Nineteen...sixty-nine in May.
(110) I: And when did you return to Lebanon?
(110) E: That was on a vacation, I returned to Lebanon, I still had time on my Visa, and I came back in September '59.

(112) I: How long were you there for vacation?
(113) E: Two weeks.
(113) I: You came back in September, how long...
(113) E: Came back in September, the end of September around, before the Visa expired and I stayed there for good, I exchanged it to student, then I worked... for the Lebanese consulate, I got a diplomatic Visa, Then I got married to a stupid German [chuckle]."

(118) I: What year?
(118E) I: Sixty-two.
(119) I: What day?
(119E) I: November sixty-two...thirty November sixty-two, and...uh... I had a very good lawyer, he put me through the German quota, and I stayed... 
(121) I: ...Umm...and when did you go back to Lebanon?
(122) E: Sixty-seven, July sixty-seven...
(123) I: ...Until March seventy-six...
(123) E: Well, I went to Lebanon before that with your mother...

(123) I: ...Well to stay...
(124) E: Stay sixty-seven, we left in July we got to Lebanon the first of December [?????] sixty-seven. The other time we stayed in Germany with your grandmother when Tarek [my older brother] was born.

(127) I: How important is it to you to educate...educate yourself about health and medicine?
(128) E: It is important because I lived in an atmosphere of medicine, all my relatives and...and friends practically, many, many of them are in the medical field...

(132) I: What about now?
(132E) I: I don't have anybody around, but I am very much interested on and very curious, that's why I keep digging in papers and advices, and books, read about medicine. That's why I'm not too much, uh...so much on uh...taking medicine for every damn thing. I try to prevent it if possible. I don't take medicine left and right just because it's medicine.

(138) I: How else do you educate yourself about it?
(139) E: How to live life, how...

(139) I: No, about health and medicine...
(139E) I: Huh?
(140) I: About health and medicine...
(140E) I: Well I have the...the essential ba...base, and I have the idea and uh...th...uh...the knowledge uh of behaving and handling uh medicine, treatment or if I need some or not. So I just be careful and watch what is good for me and what is not good for me, by listening, by practicing, reading...

(146) I: So what do you think about modern medicine, how...when would you pick that over what you know from before and what you learn on your own? What situations do you think it is still number one...

(148) E: The moder...the modern medicine, it's uh better for me because I don't have enough experience on the...the old-fashioned medicine to know how...enough herbs and the experience and the knowledge. The people used to know that, they died and I don't have any
connection with or, if still few alive, the...the result of them and the advice is not
enough to cure you for every uh...disease or illness you have, therefore the modern
medicine uh...is preferable because it's handy to reach, very easy to reach and is there-
you need it, you want it and it's there.

(157) I: D'you think there are some things that your other...the other medicine would do that this modern
wouldn't?

(158) E: Yeah, like when I have corn, I would still prefer the uh tomato slice even would put down
uh...for couple days not to walk, but it is cured and the corn never comes back. And
this is proved because I treat it with a tomatoes, never came back, and everybody else
had treat it, their corn with the modern medicine, they got them back, most of them,
most the time.

(164) I: So how do you in general decide between the two, or is it not an either/or is it both...can you use
both?

(165) E: Well, I still go with saying, uh Lebanese saying is always comes from practice, and once
you have a saying, I would like to stick to it, cause it is always a good result and it is there
to prove to you that it is hundred percent guaranteed, and it says, "Better knowing
than go to know something, or start to know something." So it's better to know it than
to get to know it as it in English you say it. So I know now from experience and practice
that it did work with others, it worked with my aunt, and it did work with me. So why
do I change, if it isn't broken, don't fix it! So why should I change to something that
other friends, I heard some of other friends, they say, "That damn medicine didn't
work, that damn medicine didn't work." And sometimes you ask and you will see that
the...those medicines has different names. They aren't the same medicine and they
didn't work, different names. I'm not saying there ain't any, and probably the dumb
doctor wants you to come back and make more money."

(181) I: Is that just...are you just talking about corns or talking about in general...?

(182) E: Well, I'm talking about things that I know and I have experienced with—eh, that's why if I can do
it in the uh...the old-fashioned way, eh...uh...you preserve uh...the...uh...reaction of
uh...uh, what you call these in medicine? sometimes the words escapes...eh...uh...side
effects! So, certainly when, when yo...you do some Arabic stuff with...with...uh...herbs
or whatever it is, you can be hundred percent sure, there is no uh side effect from it,
because there is no chemical and is pure natural, and nobody have had any side effect
using those things.

(191) I Aren't there times though that plants can be just as dangerous, like part of a plant can be used for
something, but if you prepare it wrong there's something else in the plant that comes
out that's bad?

(193) E: Well so far, whoever use that plant, he use it from the knowledge, previous knowledge of
somebody else and he's not using it for anything else but uh but this, and in the same
way as he was learned and taught to do it. So, is not gonna be any other eh...side
effect on it because never happen any side effect, people never complain or... or claim
that they have something any reaction. The same as that guy died now, he used to be
an Armenian in Lebanon and he died. You know there is some kind of worms in the
human being's stomach. People tried so many kinds of modern medicine—either
didn't kill it hundred percent and it comes back again, or didn't work or didn't clean
up, so after a few months it shows up again, so that Armenian, he used to have some
medicine for that when people comes to him, he says, "Yeah, you come tomorrow and
I give you the pills." He makes seven pills. He goes down the forest. Nobody could
find out what kind of a plant, the son-of-a-gun, he never t...told anybody how.
Walks to the bushes, somewhere in the forest, he picks up some herbs, some plants.
He makes some medicine with it and he gives you seven pills. He tells you, "You
take eh...uh...one eh...every day in the morning, (seven or five I don't remember), you
take one every morning before food. And you can be sure you are clean, you
finished." Why before food? apparently those worms run for that, they like it so
much. And then you...you come and you eat after, you poison all your stomach with it. So they eat it and they're gone, down the garbage—finished. Once, you take those once, with him and you are clean. Either five pills or seven pills, I don't remember, something like that, or maybe even three, but some in these amount. You take one in the morning, before food, then you eat your breakfast. One every day, and you can be sure your stomach is clean, no more worms in there. You have ten, fifteen kinds of worms in your stomach: you have "intania," and you have all kinds... that's disgusting what human beings have in the stomach, believe me. There is a small one with two heads, very small like a small...uh... like the pin, very tiny with two heads even, there is the ["??????"] has about 250 to 300 yards long and it's like the uh the corn of beans, piece, piece, piece, piece intestine...

(227) I: I've had biology...
(227) E: Oh, golly that's disgusting!!! Oh, yeah, you know with...with this, with the "Tania," remembering about that—I don't remember what, I had it when I was a...a kid, my brother had it when we were kid. We never had uh..uh modern medicine—there is some kind of pills like what that guy gives, or some kind—I don't remember very well. My mother give it to us in the morning, and then she boil a pot of hot water, let us sit on top of it, and the whole damn thing comes down, believe...believe it or not—to the last piece they come down. Oh that.....there is lots of these uh...medicine uh...treatment in Lebanon, Rena [Edmond's wife]. People got so lazy and negligent, and don't give a damn for it because the modern uh...medicine came and they figure why bother with the damn thing uh..take one pill of that and you finish. Take this pill, take that syrup, or take that medicine, you all right. Why bother and go [?????]
They, if they knew now what they, uh... they... uh, if they knew then what they know now, they wouldn't have thrown themselves on the modern medicine with a side effect. Now they start knowing that this modern medicine has side-effects, and they prefer the old-fashioned way, but nobody learn, the same as you, were negligent, nobody has any interest to learn, nobody gave a damn. This—it was bugging me, Ingrid, honest, when you were young, I know you were young—you don't know any better. I was boiling inside.....so many things I know and I wanted to give it to you. Who knows, because you don't need them now, or you...you don't care for them now, or whatever, who knows in the future. Look at me, I was ten, twelve, nine, eight, twelve years old, whatever—never gave a gave a damn what my mother said or or, but somehow they stuck in my ear, because I hear about them, and they repeat things, they repeat and nag and nag and hammer on with the same thing many times. So one of them sticks in your mind. You get annoyed by nagging, by repeating things million times, but thank God sometimes some of that nagging stuck in m...my mind, still have the echo, and I learned from them.

(261) E: [continues] Yeah there's so many things I forgot also, I used to know them even when I came to here, and now I...I don't have any...any much memory of... I'm losing memory too much [??????] I don't know. Locked here in the house for the past six, seven years and no practice with anything or anybody, or bother with, so uh...your memory will...uh...will rust, if you don't keep practicing and talk to people and go and come, whatever mm...exchange ideas and talk, words—you see now words I know since long, long time and now I couldn't find them. Sometimes I have to stay a minute or two and think about them because I forgot the meaning of that word—what what that mean or or what to use. I'm looking for some word sometime, I want to say, and I can't remember it. It's lack of memory because lack of practice. Your memory would rust sitting around here by yourself.

(275) E: [continues] Yeah, there is a lot of knowledge, lot of cooking, lot of sweet cooking, pastry, cake and things like that—that hurts me so much why I didn't learn from my mother. There's five, six of them which I would have loved to.... They so good, I would.... My mother used to make some kind of a pastry with yoghurt. The whole country,
around us in there used to talk about it, "Did you eat over Marie Bou-Saada the
hhallulaban?" Oh, God, that was good!! That was something.

265 (283) I: What's her name?
(283) E: Hhallulaban.
(283) I: No, your mom's.
(284) E: Marie.
(284) I: I didn't know... I never knew your mother's name.

270 (284) E: Marie...M-a-r-i-e.
(285) I: What's your dad's name?
(285) E: Hannah in Arabic, and Jean, Jean in French, but Jean is J-e-a-n, that's how you write Jean in...
(287) I: What's his middle name?
(287) E: I think Estefan, Estefan same as Gloria Estefan.

275 (289) I: How do you spell that?
(290) E: Estefan, like Gloria Estefan...
(290) I: E-s-t-e-f-a-n? What's your mother's middle name?
(291) E: I don't know.
(292) I: Her maiden name?

280 (292) E: Barakat.
(292) I: B-a-r-a-?
(293) E: B-a-r-a-k-either -a- or -e-, whatever you prefer, Barakat.
(295) [I and E talk about other Barakets we know, and middle names and nicknames and how keep names
family in Lebanon, some genealogical knowledge, structure of family and the name
of family roles...also "you" in English and Arabic, gender words...]
(388) I: Okay, here's an example for when you would choose your other traditions or medicine, you have
that nasal spray for your nose, when would you decide, like, what would make you
decide to use medicine versus using lemons. Is lemon the first choice or...

290 (393) E: I don't put lemon in my nose...
(393) I: Well, if you have a stuffy nose, you can either spray or you can drink lemon, and they would
take care of the same thing...
(394) E: Well, no...no not really, the lemon would take care anything from the throat down, it could
help the other somehow, oh, wouldn't help the stuffy, but it could help the, the bug
in there maybe, because it goes through the blood, you know, it may help, it may help
the, the bug in your nose, whatever, because of the circulation of the blood, but it's not
gonna help that much, because what goes in the blood is not gonna circulate all
around to, to by the time it gets to your nose, certainly is not going to help. It help
where it hits, you know what I mean?
(404) I: Well, maybe a better example--when would you use Ex-Lax and when would you use sumac?

300 How...how would you decide what to go for first..[E: "whatever..."]...when would you
go and find something at the store...
(406) E: Whatever is easy to reach.
(407) I: So if you happen to have your natural ingredients here that would take care of the problem, and
in the refrigerator you happen to have Ex-Lax, what would you decide?
(409) E: Actually, I would rather have the natural way, unless the problem is severe, and that may take
time. And you know the Lax, the Ex-Lax is very quick. So, you want something right
on the spot, you don't want to mess around with--you take Ex-Lax. If you want to
prevent too many chemical uh..., too many medicine with chemical, uh...and you have
time and no rush...of delaying, you take the other, didn't work--you repeat it next
morning or so, and then it should work. You, you put the quantity a little bit further,
but as I said, people don't want to mess around too much anymore- they becoming
lazy and everything handed...

310 (422) I: No, what about you?
(422) E: Oh, me personally I, I would still prefer cut down on medicine, and uh, and chemically
medicine, ah chemically ah, made than the natural. If I can have made by herbs, I
have no hesitancy to take it any time I, I have any symptoms for...and I would treat it with. I'm guaranteed sure 100% guaranteed with those herbs...uh the old-fashioned done by the grandmother and grandfather when they used to know about them. I would do that anytime, unless I don't have time to mess around, and I want something quick, and I'm sure that could help the same or even little less...[pauses]

(437) I: Why do you...

(437) E: Now you have, you have as I said uh, the Reasec, and you have the, the flour to jam your diarrhea. You have Reasec...I was 100% sure of it--it's a modern medicine and I have tried it and I know it works 100% it works, and I haven't heard so far any side-effects which could have, and I don't know about, but I never heard from anyone had any side-effects so far. And you have the flour. I could swallow a pill of Reasec if I have it handy and it's still in a good expiration date, or take 3-4 drips in a glass of water and drink it [it comes in pill form or liquid form], it uh, do the same job, because the flower--it's very hard to swallow little bit in your mouth and, and you don't, may not like it—if it does the same problem and there is no side-effect, I'll take the Reasec. It's handy and easier, but you have to be sure from the side-effect. I don't jump to any modern medicine just because is in the market. I usually take it when I find out it's been about ten years in the market, or something like that. So many people had been, have been cured, gave a good result, there is no side-effect or minimum side-effect. Because, in this country here the lobbyists are so criminal, and our people in Washington are so miserable—they run behind the money, don't give a damn for the people. Anybody would pay them, they put any kind of medicine in the market, and they tell you it's been tested. I don't trust them. Many times they had pull some, uh, tablets from the market after 2 and 3 years 4 years when they had so many accidents. So, I don't jump to modern medicine right on the spot, unless I know it's been in the market for a while...[pause]...Shame, the best country in the world, now that I have no trust for, I have no respect. I can say that openly and you can put that in there, and tell them, "My father had no respect for the doctors and for the lawyers, and the politician in this country. He used..."

(479) I: [unintelligible]

(480) E: Tell them, "He came to this country because the aunts and uncles, they used to write to them, to Lebanon, and tell them about this country, and about the people, and about the justice, and about the government, about everything in this country—that's why my father came to this country, for what he have heard, because he had facility to go somewhere else, too, and he didn't, he came here because of what they wrote to them. And after a while he start to get disappointed." My aunts and uncles—when I came in '59, they were already start talking bad about what's going on with the government, and the corruption, and the doctors. This is what happen—everything is getting expensive in this country. Doctor goes to medical school and pays fortune. Costs him $2-300,000 or even more. He has a debt above his ears, and he wanna live in a high luxury life. The moment he gets out from there he has to pay his debts, debt and he already wants to have the high class Mercedes and BMW, and he has to want, he wants to have a boat in the, on the beach, and he wants to be, to be a big shot, and have the most luxurious villa.

(501) E: (cont.) So he starts sucking and cheating the people, and he put his fingers in everything, and have a lab with somebody else, and keep sending people, like they send your father a few times to the lab, and tell him he has a thyroid problem, and I had no thyroid [problem] at all, and they keep letting me go back and forth, and withdraw blood from me and tell me, "Your thyroid is deteriorating, and getting bad...and bad," and increase my...my medicine until I got to the hospital, and at the hospital after they test, they find out that I have no thyroid whatsoever, no PROBLEM, not even 1%, and he was giving me the amount of a guy in the same company with me—he had cancer in his thyroid. They took them out, and he was, they were giving him .2 mg. He was
giving me .3 mg, the son-of-a-bitch, and I had no, not problem with my tonsil [thyroid], until I went through the ceiling, and I almost had a nervous breakdown—I was so tense and so nervous, and you know how nervous I was an... I wa..run crazy until I wind in the hospital and they checked a test. I had no problem with my thyroid. This is the doctors, most of them in this country. They give you medicine, barely listen to you, give a you medicine, “I want to see you within two weeks, I want to see you in ten days,” and that’s not the right medicine. They give you that medicine because they are pushed by this company—they pay them that much—they pay them a vacation trip—they pay them so many things to...to push on that medicine in the market. And they let you have it to try, and then they bring you again for another visit, and for another visit, “Okay, try this, and try that,” and meanwhile you got from this medicine all kinds of side-effect, and you getting worse and worse.

(536) E: (cont.) I don’t trust the doctors—I have no respect for the Justice Department, the justice people in this country, and for the lawyers, for the judge, for the doctor—particularly the doctor and the dentist. Dentists drill in your teeth anytime he feels like just to charge you—for no need, no...that’s a criminal to drill on your tooth without any, any specific reason, just to charge you $150. I have no respect, they disgust me, Bastards! What they have done to me, I couldn’t believe that would be done in China, or in Russia, or in any place in the world, what they have done to me, those doctors in this country. Put me in the hospital twice for no...for nothing. Put me in the hospital to make this balloon in my chest that time, what you call that, casteriza...cater...catherization [catheterization]. I did not need it, the make me worry to death that my problem is deteriorating, my heart is deteriorating, I have problem in my heart, and is nothing wrong with my heart. Dr. O. [his more recent, Irish doctor] finally at the end, he say, “You come here, I kick your ass! There is nothing wrong with your heart, and stop worrying and bugging. Go home and relax!” Yeah, anyhow, what else you want? Question?

(564) I: There are just a couple of rapid ones to [???]...
(565) E: Like what?
(566) I: Ah, one thing I just remembered, why do you put butter in your tea? I don’t remember, but you told me once, and...

(568) E: Oh, the butter, we have kind of a butter actually, it shouldn’t be in here, uh, very much uh, advised that since recently people are against...cholesterol, or whatever. We have kind of a butter in, in Lebanon, is made, made from, from lamb fat, from milk—makes somehow the, the uh... the butter of the mill...that you get from the milk, I don’t know what you call that. They make some kind of a, of a butter. It’s little bit too fattening that kind of a butter, but that kind of butter, you put in the tea, and you drink it in the morning, would loosen up all these slime and phlegm you have in your throat, and in the track in your throat and in your chest—would open up. So, I don’t have that kind of a butter from there—I used to, to put the butter we have in here, and uh, it helps, it does not help so much as the one we have in Lebanon, but the real butter in here, not the margarine, only the real butter would help much better—you put in the tea, dissolve a little bit, and when you drink it, it clean up. You know like you put for the floor Ajax or, or something else and it shuffle more and it scraps—so it open your track, your chest, you feel better when you get up in the morning and you not feeling well.”

(601) I: Why do you believe that we need sweets in the morning?
(602) E: I didn’t believe that we need sweets in the morning.
(603) I: I was just wondering, I remember, you always told us, “Ah, have some cake for breakfast, you need it to get going.”

(606) E: Yeah, I needed to be [???] because Tarek [my brother] don’t want to eat any breakfast, don’t feel like it, you people don’t feel like eating any breakfast. I figure sweets, you like sweet, you like cakes and all this, and especially it has sugar in it—it collapse on you
later on, actually, sugar it gives you a little bit boost, and then makes the reaction for
later on [I say something unintelligible], yeah, ah, later on, but since you are kids and
you have too much, eh, eh power, and eh strength, and eh, emotion, and uh and you
run whole day, nothing will wear you, wear you off, so little bit of sugar is not gonna
wear you off, but is gonna give you a little boost in the morning to wake up, and at
least when you eat cakes, since you like the sweet, you eat a piece of cake, at least you
have something in your stomach since nobody wants to have breakfast. That's why I
said it's good for you. It's not good health-wise, healthy-wise, it's not healthy, it's, it's
not, not good, but it's not gonna harm you as a little kid. It harm you [more] if you
stay without breakfast, than eating a piece of cake, you know what I mean?

(631) I: How do your religious beliefs [????unintelligible, and he tries to make some part of it clear, I
continue with...] How, how does what you believe as far as religion, how does that
change what you would accept and reject in medicine?

(635) E: Well, not, eh,. I personally do not uh, believe that a people goes to church, and, and tear the, the
floor and lick the floor and scream, "God and Jesus" and all this, they gonna be cured.
I don't believe on that. God would relief you from your sickness or make it worse
depending how much you deserve to, to have. Eh, actually, I would say, on this earth
no one could get anything to harm him or give, eh, make his life and health better
without the sentence of God...

END TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE
FOLK MEDICINE: TAPE 2, SIDE B

(001) E: Religion—I don't care what you want to call God—you want to call him "God," is nothing but a name... the word "God," G-o-d is to specify, to nominate things is God. You can call him "Shit," you can call him "Jackass," you can call him uh... anything, that's language, that's to identify things. God is... is the power in this earth, in this life, I would believe on it. There is a power, whatever it is, yeah... and that's what is God is... I don't believe in the preacher and uh... those priests... priests and preacher. They go in gutters in church and make all kinds of a funny things and 99% uh of them, soon they walk outside get back to be miserable and worse than before, because they figure by going to the church God would love them, and they pray for god, and they did their duty, and that's it. So, "Here... what I owe you God, half an hour of uh... praying, and that's it, the rest is my problem—it's my body, it's my life, and in my own. And they go and do all kinds of a crummy things—that is not religion. That is not believing in God and you don't have to go to church. I haven't been in church for years, for forty years. Maybe I have gone after the forty years eh, once every 5-10 years, been inside them for, for a wedding and I go against my will. But if I walk into the church, I don't know who's on my right, I don't know who's on my left and what—I walk straight, I respect... the atmosphere of the church, and the... the presence of God in there, a, and I walk straight looking on the floor, and I stay where I stay, quiet without keep looking left and right—who's the... around, who's she, who's he or whatever... and laughing and kicking—I don't do all this. And if you cannot be, if you cannot make of your house... a church, you not a religious man. You don't believe in God. You make the church start here in your house—by building a family. Your kids, decent kids—give them the decency, the dignity, the pride, the... the honesty, the real life what it is and the belief, and be honest and being straight. And don't harm other people, don't cheat st... uh, steal, don't kill. Don't harm other people—love your neighbor the same you love yourself. Love your friends, and don't have double stand—don't stab anybody in the back. Don't do to other people what you don't like other people to do to... uh to you. This is my belief... this is my religion in here at home. Whenever you eat something, or drink something or get something good, or you go to sleep and you wake up—you thank God for it, because that... that's the gift of God.

(031) I: What I'm really trying to find out is... is there something that you, would you reject a certain medicine based purely on religion?

(032) E: No, no, I do not reject any medicine purely on religion uh, belief or not to belief. Uh, if God don't want you to have it, he wouldn't have gave you the facility to have it. He wouldn't have let you create it. So, those believe in religion that against treat... uh, uh sick people—they crazy and stupid. Because if God don't want you to have it he wouldn't have gave you any knowledge to create it, and make it. He gave you the earth, he gave you the... all the facility to create it, to treat yourself, to help you, because whatever happen in here is... uh happening on the permission, on the willing of God, on the agreement of God—he wants you to have it. If you win in a lottery a 100 million dollar, God wants you and not me to win it. And if he wants me to lose every penny I have, that means I deserve it because I am a... no damn good, and he wants to punish me, because I don't deserve to have this money. This is how I believe...

(043) I: So do you think people get sick because they're being bad?

(044) E: Well someone in the family—sometimes we say, we say in, in our belief that uh, the, the father... uh the... the, the children eats the sour grapes, the small grapes when it's sour and the... the parents will feel uh... the teeth uh... the sensitivity on the teeth—the sour bite on it, the hurt, in other words the, the kids get sick or get hurt or die... to have the parents... uh suffer because they don't deserve to have a kid—he doesn't want to let them have a kid, and he wants to punish them, punish them for it. And nothing will come—
good or bad—without God's willingness on that. He sent you the good and the bad, and no one gets anything without deserving...what he gets. Eh, what I was saying before, now I remember, in other words, when you go to sleep—you pray God to let you sleep and wake up in good health, and wake up, and when you wake up in the morning you thank God, at least thank God. You don't have to go and make those baloney that they make in the church, and singing for half an hour, by looking left and right and playing with the cat and eat and drink your coffee and make your prayer. You don't need that. The moment you open your eyes—you say, "Thank God million times, you made me wake up, and I'm healthy and I'm alive 100%...I'm not sick, thank God million times." That's good enough for him. He doesn't need to read the book for one hour—all kind of baloney, and your mind is someplace else, and you dressing and shaving and you...while you praying and thank him. That's not that. Just concentrate for half a minute, a minute and thank him. When you eat, concentrate 15 seconds, half an hour [minute], and thank him for it. You get something good, you win something, you make money, you...you live, you healthy, you get home safe, you not ki...killed or smashed on the road—thank God you get home safe. Think of God, in other words thank him, what...what I mean, think that there is God, think of God—that's good enough for him. You don't have to go to church and baloney in church with all these uh...double-face, double stand, then go outside and be miserable, and cheat...and steal, and be miserable to your neighbor and fight an'... be good person, be decent and honest. Love everybody same way you love yourself. This is the religion and it's good enough. You don't need all these baloneys they make it. That is a religion. Religion starts with your house, with your family, with yourself. I don't need to go to church. This here my, my...my church. If I can't make of my house a church, you tear that house down, it doesn't deserve to be uh, uh blessed by God. You have your...your house to be blessed first.

END OF INTERVIEW WITH EDMOND BOU-SAADA [TAPE SHUTS OFF]

INTERVIEW WITH RENATE BOU-SAADA

(077) I: Okay, where and when were you born? [background noise throughout as Edmond tries to fix something in the house] [tape shuts off--while tape off, she tells me the only German home remedy she remembers that Americans don't also know is, if you burn your finger, you should press it against your earlobe, because that will absorb the heat and relieve the pain]

(078) R: Uh, uh don't show a beautiful baby to anybody [interruption--tape shuts off]

(080) R: ...because that could put a bad eye on the baby...for good measure you should put uh...uh pictures of uh saints and the uh Virgin Mary in the bed of the baby make it uh...keep it healthy [interruption]...under the mattress, right? What else did they tell me? I can't remember anything. Uh...

(085) I: How...how did the stones...prevent[?????].

(085) R: The stones also...the...the...the blue stones are also for good luck.

(086) I: Just the blue or...or is it the material?

(086) R: Turquoise, no it's just the color blue means good luck.

(087) I: It means good luck or does it ward off the evil eye?

(087) R: Good...good luck and...and ward off uh evil eye [in background, Edmond comes in and asks "oh you have that in Germany, too? She answers, "No we're not talking about Germany" He leaves again shortly thereafter]. [tape shuts off]

(089) R: So, therefore, any kind of jewelry that a baby is given as a gift will have blue stones....turquoise or um...emeralds, or some kind, and so on."
(091) I: Emeralds?
105 (091) R: Emeralds are blue.

(091) I: They're green...
(091) R: Sapphires, then it's sa...sorry sapphires. Um...what else?...two p's...
(093) I: How many people told you that? A bunch or...
(093) R: Everybody, everybody especially the old ladies.

110 (094) I: He told me just a few.
(094) R: Bullshit! [both chuckle]
(095) I: Everyone? It doesn't matter what religion they were?
(095) R: Oh, well we only lived in...we lived in a Catholic area. So, naturally.....I can't tell you whether the Moslems have the same...

115 (097) I: It's mostly the old ladies? Not the young ones, too?
(097) R: The young...some of the younger ones are superstitious, but more the older ones.
(098) I: Can you think of any other superstitions that were [?????]
(098) R: Super...superstitions in...in relationship to babies?
(100) I: Or any...anything you can think of, I'll take them all.

120 (100) R: Maybe I can think of, if I would have known, I could have thought about it a little bit before.
(101) I: [?????] muffled: maybe, "I'll call ya on the phone"
(102) R: Okay.

125 (102) I: Well think for a couple of seconds... [Renate tries to shut off the tape, I stop her and say, "No, it stays on, it stays on the whole time..."]

(104) I: What did the priests tell you...after I was born?
(104) R: We didn't talk to any priests—the only priest we ever talked to was the uncle of Samir and Nabil and he was about as cosmopolitan and modern as can be. He looked like John Wayne, he...

130 (108) I: Did he also believe in the stone and the evil eye?
(108) R: I'm sure...I'm sure he didn't, but we didn't discuss that with him, I can't tell you.
(109) I: So what did you do with these stones after these people gave them to you?
(110) R: We put them in a...in a safe place to keep your...to...to keep your jewelry.
(110) I: And if they came over, did you take them out [chuckle] and put them on me? Or, did you just make it known that you didn't believe in it?

135 (112) R: Depends...sometimes I told them, but I was...I'm not very bland [blunt] about it when, you know people tell you that.
(113) I: What do you mean?
(113) R: I mean, I'm not gonna say, "I don't want your stupid stone because I don't believe in it"..."Thank you very much, that's beautiful, and thank you for your good wish...wishes for the baby, and we hope she'll grow up to be pretty." Ah, they...they also bundle kids...they bundle kids so to...to put the arm [demonstrates with rigid body] against one side, and put the...the blanket around and put the other one like this, and make it a li...so...solid, little bundle.

140 (118) I: Why?
(118) R: For three or four d...four weeks, so that it has straight legs, and straight nice arms. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way."
(120) I: That's ver...do they wash the baby in anything...[R: "No"]...besides water, soap [R: "No, no"], anything that's [R: "Not that I..."] supposed to help it [R: "Not that I remember"] Do they feed it anything that isn't.....

150 (122) R: No, but mothers stay in bed for two weeks being...being pampered like little...queens after they give birth.
(124) I: All mothers?
(124) R: All young mothers, because they're lucky, they have aunts and mothers, and grandmothers and all the dear neighbors and everybody is around, and they can help them.

155 (126) I: [??????unintelligible, maybe something about the fathers] ...and during birth?
(127) R: Absolutely nothing—wait there and then brag to the...to the uh...neighbors that he has a son, if he has a son, of course, having a son is terribly important.

(128) I: What about daughters?

(129) R: It's o...they're okay [laughs], they're okay, especially when they're pretty...well, you know your name, Abu-Saada, must have...me...me means that somewhere along the line, "Abu" meaning "father"—there was a very pretty, gorgeous, intelligent, I don't know what, daughter, blessed daughter that um...uh...that he was named after, because you're being called, as soon as you have a child, you're being called "the mother of Tarek" the...the child, "the mother of..." "the father of..." the child, of the oldest born.

(134) I: Well could it be...could it just be that he didn't have a son? So, they have to name him after the daughter?

(135) R: Um...could've been, I guess, but there must have been something special about her...of course, if they don't...uh, uh conceive within the next...after marriage, within the next three months, you know, they're totally upset, terribly upset.

(139) I: Does the woman think that, too?

(139) R: Yes...yes.

(139) I: They're upset also?

(139) R: And it could never, if they don't conceive, it's always their fault, could never be the husband's fault, uh...I was just thinking of something and it...flew away...flew away...um...huh!....They also let, let the baby lie on the, on the back—that's why a lot of Lebanese seem to have a round, flat head...head on the back—instead of putting the baby to one side or the other. That is what we believe in Germany—put it on one side and then on the other, and this way every feeding, you change the baby around, and then he has a very well, even-formed head, because the head is so soft it still does a lot of forming in those few months.

(149) I: Was there ever a question of going to a midwife...at this point?

(149) R: No, no, I would have never given birth anywhere else [than the hospital].

(150) I: Were people trying to convince you to?

(151) R: No, in Lebanon it's...in Lebanon it's...not done anymore, I...I mean very rarely at least as far as I know. Everybody that I know had their babies in the, in the hospital, unless it's, you know, last minute, so to speak emergency. But they have good hospitals, and there's no reason for them.

(154) I: Was there anything that a local woman could do [muffled:...??]

(155) R: Of course they had all kinds of...of ideas of whether you're gonna have a boy or a girl during pregnancy. They would put a...but that's not, that's not only in Lebanon, I think—they hang a ring on string and let it pendle [????] over the mother's stomach, and if it goes round in cir...I think in circles it's a girl, and I think if it swings back and forth, it's a boy. Of course, I'm all...you know, give it a little kick, and you can help that along a little bit, right?

(160) I: What other things?

(161) R: Oh, God...it's so hard to think of these things so...so quickly. They come to my mind if I talk to somebody and they say something, then ump...that's it, you know, that's what they told me or...

(164) I: But they did...there wasn't a woman in, in the village or area that you lived in that would have maybe had some kind of specialized knowledge...?

(165) R: There might have been, but I...uh I went, I had a lot of problems...see, the only pregnancy in Lebanon that I...I had in Lebanon was you. Tarek was...was here and in Germany, and in...in the onl...that was the only one, and uh, I had so many problems with you during your pregnancy that the first thing that we did, and especially since Tarek wasn't exactly easy, that we found ourselves a good doctor who spoke English, and the one I had was American trained and educated, even though it was in...in Ashrafiya and a little bit far away we decided that was what it was.
I: Were you happy with your experience?
R: Yes, with your birth, extremely, a hell of a lot more than in Germany.
I: Did you...were you ever, were you in control of it, or...?
R: No I wasn't...
I: Were you completely laying there?
R: They put, they put me out.
I: And you still liked it?
R: Yes, because I didn't have any problems. With Tarek I...I couldn't push, and with Tarek I had a lot of problems, a lot of pain, a lot of problems. Tarek had problems after he was born.
With you, I got in there, and he said, "I'm going to give you a shot," and I said, "What's that for?" and he said, "It's to ease your pain," I said, "I haven't got any, it just felt like a little bit of gas that wants to come out but doesn't." And, you know maybe...the whole trip to Ashrafiyah probably took twenty-two minutes and I had like three contractions. And, so he said, "Yeah, but you will," and it also put me to sleep. And, uh, when I woke up you were washed, and bathed, and...and there which I preferred...after Tarek. After the experience with Tarek, I would have taken anything.
I: What happened with Tarek?
R: Tarek...the only thing I remember that was very pleasant was they put me in a hot bath of water up to my neck. I'd gone first the night before because we thought that was labor—they sent us back home. The next morning during traffic hour, of course, we had to take an ambulance to get to the hospital, and then it still took until he was born around 2:30 or 3:00 o'clock, no he was born earlier—1:00—you were born around 2:30, or so. And they put me in that water—it was the only thing that was relaxing. They didn't give me anything, even though it was a specialty hospital for women and women's illnesses, didn't help me with anything, and then finally because I couldn't push, they took a towel, a big, fat towel, rolled it into a sausage, put it here [points to upper abdomen], and pushed the baby out—put it right under my breasts and pushed the baby out. And while she did this, she put her elbow into my ribs, and they were hurting so badly that six weeks after that I went and had an X-Ray taken because I was afraid my ribs were cracked, but they weren't. And then [section of about one minute deleted for privacy issues]. And nobody told your father—he was just pacing the floor out there, and whoever he asked didn't speak English. They didn't let him in.
I: Were there any beliefs about...scaring kids, that it would effect them adversely...physically. That some kind of fright or something like that [muffled...????]?
R: Not that I remember.
I: Is there anything you should be careful to keep away from kids?
R: I don't know, just all the neighbors!
I: And it was only women who could have the evil eye?
R: I think only women get evil eyes.
I: Why?
R: I don't know, why were witches only women? Why weren't there any male witches, who knows? [Edmond in background says, "male are good, women are witches" to which Renate rolls eyes and says, "um...huh"]
I: And what about diet, were you restricted from eating anything, just by what people told you, not your doctor, just people in the area?
R: I don't remember, do you remember anything, Edmond, that they might have told me while I was pregnant, not to eat [he says, "where"]...In Lebanon.
I: Not the doctors, but the people who lived around you, just advice.
(224) R: The women...you know how Aunt Raehel said, "Don't show the baby to anybody because of the evil eye—that's, of course, common in many cultures, the evil eye.

(225) I: Very many cultures, almost every culture has a belief in that somewhere...[no response]...Do you think it had anything to do with jealousy?

(227) R: Yeah, it probably does, yeah, but that doesn't make a pretty uh...uh ba...a pretty baby ugly. I mean either the baby is ugly, or the baby is pretty, and that's the way he's al...he or she is gonna be.

(229) I: No, but you said that the prettiest babies were likely to...

(230) R: Well, that's when they warned you more of it." [more background activity] [tape shuts]

(232) I: How much do you believe in...Papi's [=Dad's] home remedies, or the things that his parents or any of his family were always saying, and how much...how much faith do you put in that versus modern medicine?

(234) R: Oh, some of them, yeah...now I have not seen the deal with the tomatoes and the corn [she heard this earlier, as she heard much of the interview with Edmond], but uh, I'm sure that some of them work.

(236) I: So, when would you rather use that versus going to the doctor?

(237) R: Well, if it's proven, if I know somebody for whom it has worked, yes, I would use it. Somebody in my office these days is drinking a teasp...a teaspoon of vinegar every morning—not the...the distilled, but the...wine vinegar, and she feels that her arthritis in her fingers is...is hurting less. She read that the other day—that's one of those home remedies. Now it's not particularly Lebanese, I don't know whether they have this, but uh...uh some of...you know if...if I know that somebody has used it and...and is uh...was happy with it, I would try it, yes.

(243) I: Is that the only time you would use that or would you use that above going to the doctor?

(245) R: I would try it first, before I would go to the doctor.

(246) I: How come?

(246) R: Well because it's usually, uh close to hand, and you don't have to go anywhere, spend money, sit somewhere and wait. I have tried the thing with the coffee—of course when I hurt my finger, it was...not even the coffee should, could stop it, but I understand from somebody who is from Iraq. Namir, that a teabag would do the same thing, so it is apparently the caffeine in there, and a teabag would be a heck of a lot...cleaner and less messy than ground coffee.

(252) I: When would you laugh it off and say that it's silly?

(253) R: God, if I don't believe in it, but...

(254) I: You don't know what would make you believe in something?

(255) R: If it sounds too ridiculous. Look, [section of about 30 seconds deleted for privacy]

[Edmond comes in, tape shuts off]

(256) I: I wonder if you have more to say about when you choose which...which version, or how you do you blend the two, besides what you've told me [muffled:...?????]?  

(262) R: Yeah, if...if...I know somebody, yeah, if I know somebody for whom it has worked, and it doesn't sound totally, utterly ridiculous, if it's...you know if it's that, then I wouldn't use it, but, I always would give it a try first because it's...it's easy, it's at hand, it's free, it's right in your house, why...

(266) E: [Edmond in background, "If I have heard something, I personally do not try because somebody told me this, and I try it right away because, it could be his mind, he's sick and he took that and it's his mind that gets...[muffled:...?????] When I want to try something, I have to make sure, even herbs and things in Lebanon, I never tried it right away, just because so-and-so told me. People has big mouth and like to brag. So I try it or I do it if I had heard it from many different people [R: "...from a respectable person..."] respectable, they have tried it, and they are cured...

(273) R: ...But if I have a corn Edmond, Why don't I try the tomato, if it doesn't work, it doesn't hurt...

(274) E: ...Fine, but what I'm trying to say, somebody tells me, "Go and try to have sauce on your cake, and you won't...be...uh....."
(276) R: No...no, but that sounds utterly ridiculous...

(276) E: ...What I'm saying, "...and you'll be saved from cancer," let's say, "...and I was saved, and I'm cured, I tried it and I'm cured," [Renate in background periodically saying "No, no"]...maybe it wasn't cancer and in his mind he had that, and he ate that and now everything is fine. Many people get sick in their mind and you can give them a piece of sugar, and they are saved and, and they try it, and they cured, and they go and tell, "eat sugar, and you are saved." I have to hear and see that somebody really had that pimple, or that disease, or that thing, and he tried that and he was cured, the same as for Tom, Dick, and Harry, all 5-6 people because everybody react to medicine different than other, everybody react to that medicine different than other because that medicine could help that body, may not help the other. Could be the help of that medicine, the ingredient, the...the residue that is gonna help, has the minimum, minor, and it could have helped that guy because he has a minor problem, but doesn't... is not that is...is okay. That's why I said about that book, I don't believe on so many bullshit [R: "There are a lot of funny superstitions around the world"] I never heard them before, and if I had time in Lebanon, I wouldn't have bought it maybe, I would have read it somewhere first. But two weeks before I left, did not have time...

(293) R: Okay, I will...I will think about it if I come up with some things that I...[muffled:...????]...You want that superstition book? I think it's $8.00. [We talk about a book she saw at the store]

(298) I: That's what I'm doing now is folklore [we talk about how folklore is not necessarily false, just word of mouth, passed down. R says, Yeah but unfortunately, it gets changed and loses original meaning, and I say that's part of the interesting thing, that it wouldn't be kept if it wasn't meaningful to the people, changed or not.]

(307) I: Were there any herbal or other means of birth control...in Lebanon, besides...[????]

(309) R: No, they don't practice birth control, they want to get pregnant, immediately, on the spot, and the more the merrier.

(310) I: There is nothing women use?

(311) R: No. and that's not only in the...in the Catholic religion which, of course, forbids birth control in the first place, that's the same in the Islamic religion—the other part of Lebanon. Because they only get...they only get married in order to procreate. That's the only reason you get married.

(314) I: How many kids would most women have?

(315) R: In Lebanon the Christians did not have many because they're thinking ahead of what they have to pay later on.

(316) I: Well how would they keep from having more kids if they didn't use birth control?

(316) R: I guess abstinence or the rhythm method, I would assume, I don't know what else [Edmond says something in the background] that's in...that's in Lebanon, but it's imbedded in their religion. In Saudi Arabia where they don't have to worry about uh, overpopulation, they only get married, but the newer ones are thinking, "I have to educate that child." [E: "Yeah, but before they don't care because they want to become a majority"] Yeah, but that's only in...that's only in Lebanon. [E: "[muffled:...????]...well-educated, he would limit it to 2-3-4-or 5 or how much he can. Look at the others. They're not even married, those women...[????]...who have 8-9-12 kids and they're not even married"] Yeah, but they don't know any better, that's...yeah, but they're not thinking about it, they just don't know any better...[E: "No, they want more population"]

(327) I: ...And so there's nothing else you can think of--maybe you just didn't know because you were German and they didn't include you in talks behind the door...?

(328) R: That's...that's probably an awful lot because I don't speak the language [she spoke enough to get by with]...it'd be kind of...

(329) I: I mean, because they're gonna have limited it somehow. I mean it's not just by chance that they only have two or three.
R: I don't know, what do they do as birth control, the Catholic Church forbids it, Edmond, if they have three kids and they decide that's it? What do they do? Abstinence and the rhythm meth...method, maybe, huh? I mean the Catholic Church doesn't for...doesn't allow uh...um pills.

E: That was a long time ago. Before they used to go to the priest, and [R: "I know"] they used to kiss his hands, [R: "I know"] "Oh priest please give me a blessing." And now they give him a kick like I do in his ass and tell him, "Go to hell bastard!"

R: There was a story about uh...uh Selma, Edmond, because she...she had a daughter, and then for two years she didn't have any kids...something about the chickens, and I can't get it together anymore. And, then she had, what...six boys after that in rapid succession, every 10-11 months, another one, and she believed that was all because of....and I don't get the story together. It was the...a crazy story.

E: I don't know Rena...

R: It worked for her, but I'm sure it had nothing to do with whatever story it was. [E: (muffled:....????) so many things... (muffled:....????)] I know, but you see, she's talking about superstitions. Superstitions may be good or bad or otherwise. [E: (muffled:...something about it not being widespread (the belief?) in Lebanon)]

I: Well I wouldn't be... Papi, this wouldn't make it look bad because everywhere, all over the world there are people who believe, throw salt over your shoulder you keep bad luck away...

E: Well, look at it in here, Ingrid, people throw rice on a wedding [I: "Yeah;" R: "No, now they don't anymore, they throw bird food because it's no good for the ecology"]...and look at Nancy Reagan, [I: "Yeah, so"] First Lady [I: "Yeah, so...so, just because they don't believe"] she goes to the astrology...

R: That's what she's telling you, if you tell us your superstitions, that doesn't mean that we look badly at you...

E: Well, look, no, Rena, put that on hold a minute...[I: "No, this is for me, no one is going to listen to this!" yeah, I know, but you don't have enough on the tape, (muffled:....????)...now you can (muffled:....????)...uh, you don't listen in Lebanon to every single old witch around she want to give an idea. It's not because she heard it. Many of them they want to brag that they talk, they give advice, they know, they knowledgeable. Every witch around, they tell you something. You don't have to believe in everything and take it as this is a customs, or this is coming as...everybody in Lebanon...

I: No, I don't care what everybody thinks, if there is a thought, I'd like to hear it.

E: Yeah, I know, but it isn't...

I: It doesn't have to be part of the whole country [R: "That's what superstition is about, Edmond"] [E: "No, I am not...I am not..."]...it's carried by individual people.

E: No, no, people themselves create these things [I: "That's fine"] you saying...

I: There is something interesting in the fact that they created it, Papi. To me, there is something interesting--why did they create that? I don't care if it's only one person you've ever heard this from...

E: Let's say a woman sits like that [and she is saying], "And you know these uh...people there they...they drank the juice of a rice [I'm not sure this is what he said], and look at the healthy baby, they do...and this is fine." The other one, "Oh, you know, they wash their feet with uh...epson salt, and now they got six inches taller, and look at those, and those...those...happened to all those," and one woman sitting there like a stupid shit, "But, you know, my husband last time, he fried potatoes, and we ate the potatoes, and it...it been tried all over the country, believe me." It's a lie! from her, she just said it to interfere, [I: "What's wrong with that?"] to enter...to enter the subject [R: "To enter the discussion..."] (muffled:....????)

I: Fine...there's something...there's...her being Lebanese is gonna come up with something different in her lie than a French person, than a German person, their...they think differently because you raise them differently...
(379) E: What I'm...I know, what I'm trying to say is if you want to look for something it's been by
generation saying it is true...
(381) I: That's not always what I want to look for...
(381) E: And it is...it is, what I'm trying to explain, and it is true, and it is fact, and it's happening, and this
is the tradition, or this is this, or this is that, and it's been known all the time, it is
something. And just somebody, "Quack, quack, quack, quack," she likes to quack and
show in the neighborhood that uh...she knows everything and so she create stories and
bullshit on her own, which is a lie and doesn't mean anything, and senseless--just to
enter the subject and be...

(387) I: You're not catching my point [E: "I did catch your point"]'). No, there are two...there are two ways
something is traditional. First, there is the way that it's handed down--everybody
practices it--you see results, you see that this actually works,...

(391) E: I understand, but you have to divide that when you are going to put that in there...

(392) I: Papi, let me finish, would you let me finish, please? There's that way to be traditional, and it's
handed down from generation to generation. There's another way--someone lies, that's
traditional, too, because every culture has a way of lying, and if they...they wouldn't
have thought of...of the chicken, unless the chicken is part of their everyday life. We're
not going to sit here and say, "Yeah, she kissed the chicken, and now has a girl."
That's not an American way to lie, it's a Lebanese way to lie, so...

(398) E: I understand you 100%, perfect, what I'm trying to tell you [I: "It's divided"] is to divide...

(399) I: It is divided.

(399) E: How? How do you divide them in this when you taking every tradition there as...as it is a tradition,
same word [muffled:?????...]

(401) I: Fine. I'm asking you for superstitions. Superstitions are by definition personal or individual
ideas of how the world works--whether it's true or not, doesn't matter. It's how one
person thinks that the...their world works, whether they're lying or not, the fact that they
said it, the fact that they said it in front of people is what's interesting. [E: "Yeah, well
that's..."] Why is it chickens? Why is it dogs? Why is it a potato? Here it's not going
to be a potato, but it is there. In France it might be a snail, I don't know [laughs]...

(408) E: Yeah, but...eh, I know, but what I'm trying to...to argue about is not to mix...

(409) I: I'm not mixing them...what you told me before...

(409) E: ...the real good [I: "Yeah"] facts, I'm saying...

(410) I: Yeah, but they...they belong together. I mean, what you're, this is...it's gonna be divided. What
you told me so far has been the traditional, handed-down from generation to
generation, but the superstitions are just as interesting. They a...ah...bi...they give it a
bigger picture because it says something about the culture--and it's not bad or good, it's
just...it says something about the culture, just like their songs say something about
them. I mean, you're not going to make a value judgement on a song. So, I'm not
saying bad or good, I'm just interested in what they said...

(419) R: Only if I'm living on spongeweight [a reference to the Jimmy Buffet song that they laughed at and
called stupid ever since first hearing it years ago]...okay...[muffled:....????]

(420) I: Well if you think of any superstitions that you heard like that, write 'em down, please. I'm
serious, I'm very interested in them.

END TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO

END OF INTERVIEW
APPENDIX C

CLEARANCE BY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Texas A&M University

Form I
Summary Cover Sheet
Protocol for Human Subjects in Research

Please check off or provide details on the following (enter N/A if not applicable):

Principal Investigator: Ingrid Bou-Saada ☑ Faculty ☑ Graduate Student ☑

College/Dept: Liberal Arts / Anthropology ☑
Phone: 945-0541 / 764-6557 (HOME)

Project Title: "And My Father Told Me...": A Lebanese Immigrant Recounts His Life Story and Discusses Traditional Remedies and Cookery

PI's Subjective Estimate of Risk to Subjects: Low ☑ Moderate ☑ High ☑ None

Gender of Subjects: ☑ Male ☑ Female ☑ Both ☑ Age(s): 62 ☑ Total Participants (est.) 1

Source of Subjects:
- Psychology Subject Pool ☑
- Other TAMU Students ☑
- Community ☑
- Public Schools ☑
- Hospitals/Nursing Homes ☑
- Prisons ☑
- Other (Please specify) ☑
Location of Experiment (INTERVIEWS): family home, Houston, TX

Subject Recruitment:
- Telephone ☑
- Door to Door ☑
- Community Health Centers ☑
- Newspaper Ad ☑
- Meditation ☑
- Debriefing Form ☑
- Posted Notice ☑
- Other (Please describe) ☑

☐ Other (Please specify) He is my father

Invasive or Sensitive Procedures:
- Blood Samples ☑
- Urine Samples ☑
- Physical Measurements ☑
- Stress Exercise ☑
- (electrodes, etc.) ☑
- Review of Medical Records ☑
- Depression Inventory ☑
- Other (Specify) ☑

Sensitive Subject Matter:
- Alcohol, Drugs, Sex ☑
- Depression/Suicide (some depression, learning disability, but no suicide) ☑
- Other (Specify) ☑

Provisions for Confidentiality:
- Reply Coded ☑
- Secure Storage ☑
- Anonymous Response ☑

Use of Video/Audio Tapes:
- Retained Yes ☑ No ☑
- Length of Time to be Kept ☑
- Destroy/Erase Yes ☑ No ☑
- Other (explain) ☑

Use specified in consent form: Yes ☑ No ☑, no form

Use/Access to Tapes:
- No one will have access without written permission from my father and myself.

Exact Location Where Signed Consent Forms Will Be Filed: N/A

* Must include signature of committee chair on protocol.

Please attach

*** Please attach conditions, schedule of payment.

Principal Investigator: ☑
Date: 1/26/94

Graduate Committee Chair: ☑
Date: 1/26/94

Date Approved:
1/26/94

Department Head:
Date: 1/26/94

Institutional Review Board:
Date: 1/26/94

Scott & White ☑
Other ☑
FORM IV

EXEMPT PROTOCOL FOR
RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

(Please Type)

Project Title: "And My Father Told Me...": A Lebanese Immigrant Recounts His Life Story and Discusses Traditional Remedies and Cookery.

Principal Investigator(s): Ingrid Bou-Saad

Faculty _ Graduate X _ Undergraduate _

College/Department: Liberal Arts / Anthropology

Phone: 845-0541 / 764-6557

Address: 1301 Harvey Road #238, College Station, TX 77840

Source to Support for Study: Personal funds

Basis for Exemption: [Please refer to attached "Categories Exempt From Full IRB Review."]

Established Educational Settings/Normal Educational Practices

Use of educational anonymous tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, advancement)

Survey or interview procedures, unless subjects might be identified, put at risk or personal risk, and deal with sensitive matters of personal behavior

Observations of public behavior, unless subjects might be identified, put at risk or personal risk, and deal with sensitive matters of personal behavior

Anonymous collection or study of existing data - records, pathological or diagnostic specimens

Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies

Concise, non-technical statement about scientific purpose of study, including anticipated benefits to subjects.

The purpose of this study is to document one individual's repertoire of traditional remedies and cookery from his country of origin - Lebanon. In addition, I will collect his life story in order to compare his stories in a structured interview with those of the family. I will use the structured life story. The subject benefits by having a chance to be heard, to feel important. Concise statement about human subjects in study. Please specify number, age(s), gender, source of subjects, location of experiment and what will be required from subjects.

I have one male subject, 62 years old, who is my father. We conducted the interviews (not experiments) as well as recorded the life story at our home in Houston, TX. He discussed traditional Lebanese remedies as well as the preparation process of Lebanese food items during two separate interviews - the first in the fall of 1992, the second in the spring of 1993. In addition, he performed his life story on tape one month ago. He knew prior to each interview that I may use whatever he said on tape for my research (see attached letter Consent Form Attached: _yes X no) and could have withheld information at any time.

I have read and am familiar with the ethical principles and standards of the Declaration of Helsinki, and unreservedly subscribe to these principles.

Principal Investigator
Date: 24 January 1994

Graduate Committee Chair
Date: 1/24/94

Department Head
Date: Jan., 1994

Chair
Institutional Review Board
Date: Aug. 1991

Date Approved: August 1991
To The Institutional Review Board:

I consented to my daughter, Ingrid Bou-Saada, interviewing me, tape recording the sessions, and using the material for several research papers and for her thesis. I am aware that portions of the interview may be used verbatim in her work and have no objections to this. I understand that her thesis focuses on my life experiences, both positive and negative, as well as my knowledge of traditional Lebanese medicine and cookery.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Edmond Bou-Saada
APPENDIX D

BOU-SAADA FAMILY PHOTOS

EDMOND, TAREK, AND INGRID BOU-SAADA,
JOUNIEH, LEBANON - 1970

RENATE, TAREK, AND INGRID BOU-SAADA,
JOUNIEH, LEBANON - 1971
VITA

Ingrid Edmond Bou-Saada, the daughter of Edmond and Renate Bou-Saada, was born in Beirut, Lebanon and came to the United States in 1976 at age seven. Her family settled in Houston, Texas where she graduated from Hastings High School in 1986. She then attended Texas A&M University where she received a B.A. in anthropology and a B.A. in psychology in 1991, and, finally, an M.A. in anthropology, focusing on folklore, in December of 1995. While completing this thesis, she worked for over a year at the Family Health Clinic, a clinic primarily targeting low income clients, as a medical assistant and a counselor, and this experience helped her decide to shift her career focus. She plans to use her background in anthropology and psychology while pursuing a Ph.D. in public health, with an emphasis on reproductive choices and health care. Her permanent address is 1800 Holleman Ave. #219, College Station, Texas 77840.