Story and Narrative Noticing:
Workaholism Autoethnographies

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ABSTRACT

We enter this energetic debate over causes and consequences of workaholism using autoethnography. Our main contribution is to explore when our autoethnographies of workaholism experiences is narrative, and when it is expressive, living story. The difference is narrative is a re-presentation (following representationalism of a sensory remembrance), where as living story is a matter of reflexivity upon the fragile nature of our life world. We began through analysis of workaholism narratives in our own academic lives, and in the movies of popular culture, the influence of a particular meta-narrative – that of the American Dream. We proceed to juxtapose our own living stories in their struggle with those American Dream narratives.

INTRODUCTION

We believe that autoethnography is a methodology with something important to contribute to workaholic research and theory. We are a female and a male author, who use autoethnography to explore the differences we theorize between narrative and story. If we were only to approach autoethnography from a retrospective, representational sensemaking narrative perspective, then we would be omitting what's most important to us about living story. Living story recognizes the plurality of selves that constitute our identity, and our reflexivity that is out of time, more upon what lies below and above. We believe this difference, and this relationship of representational narrative and living story, will contribute a dialectical understanding of workaholism, for future research.

Our take in the present study is not to replicate the empirical findings in previous studies of workaholism (e.g. Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Burke, 2002, 2001; Burke & MacDermid, 1999, Schaef & Fassel, 1998; Scott, Moore & Miceli, 1997). Rather, we intend to use our gendered autoethnographies to inquiry into facets that have yet to be investigated, and can therefore constitute a contribution to future studies.

One key facet that lies beyond the understanding of the way workaholism is perceived by those who it affects (see for example Burke, 2001, 2002; Burke & MacDermid, 1999; Spence & Robbins, 1992), is the nature and extent of attempts to grapple with the addiction to work (Schaef & Fassel, 1988) on a personal level, that is, on the effort of the addict to release themselves from its clutches. We do this here through an attempt to resituate and restory (Boje, 2001) our own experiences with over-commitment and our variously unhealthy approaches to our work. We attempt to look through and beyond our personal narratives, and the meta-narrative of the American Dream to better understand our own ethical answerability.

We turn next to a brief review of how workaholism and our autoethnography method might answer questions about the ethics answerability.

I. BRIEF REVIEW OF WORKAHOLISM, AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND ETHICS OF ANSWERABILITY

Workaholism - Since Burke (1999a) argues that there are gender differences in workaholism, we thought a male (Dan) and a female (Jane) autoethnography (explained below) would serve as the basis of our exploratory study. Burke's study found that females and males are similar on three workaholism components: work involvement, feeling driven to work, and work enjoyment. Females, however, reported higher levels of particular workaholic job behaviors: perfectionism and job stress (that lower their satisfaction with work).

There is growing awareness that postindustrial work organization arrangements of late modern capitalism promote workaholism (Boje & Rosile, 2006; Burke, 2001; Scott, Moore, & Miceli, 1997). What is less understood is how the narrative of work in late capitalism comes to shape people's life. We know from Burke's (2001) empirical results that organizational values support a life-work imbalance of 530 MBA graduates using survey research. Burke calls for more research attention to workaholism, and inquires into the life-work balance.

As our interest is in narratives that pattern past behaviors and set expectations, we want to review brief what empiric research tells us thus far about workaholism patterns. For example, Hamermesh and Slemrod (2005), taking a more sociological approach, they

find that workaholics fall into two types of accounts. One in which the future negative consequences of one's workaholic behavior are ignored. The other narrative account is where one understands the health and relationship consequences on an intellectual level, but lacks the self-control to battle their addiction.

The Good/Bad Workaholic - One workaholism narrative prominent in the research is that being a workaholic can be a very positive life style, almost in defiance of the general metanarrative of the disastrous consequences of overwork. We will suggest that this has something to do with the interplay of the American Dream (rags to riches by putting one's nose to the grindstone to the exclusion of all else) and the bourgeois middle class narrative pausing from work to notice and participate in the present 'little' moments of relationships to family and friends is equally important. Scott et al, (1997), for example, identified three types of workaholic behavior: compulsive-dependent, perfectionist, and achievement-oriented work. They view each type, as bad or good, depending upon consequences for the individual, organization, and society at large. They caution managers to not make judgments about the positive or negative effects of workaholism until more research is published. In sum, the results of this empiric work on workaholism show that organizational values supporting work-personal life imbalance were significantly higher in workaholic than non-workaholic types. Practical implications for organizations and management are offered.

There also appear to be gender differences in workaholism with respect to the way the phenomenon is experienced, and to its consequences. Doerfler & Kammer (1986) investigated the workaholism from the perspective of gender and sex role orientation in which the largest percentage of unmarried workaholics were female, and with regard to role orientation, the female workaholics reported more characteristics that were considered masculine or androgynous. Spence & Robbins (1992) used a collection of measures to compare men and women in academia on the basis of their relationship to their work, along with corollary behaviors and health issues. Work by Burke (1999) extends these earlier studies, leveraging their definitions and measurements in an effort to understand the extent to which "workaholism components are enacted in the workplace…different[ly] for women and men" (p. 343).

These studies point to a range of variation in the nature and consequence of workaholism across large samples in organizational contexts. They provoke for us questions regarding the way workaholism functions at the level of individuals – male and female – who struggle with its complex ramifications as an addiction (Schaef & Fassel, 1997), and the ways in which individuals with an inclination to extricate themselves from its addictive grasp attempt to do so. We therefore leave more extensive reviews of workaholism to other articles in this special issue. Our take here is to parcel out some agreed findings that open up spaces for our autoethnographic inquiry. We turn now to what we propose as a contribution to ethics.

Answerability - The ancient divorce of narrative-representation from story-life needs to be deconstructed to show this two-sided answerability. Answerability is a theory of ethics in the work of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1990, 1993). *Answerability* has been defined by Bakhtin (1993: 42): "An answerable act or deed is precisely that act which is performed on the basis of an acknowledgment of my obligative (ought-to-be) uniqueness." There are two kinds of answerability. The first is content answerability, which is about verification and structure of the one's account. The second is moral answerability, one's compellent obligation to intervene in the life world, in the moment of Being. To us, this has a compellent call: story is suffering. I am compelled to story in contradiction to narrative that drains my identities, because narrative modernity is a kind of "cultural nihilism" (Bakhtin, 1993: 55). Answerability is what Bakhtin (1993: 38) calls "*faithfulness* [being-true-to]" in the form of putting my signature below the storytelling I undertake as an obligation to tell. It is my unique side of story, one no one else in the world can tell faithfully, and I tell it with active answerability.

To date, narrative ethics has overshadowed story ethics. Adam Newton's (1995) *Narrative Ethics*, and finds a duality of *narrative answerability in texts*, over marginalized concern with the *sociology of the corporeality of storytelling. Story ethics*, we posit, need not accept the duality of textuality over orality, and can instead construct a moral answerability that is socially conjunctive rather than either/or (Boje, 2007b). Recognizing the social aspects of storytelling, in relation to textuality and orality, does this. The contribution to our study, a 'critical theory ethics' is to suggest how Mikhail Bakhtin's (1990, 1993) *answerability* goes beyond Newton's framing of 'narrative ethics'

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capturing storytelling as what writers do. Newton attacks deconstruction for not tending more specifically to ethics (See Boje, 2007b, for review). Yet, we find that what he writes about narrative is tightly constituted around literary writing, limited to text verifability (i.e. to content answerability). His narrative ethics removes living as well as oral storytelling from the narrative playing field. More accurately, it imprisons storytelling within narrative writing.

The power of narrative is for Newton, in its textual features, its form, and hermeneutic-layering (Newton, 1995: 289-290, 304). But to Walter Benjamin (1936: 93), the layering comes from many rounds of telling listening and retelling, in a "slow piling on one top of the other of thin, transparent layers which constitutes the most appropriate picture of them and in which the perfect narrative is revealed through the layers of a variety of retellings." Newton seems to truncate storytelling into written narrative forms, structures, and hermeneutic reading, at every turn of the page, but not the king of rounds of listening and telling in a tribe of storytellers, in a community of craftspeople.

Bakhtin (1981: 9-10) sees the phenomenon as multi-layered in a socially-dialogic way. Newton (p. 28) cites Bakhtin's focus on "the living word" but restricts it to narrative text, and to readers reading texts. Newton (1995: 55) reflectionism self-deconstructs when he asserts narrative texts "reflect states of reality" and "such reflectionism" does not need to be treated as "naïve." It self-deconstructs again when Newton (1995: 24) says, "I am aware of the dangers of collapsing the difference between the world of the text and the world which this final example of life-turned-into-story raises." Newton's 'reflectionism' claim is that the world of novels reflects the wider world of social discourse.

The dominant plot is what Boje (2007a) calls 'control narrative' of coherence. The control narratives are "texts" that are supposed to "tax readers with ethical duties which increase in proportion to the measure with which they are taken up" (p. 292). Newton's (1995: 101, bracketed addition, ours) "essential principles of narrative ethics [are] at work in the novel" and nowhere else. It is the novel that "summons readers" to ethical answerability (p. 101). Newton (1995: 292) says, "Narrative ethics is not merely a property of texts." Yet, when we read his principles of narrative structure and

hermeneutics, it's all about textual composition, the writing of novels, and not about the sociality of storytelling, in its many stylistic forms.

In sum, Newton picks up the gauntlet of answerability from Bakhtin, but restricts it to textuality. Our contribution here is to look at more reflexivity kinds of story ethics. We intend to accomplish this by looking at *narrative ethics* as content answerability of textuality, and *story ethics* (in the Benjamin, Bakhtin, & Derrida sense) as more about compellent complicity in the life world.

In sum, answerability has something different to do with narrative (content answerability) and story (moral answerability). This we, develop in the next section. Haivng established our ethical perspectives, we turn now to a brief exploration of additional differences we see between narrative and story, not as a duality, but as differences that are in special interrelationships.

Narrative and Story In narrative sensemaking, the retrospective approach (Weick, 1995) dominates the field of organizations studies. As we proposed above, we believe content answerability has more to do with narrative, in particular, the verification of representational content. Living story, by contrast, has more to do with moral answerability, our reflexivity upon how we may be the only person in the moment of once-occurent Being that can act upon a story.

Living story sensemaking, by contrast, looks at our own multiple interpretations, and at introspections that lie beyond representational models/frames/logics/grammars. We argue that a retrospective narrative approach privileges representationalism. Representationalism fits 'events' into causal models, and linear-sequential depictions. Since Aristotle (350 BCE), the linear sense of plot having a beginning, middle, and end has been the backbone of narrative. Narrative requires story to be a *proper* "imitation of an action that is complete in itself, as a whole of some magnitude... Now a whole is that which has beginning, middle, and end" the definition of coherent narrative (Aristotle, 350 BCE: 1450b: 25, p. 233).   We think there is a difference between narrative noticing, and what we propose to contribute as, 'story noticing.'

Narrative noticing looks at what Spivak (2006) calls "identity poetics." Be it textuality, orality, or visuality --- narrative reduces the "variability of identification: (Bal, 1999: 185). For Bakhtin (1973: 12) "narrative genres are always enclosed in a solid and

unshakable monological framework." In sum, narrative is monological/monovocal, even in its act of double narration (including some sound-bites used by some other narrators), is a linearization, a beginning, middle, and end (BME) form-formula of identity identification.

Narrative is so caught up in theoretic-sensemaking it has no access to story as now-ness in ongoing events of Being. Derrida (1979: 78, bracketed additions ours), for example, says of narrative:[1]

> A demand for narrative [is], a violent putting-to-the-question an instrument of torture, working to wring the narrative out of one as if it were a terrible secret… [With] archaic police methods… psychiatric, and even psychoanalytic [methods]

There are several besides Bakhtin, who have noticed the dialogic manner of stories. One is Italo Calvino (1979: 109):

> I'm producing too many stories at once because what I want is for you to feel, around the story, a saturation of other stories that I could tell… A space full of stories that perhaps is simply my lifetime where you can move in all directions, as in space, always finding stories that cannot be told until other stories are told first.

Jacque Derrida (1979: 99-100):

> Each "story" (and each occurrence of the word "story," (of itself), each story in the story) is part of the other, makes the other part (of itself), is at once larger and smaller than itself, includes itself without including (or comprehending) itself, identifies itself with itself even as it remains utterly different from its homonym.

What we theorize is not a duality of narrative and story. Rather, one defines the other. One is in double evolution with the other. Bakhtin builds on Husserl's *Lebenswelt* (Lifeworld that is open ended, multidimensional, and embodied consciousness not restricted to perceptual sensory field).[2] In short, story noticing takes us into more intersubjective (transcendental) consciousness, whereas narrative (in organization studies, in particular) is cognitive-perceptual sensemaking.

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[1] The Derrida quotes on narrative and story come from an essay, 'Living On – Border Lines' in Deconstruction and Criticism (NY: Seabury Press, edited by Harold Bloom, 1979)

[2] See points 2a and 2b on Husserl's lifeworld concept http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/#EmpIntLif

Benjamin's (1936: 83) reflections on the works of Nikolai Leskov, "teaches us that the art of storytelling is coming to an end. Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly." Storytelling was once "the securest among our possessions" this "ability to exchange experiences' (p. 83) has been taken from us. In terms of ethics, "the art of storytelling is reaching its end" says Benjamin (1936: 87) "because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out" which is evident in the concomitant transition that "quite gradually removed narrative from the realm of living speech and at the same time is making it possible to see a new beauty in what is vanishing."

Benjamin's (1936) storyteller, who is in the "milieu of work— the rural, the maritime, and the urban," is left at the margin in Newton. In its place Newton focuses on the literary writer and the literary critic of the literary writer. He does not skin into the lowly life of the storyteller who is the worker. Newton's storytellers do not begin their story by telling the "circumstances in which they themselves have learned what is to follow" (Benjamin, 1936: 92). The plot in Newton's (1995) *Narrative Ethics* is that the written narrative affords the structures and forms that implicate the reader in ethical answerability, a responsibility for readers to what they read. The dominant plot is that using writerly tricks of rhetoric, the reader becomes answerable. "And more that we are responsible for knowing" due to the "catharsis of narrative ethics" (Newton, 1995: 292). (p. 292).

In simple terms, studying our own workaholism, we intend to look at the interplay of representational narratives with story introspection. On the one hand, narratives of what work is about, how culturally work is socially constructed as the center of life in late modern capitalism. On the other hand, stories allow one to peek out at one's work life, and pose counterstories to culturally dominant narratives.

We turn next to a brief overview of autoethnography.

Autoethnography - The value of autoethnographic inquiry is in exploring multiple layers of consciousness, multiple selves, and what be believe to be the interplay of narrative and story. Carolyn Ellis (1997), for example uses autoethnography to make retrospective and introspective forays into the self. Ricci (2003) says that autoethnography is as much about 'discovery' as it is about telling a something in a narrative order. Autoethnography is most often described as a personal experience

narrative of the author/researcher, which extends sociological understanding (e.g. Sparkes, 2000). Carolyn Ellis (1999), on the other hand, looks at "evocative stories that create the effect of reality: in their detail, their multiple voices, and their focus on moral, ethical, and political consequences. She builds on Gregory Batson who says, "You are partly blown by the winds of reality and partly an artist creating a composite out of the inner and outer events."

Autoethnography is a recognized autobiographical genre of qualitative research (Becker, 2007; Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Dent, 2002; Ellis, 1997, 2003; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Flemons & Green, 2002; Humphries, 2005; Keisinger, 2002; Reed-Danahay, 1997a, b; Ricci, 2003; Vickers, 2007). Autoethnography can be defined as "the practice of attempting to discover the culture of self, or of others through self" (Ricci, 2003: 593). Goodall (2000) calls this the "new ethnography"...that which is "shaped out of a writer's personal experience within a culture..." (p. 9). Autoethnographic researchers situate themselves in social, historical and cultural context (Reed-Danahay, 1997; Ellis & Bochner, 2000), and take a stance against silent authorship ways to create so-called 'objectivity' (Ricci, 2003). Humphries (2005) proposes that autoethnographic vignettes enhance the representational and reflexivity richness of qualitative research. Gergen & Gergen (2002) also follow a narrative representational path. When such stories are used to illustrate or enrich narrative accounts, we wonder if this leads to narrative hegemony.

Next, we examine our own autoethnographies – first Dan's, followed by Jane's.

II – OUR AUTOETHNOGRAPHIES

Dan's Narrative: I am an academic workaholic. I have been acutely aware of being workaholic since coming back from Vietnam. It was in Vietnam that I overworked myself until I could no longer sleep, and kept working until I was taken to a hospital for a rest. I had no idea that at 22 years of age, one could burn out. [Insert narrative from Boje Feminism paper here]

After two stays in the hospital I got the message. I needed to change my ways. Mostly I was just scared to death by the experience, and decided to prove my brain was not broken by reading a hundred pages a day of every kind of book imaginable (from

philosophy to the history of the Beatles). With six months left on my tour, I read more than I had read in my 12 years of schooling.

Before the Vietnam experience, growing up in a workaholic family, I just thought I was pretty much like everyone else. As my dad told me, "when you stop working, you die." He kept working till he died, and that was that. Working 14 to 16 hour days, seven days a week seemed normal. I want to say I am no longer a workaholic, that I have conquered the monster, but that is not yet the case. Being a workaholic means I push family relationships and all manner of leisure to the margins in my daily patterns. Overwork puts a strain on the family, as well as the work relationships. Crisis ensues. I promise reform, and for a while, I try to balance my life, but only for a while. Workaholism means I am driven. I think if I slow down I will surely die. So pretty soon I am pulling as many hours as before. I understand the concept of balance between work and relaxation, but often times relax is in the service of being able work harder.

In 1985, I took a Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) assessment. The practitioner said, "I can resolve the workaholism, but you should know that your productivity will suffer. You life will be different than it is now. So think it over." I thought it over, and did not go back.

I got some counseling, now and again, in behavioral therapy in 1987 and in script therapy in 1989. Twenty-five years of marriage, three wonderful children, and I worked without noticing just had bad things had gotten. It was the usual account one hears, not taking meals together as a family, working on different schedules, dreaming and waking moments all about the work. My children learned to pretty much ignore me. They learned not to interrupt Daddy when he worked, which meant never interrupt. After my divorce in 1993, I did several personal development seminars (each a week long). The counseling and seminars all seemed to help around the edges, but the workaholic pattern continued.

In my second marriage (1996), I did some reform. I put some limits on the working day. Stopped working through the weekends, at least not both days. I learned to meditate. I kept up my jogging until about 2003 when the knees said, 'enough of that.' I had a career to build. That is what I told myself. But when I broke the hundred published journal article mark I had set for myself, it seemed I was doing more each year, not less. The number of conference, in the US and in Europe, the number of book and research article projects grew and grew. I learned to prioritize a bit, to not be a total perfectionist in every project, to do 'good enough' in some of it, to let some things slide and focus my creative energy on the important ones. But the pile of work grew: there were the articles needing review, journal editorships (including Tamara Journal which feel 2 years behind in publication), founding and leading a conference, starting two consulting companies, doing speaking engagements, doctoral committees, etc. The usual academic workload. When I list it out, I get tired just thinking about it.

Narrative Noticing – The narrative that runs me goes something like this. When I came back from Vietnam, I started college. Being the first in my family tree to go to college, I did not have a clue about college life. My dad took me to B'nai Brith and got my IQ test. They would not tell me the results (still don't know if that's bad or good). All they told me, "work hard as you can and you just might make it." So I did. I graduated first in my class from Burlington Community College (now Burlington College), and tied for first from Rider College (now Rider University). This got me a fellowship to University of Illinois, which with my GI bill and a pack of loans got me through the masters and Ph.D. I worked hard, but so did everyone around me. It did not seem unusual. When I went to UCLA for my first assistant professor job, I worked hard, but it was not enough. I did not get tenure. It did not matter how hard I worked. I just could not do it. My teaching suffered because I was terrified in the classroom. These students were very different from the ones I taught in Illinois. They were masters and Ph.D. students, not undergraduates. And many of them were brilliant, and more than a few challenged me in the classroom. What is a young upstart like you doing here teaching me? Don't you know my dad owns several companies, or I have my own company, etc? I got so intimidated by UCLA there were times I just could not speak, would not speak to anyone, except to mumble a few words to a class and go back to my office. The marriage

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collapsed along with my teaching and research scores. My wife left me, taking the kids with her. We separated for a year, and got back together. I left academia vowing never to come back. I had failed at academia and that would be the end of it. So I founded a business with a couple of friends. We each worked pretty hard, but soon I was pulling more than my fair share. And the partners eventually went their own ways. After some times of misery, I decided to give academia another go. I did a walk on at Loyola Marymount, and got a temporary job teaching several sections of a management courses. This time I dug in, worked as hard as I could, and by the end of the term, I was teacher of the year for the entire university. And my contract got extended one more term. It happened again: teacher of the Year. And I was given a tenure track contract. I got a promotion to associate, then to full. It was a no brainer, I had several articles in the top journals in my field, as well as another book, and I had taken editorship of an unknown journal and turned it into something that was tops in its field. That is when my marriage collapsed again, and we separated for good, filed for divorce and went our separate ways.

The narrative, thus far, carries several irrational assumptions: You are worthless without your work. You will die without your work. There is nothing after work. Your relationships come out of the work. Your worth as a human being comes from the work. It also has the people-pleasing aspects: people like you for your work.

In 1996, I moved to New Mexico. My coach, Toni Delgado, has been working with me for about two years. How do I tell you this? Toni is a Native counselor who believes in energetic healing, rebirthing, animal guides, and spiritual practices that are not in the guidebook for overcoming workaholism. For my spiritual guide animals, I chose a snail and a turtle. Both are animals that take their time, go slowly, and do not overburden themselves. They get me into the moment of Being. My definition of success is being present in the moment, not obsessing on all that needs doing. There is always more work to do. I am learning to say 'no,' to clear out projects in process before taking on more. As I said, I am not there yet, but slowly I am noticing the narrative that runs my life, and the story possibilities. Nov 27th 2007 I decided to say no to a conference and to gig teaching a doctoral seminar at another university. This will give me more energy to do the March conference and consulting workshops in Philadelphia. It's not quite the way to think about balance.

Jane's Narrative: In an effort to arrive at my narrative free from any special manipulation for this article, I located an earlier piece of writing that expresses my relationship with work. The text here comprises verbatim selections from my "life experience history" written for a Life History graduate class. I was given this assignment in the spring of 1999, to be submitted prior to my first classes with the faculty and the members of my doctoral cohort, with whom would spend the next two years in classes at Columbia University. The assignment from the syllabus was follows:

> Write a paper (approximately 10 pages double spaced) about any
> experiences in your life, however tangential or remote that connection
> may seem – that you believe were influential in shaping your practice as
> an adult educator. These might include (but do not have to include): where
> you were born and grew up, family and childhood experiences,
> experiences with formal education, close friends or other people who had
> a strong influence on you, your first job experiences, early and/or
> significant experiences as an adult educator. (unpublished syllabus,
> Columbia University Teachers College, 1999).

For our purposes here, I have selected representative passages that resulted when I followed those instructions literally and closely. This assignment had nothing to do with workaholism, and yet seen now from a distance the result fairly screams of denial, and illustrates a carefully crafted defense against revealing the truth that I feared would indict me as something other than a success story. These excerpts were chosen based on what I see now as a clear connection to my relationship to work, and the manifestation of my workaholic tendencies of the course of a lifetime of conditioning.

My early years were spent in the country, consorting with adults until it was finally time for me to go to school. My family in the last few generations on my father's side was farmers. My paternal grandfather knew which mushrooms were safe to eat, and he could tell the next day's weather by standing in the yard at dusk…. My family taught me what they knew for sure, but they sent me to school with the notion that teachers are a breed apart, that they merit close attention and great respect, and that I was to do everything they instructed. My parents relied on them to teach met what they felt they were unequipped to teach. Still, it was my parents who first gave me the responsibility of

learning something new, every day, long before I started school. To this day, I test myself before I sleep: What have I learned? And now I wonder something else: Who has learned something from me?

[In eighth grade, getting ready for high school,] I wanted to take the honors track because my sister had. Mr. Harrison, my English teacher, said to sign up for the "college level one" courses – not honors – because it would be easier for me to pass. It made me cry, but I did it. At the end of my freshman year when I said I wanted to transfer to honors English for the rest of high school, my father had to go to the school and insist on it. The first paper I turned in as a sophomore in honors English (on the greed motif in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*) came back to me with Mrs. Davis's trembling red ink on the bottom: "A good effort for someone with your background. B-" The underlining is hers. I never showed anyone. And I was angry. By the end of my junior year I had taken every English elective the system would allow – all honors and, after Mrs. Davis' class, all A's. I was going to have too many credits in English. I was banned from English for my senior year. No classes. They wanted me to go to two study halls a day instead. My father made his second trip to the school, this time declaring himself a taxpayer. I audited Creative Writing and British Literature that year. My teachers were amazed that I actually did the work.

One night, after dinner, I stood at the end of the table while my parents had their coffee. I had prepared for this moment. I knew they would find the notion of majoring in English ridiculous. They were Yankees, after all, and this was just not practical. But I had my arguments ready. I broke the news to my parents bluntly…. I laid out every argument I had expected them to make, that I expected to counter. When I was done, my mother said to me, and I will never forget it, "But Jane, will you love it?" I said that yes, I thought I would. "Then that's fine," she said. "If you love it, you will be magnificent."

Fitchburg State College in Massachusetts has a special place in my heart…now. But I knew something when I went there: I knew that no one outside of eastern Massachusetts had ever heard of it. I went there because it was all that I could afford. Tuition was a flat semester rate, and I was determined to get my money's worth. I took a

double major and a minor. I strove for a perfect cum, and if it weren't for statistics, I would have had one. I loved every class. I never cut. I never slept late….[When I wanted to transfer to a brand name school in my sophomore year, my mentor on the faculty] agreed I could be successful…. but that I would have to spend time establishing my reputation there…. if I stayed [at Fitchburg], I would have opportunities that I might miss out on at a bigger school….I was still working retail, but they got me a second job…on campus. I was the editor of the literary arts magazine….I taught a section of freshman composition to complete my requirements for student teaching….

There were no [teaching] jobs when I graduated in 1981. We were in the middle of massive tax cuts. The same professor convinced me to go to graduate school, to find a way to swing it….I found an accelerated masters degree that I could do in a year. I borrowed more money and I went to brand name school where the Fortune 500 recruited on campus. RPI's campus was laden with testosterone, and everyone had something to prove. Me? I wanted to survive….I had a plan. Hewlett Packard offered me a job in California in my first semester and I was off like a shot. I was going for two years, and then I would be back….

After five years, I left HP because….I wanted new problems to solve, and they wanted me to keep solving the same problem, faster, and in different places with different people. I could feel things getting complicated. I hardly ever had any money. There were way too many excesses in Silicon Valley in the 80's, and I liked them way too much. They compensated for the long hours. I wanted to make up for all the "lost time" in college when I was studying hard and my friends were partying. You could get whatever you wanted, 24/7, and I was beginning to want it all, all the time. I made a new plan – to leave. When I couldn't get a job in New England – the land of restraint – from so far way, I got in my car and started driving….I arrived on the East Coast clean and sober, certain of nothing in particular, but certain, nonetheless.

My first boss at Otis Elevator was just that: A Boss. He was horrible….I paid my dues to United Technologies with that guy, but Otis reimbursed those dues another way,

when they sent me around the world, and then expatriated me to London for three years. The London job was hard – I was a woman, a "Yank," and I was from corporate – that was three strikes against me, and any respect I earned there was hard won. But I had great opportunities. I had a big budget. I built a training center with an international reputation, and I worked all across Europe. I was a loaned executive, teaching in the townships and squatter camps in South Africa. I taught in China and….

These experiences, and others in between, are not, I think accidental. Rather they have tugged me to where I am now: on an open playing field. Armstrong. It is a place where my ideas have value. It is a place where I am accountable for providing ways and means that help people discover new doorways, open them, and gracefully step through….

Narrative Noticing: This document is narrative representationalism taken to the extreme. I represent my past (from my childhood to 1999) in terms of the then-present (1999) and its requirement to write a "life experience history." The narrative is a process of leaving-out decisions. As a still-closeted vice president in the Fortune 500 (Armstrong), I chose a narrative that would represent me as a capable, ambitious woman who peers into challenge and adversity in pursuit of opportunity. Looking at the decontextualized text - which is how my then-new colleagues in the doctoral program looked at it – we see a narrative that runs something like this: I come from the country with few monetary advantages. I am lucky because I have parents who love me, and tell me I can do anything. I come from Yankee stock. We New Englanders persevere in the face of all odds. What matters most is hard work. Listen to authorities, be obedient, and follow the rules. Faced with a challenge, keep trying and you will thrive. Opportunity manifests from hard work, and opportunity manifests *as* more hard work, which you will also do, rising up with each new wave of work. Never stop and it will pay off. Rest is a getting ready to do more work. When people say that you do not work hard enough (as Mrs. Davis told me in sophomore English), you keep it a secret. Instead of confiding in anyone, lower your head, put your nose further to the grindstone, and work even harder. Take on more. Do better, better than even "they" could. Show "them."

The text I include here is heavily excerpted, with only exemplar passages from the narrative I submitted at Columbia in the summer of 1999. There are many others passages, and while I find them personally compelling, they are no different from these with respect to the narrative refrain. It is the same riff over and over: work hard, keep your failures secret, learn from them, and lick your wounds in private. Because you have not been killed by your wounds, they will make you stronger. (I grew up going to a Sunday school at the First Church in our small town and basic Christian homilies, simple and at the same time problematic, are unconsciously integrated here.) So, at the same time that you keep your wounds a secret, because they shame you, you do not waste them. Waste not, want not.

Taken as a whole, the pattern these show is, to me, alarmingly consistent and quite disturbing. It is disturbing not only because I believed the narrative I constructed (and was endeavoring at the turn of the century to live it), but because while it is not "counterfactual" (Flowers, 2007, p. 3), the narrative is the product of a careful process of leaving out that results in a lie. The lie is not produced with words but, as Adrienne Rich says, "with silence" (1979, p. 186). The story is true, but it is only skeletal. A listener cannot recognize the full flesh of the story – or anticipate a divergent future story from it – with any accuracy - from the text in black. Too much has been clawed away from the bones. It exerted on me the energy of the undead (ZZZZZ, 2007), allowing me to actually live the lie it narrates. It caught me, and my story. I have come to notice the way in which this narrative was built around, and then fostered, my decision to stay in the closet. Indeed, being a lesbian is a catalyst for my hard work. Because I never talk about my sexual orientation, I never talk about my belief that proving myself to be a "value-added" member of the team would somehow act as an insurance policy. It would somehow make up for my aberration, so that if I were ever outed, "they" would have to think long and hard about losing such a "high performer." Like Dan, I too am noticing the story possibilities. I am out at my university, and I tell people I have made a decision to let the chips fall where they may. Like Dan, I am not perfect at this. Secretly, I still have my sights set on conducting more research and producing more articles for tenure than the conventional wisdom recommends, compensating for what the committee may see as the "deficit" of my lesbian-ism.

Next we perform two kinds of analysis on our autoethnographic materials. The first is a deconstruction, a methodology popular in poststructuralism, and often adopted as proto-analysis in postmodern studies. We suggest that it is a way to investigate the narrative order of workaholism societal narratives in relationship to the unexposed logics of our own consciousness of how we are narrating workaholism. Our ways of narrating, for example, can be deconstructed, so that we can move to restorying our relationship to our life world. Our second analysis is more about story reflexivity. And it is in this analysis that we explore the ethical aspects of answerability (a Bakhtinian theory of ethics, where one looks at the compellent nature of story that calls for changes in the life world of self and others).

III – DECONSTRUCTING THE WORKAHOLIC NARRATIVE

To restory is to deconstruct the dominant narrative that runs one's life, and out of the fragments construct a new story. This paper begins with a review of the relationship between narrative and story. We then turn to an autoethnography where I do what is called narrative and story noticing. The aim is to then deconstruct the narrative of workaholism in my life, and then restory the remains into the new story, one that is hopefully liberating. We conclude with implications for workaholism theory and research. In this section, we will work first with Dan and then Jo's separate efforts to restory their workaholic narratives.

Dan's Deconstruction - I've decided to restory myself, to end my workaholic patterns.

There are people around me who seem to put in fewer hours, and put out fewer articles and such, and do just fine within the university. To deconstruct the narrative, I will use some stylistic steps that I have written about elsewhere (Boje, 2001; Boje & Dennehy, 1993). In figure One, I lay out the eight stylistic steps in deconstruction.

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Figure 1: The Deconstructive Resituation

1. Dualities – Several binaries are embedded in my workaholism narratives. Most prominent is work-rest, work-leisure, work-burnout, work-relationships, work-family, work-marriage, work-life, work-death, etc.
2. Reinterpret the Hierarchy – In each duality, the dominant term is always work. Reinterpreting (or reversing) the hierarchy is a way to stretch one's perspective, to sort out the power relationship. Rest is important not only for work, but for life, health, and getting a sense of Being part of the world. Leisure is more important

than work; people did not always hold work in such high esteem; it's the working class and middle class that value work over all else; to pursue leisure without the need to work for one's living would be an alternative life style, but not one highly value in the narrative currents I navigate (i.e. university, academia, relatives, work to succeed scripts in the media, etc.). Burnout is a fearful reaction to work, a fear that work will cease; every time I have burnt out, doors opened and I got perspective to take a new line of Being. The next set of dualities is about work-relationships (e.g. family, marriage, as well as the implied ones of friends, colleagues, and ones left out, Nature and spirit). It would seem that being immersed in relationships expands one's self, obligates one to Others, gets one being part of life; in this sense relationship are more valuable than work unto itself. The work-life and work-death dualities are more difficult to face. To me, the edict work or die is pretty ingrained, hard to shake off.

3. Rebel Voice – The dualities around workaholism seem to leave out some important voices. I hinted at these as Nature and spirit. Work is important in nature, but not all there is. Besides the competition to survive and be fittest, there is cooperative behavior, work that helps others do what they need to do. Work from a serving or caring spirit seems different from one that is about self-development, or worse, self-aggrandizement. I am not sure the higher power (gods and goddesses, ancestors and guides, etc) wants me to work as hard as I do. To stack one's day to the hilt seems to be against both nature and spirit.

4. Other Side of the Story – Work has been a path to education, a path to provide for my family, a path to develop an occupation, a career, some recognition. The other side of that story is that working to be recognized is about what a friend of mine calls, gathering badges. He says, "Dan, how many badges do you need to earn, before you feel good about yourself, before you just accept yourself?" It has always given me pause. His grandmother told it to him, as advice, and he passed it along to me. His image of me (living in California at the time), was of someone walking along the beach, so weighted down by badges (prizes, accomplishments, responsibilities to do this or that, etc.) that I could hardly walk under the load. A similar observation by my communications professor at Rider College (now Rider University), back in 1974. She asked us to bring in a symbol that represented our life. I brought in a small, golden statue of Sisyphus. Confined to Hades, he was doomed to push a boulder up a mountain each day, only to have it roll back down and begin the ordeal again the next day. I did not know who it was at the time, but I think about this image in relation to workaholism. The other side of the story for me is that as I get older (will be 60 in a few weeks), that boulder is getting bigger, and harder to push up the hill. It seems simple. Just step out of Hades, choose a boulder that weighs less, or just don't push it up a hill.

5. Deny the dominant plot - One dominant plot of workaholism is that the individual becomes stressed out in overwork trying to satisfy the boss, the company, or climbing the economic ladder, all to the neglect of family issues and personal relationships, usually quits the rat race to rediscover what matters. This plot is the narrative order in many movies, such as Remote (Adam Sandler plays a workaholic dad who gets a remote allowing him to speed through all those boring little moments, that he then discovers are the most important), Baby Boom (with

Diane Keaton, who inherits a baby and cannot keep up with the rat race of fast lane executive life, only to discover that a small business in a rural setting is more balanced way of being), A Good Year (Russell Crowe plays workaholic banker who inherits a vineyard in Provence), The Body Builder and I (an out of shape workaholic lawyer and absent father after 2nd divorce suffers depression, then sells the law firm and starts working out) and a 1996 movie called 'workaholic' (Sharon von Witersheim & Andrea Sixt). One counterplot to these movie narratives of workaholism, is that people who have not gotten a piece of the American dream (bootstrapping to economic success) put their nose to the grindstone, overworking self to provide a life for their children. In Millennium, Cheryl Ladd plays a workaholic female executive that heads up time-travel Snatch Teams in the year 2989 AD. In the sci-fi genre, what else is there to do but work, as late modern capitalism erodes all other life spaces.

6. Find The Exception – Looking back upon the workaholic academic's life, I can fathom many moments with family and friends, where I was able to slow down, tune into what Bakhtin (1993) calls the once-occurent moment of Being, where I am able to be answerable to relationships, and see the mounting stress and devastation of the workaholic life. In other words, the signs are there, and partially noticed all along.

7. Trace Between-The-Lines – Looking at the above items (1 to 6) there is something between-the-lines, a message appears. You cannot take it with you. All the accumulation of success, in my case publications, conferences, awards, accomplishments, even helping others to succeed – cannot pass through death to the next life. Slowing down, doing less, becoming part of fewer projects, is supposed to give one more meaning in life. But, instead the between-the-lines message is that when we can avoid attachment, envy, and hypercompetitiveness, we can attain things not on the top ten success list: bliss, tranquility, love of self, time to love and enjoy others, time with nature.

8. Resituation – The above stylistic steps help one to arrive at insights that can resituate the workaholism narrative driving one's life and find ways to craft a living story of balance, being tuned in, avoiding the telltale signs of indulgence in overwork practices.

How do we take the dregs of our lives and restory them into something that moves us beyond the usual enmeshing workaholic patterns? We turn next to our second analysis of our autoethnographic materials. It is here that we examine the ethics of answerability.

Jane's deconstruction – I have also applied Boje's eight stylistic steps to deconstruct my narrative.

1. Dualities – The prevailing binaries in my 1999 narrative are work-failure and hard work-laziness. There are hidden binaries. They are unspoken, in the absence of any commentary on my workaholic behavior on my relationships, the effect of my frenetic working on them, about my values and how they have been distorted by

work, or on any of the things that make me afraid lead me to despair. Among these are dualities of work-life, public-private, success-failure etc. Finally there is the notion of power-impotence, a duality that privileges moving up the corporate ladder as desirable, and contends that the goal is to be in charge of something, to be in a position to make things happen, rather than to let things unfold or, heaven forbid, follow.

2.   Reinterpret the Hierarchy – In each duality, the dominant term is not always work, but it is always connected to work, or derived from it. Reinterpreting (or reversing) the hierarchy, brings me the idea that work itself can be a failure. Having the "wrong job" doing work that does not matter or is harmful to me or to the world is a failure. I do not have to settle, in the way my grandfather did, looking for the thin silvery lining in every job, letting that be enough to compensate for the sacrifices of doing work that impedes my ability to be honest about who I am, to be sufficiently truthful to live my life more holistically and make public my relationships with people I love. Making this sacrifice is the real failure. The people I admire are the ones whose beliefs lie out of the mainstream, at the margins of the dominant cultural narrative, but who follow those beliefs nonetheless, without compromise. This in itself is a strenuous path, so the opposite of workaholism is *not* idleness.

    The American Dream is an individual dream. We like to see the power implications of achieving it in movies and read about it in novels where the oppressed climbs, becoming the oppressor, then (in the ones with "happy endings") sees what he or she is becoming and finds redemption. In 1999, I was not yet enlightened in this regard. I did not think of it. My interpretation was that with some authority, I could work for the greater good. I had good intentions, but I was serving a story that was not universally shared. Only now, looking back on my time in corporate, rising up to a bird's-eye view, can I see the way I was manipulated and began in turn to manipulate others. Coercion runs contrary to the myth of the American Dream narrative, but is part of the reality story of pursuing it.

3. Rebel Voice – The rebel voices are these ones who have been silenced, including my own identity as a lesbian. We do not hear from my partner who cannot tell her friends about our relationship, who cannot come to any events connected with work, who is unnamed, whose gender is changed in the classic homophobic game of pronoun switching. We do not hear her say that my success at work with all of its trappings does not matter to her, that she is used to a simpler life, and that she would be happy to have that life with me, to have me in her life, instead of her trying to fit into mine. But my own lesbian-self is too afraid of this. She is yearning to come out, but she is familiar with the dark of the closet, and not with the details of the well-lit room. She is like a February groundhog who, scared by the sun, disappears with promises of a longer winter.

4. Other Side of the Story – I often say that I have compensated for keeping my sexuality a secret by being brutally honest about everything else. People do experience me as forthcoming, as an extrovert full of stories I am willing to share about all my experiences with work. But it is not true that I am brutally honest – only lying with silence. Other people in my life have been caught up by the secret

and they become a part of its silent lie. They disappear from the 1999 narrative entirely. These people are not just my lovers and friends. They are also the straight people who have power in the organizations in which I work – bosses and colleagues – who never have an opportunity to support me because I only build a wall (not a bridge) with my narrative that they cannot possibly transcend. Because I do not create a threshold with the true story of my life they cannot help me to live in a way that is not bifurcated. It is only after I leave business and move to academia that I come out to them and learn the other side of the story. Now I have been out for five years and the consequences have not always been pleasant. I have experienced the oppression and hatred that I had feared when I was in the depths of the closet, but it occurs in the context of some surprising, important and unanticipated support.

5. Deny the dominant plot – Taylor (2006) says "our understandings of who we are, our identities are derived from the accumulated ideas, images, associations and on which make up the wider social and culture contexts of our lives" (p.99). For me the dominant plot is the pervasive narrative of the American Dream which has informed my decisions about what to tell and not tell in the 1999 life history narrative. Leaving out all the information that might put me at risk in the new community of my doctoral cohort seems to have left me crafting only those fragments of my story that are supported by the American Dream into the narrative that was eventually turned in for class. Gubrium (2006) says, "The American Dream may be thought of as a success story, in which participants take up its storyline in assembling their own identities….[that] may be thought of as a cultural script that participants are following in articulating the meaning of their growing-up experiences" (p. 235).

    In describing American Dream storytelling, Gubrium goes on to say that it follows "a positive development course, based on capitalist notions of individualism, accomplishment, and what are usually thought of as white, middle-class values. They are constructed through a valuation of individual achievement and based on being different, or standing out, from the rest of the community" (2006, p. 235-236).When I went through the process of sharing the life experience history publically with my new colleagues, my body was flooded with a sense of relief at having what I had left out any reference, and I shared what I did include with relaxed abandon. I had made it safe precisely by leaving out some things that would make me stand out (my sexual orientation, my failures), and leaving in others that would make me stand out (my achievements, my upward trajectory of increasing responsibility, stature, power). Flowers (2007) suggests that, "To deepen the American dream is to engage the imagination – to create better stories of who we are and who we might become. But to create deeper stories requires us to look closely at the stories we already inhabit, both individually and collectively" (p 1). When I looked closely at my life experience, in 1999, preparing to write the narrative requested by the syllabus, I was not consciously comparing it to any contextual narratives. It was early in my studies, my critical sensibility was in its infancy, and the influence of the zeitgeist of the American Dream on my story was strong. I *was* conscious of, and fully recall, the sense that elements of my story were so contrary to the tenets of what seemed proper and

appropriate that they were likely to put me at risk. As a result, my editing of my story – my "leaving out' in the original narrative version – seems (and is) extreme.

6. Find The Exception – I have kept journals over the years, and I see them as more reflexive than this representational 1999 narrative. Though we talk about dialogue as necessary to the reflexive process (Habermas, 1975), I typically make notations in these journals under two kinds of circumstances – either despair and fearfulness, or to mark occasions that I see as important milestones, that should be captured in some way on paper. I often do not talk about them to anyone in the moment. In one journal, there are passages written when my partner was diagnosed with leukemia. At that time I dropped everything, moving to Baltimore to stay in a caregiver's residence house on the hospital campus. I did not work at any job. My partner filled my focus. Her illness became a new workaholic project and, for a few intense weeks, so did her death. It was work, but of a dramatically different sort than that evoked by the American Dream narrative. After the lawyers began to turn the wheels on my behalf, my grief slowed me down, shifted my lens, and brought different priorities into view. It was perhaps the beginning of my noticing, made possible by this slowing down, made possible by the loosening expectations of others. Supported by the myth that I could heal from the loss, that this too would pass, it became my work to grieve. That was all anyone expected of me. I had permission to let go of the other kind of work that is the heart and soul of the 1999 narrative. Louise and I had been outed by her illness, and in the hospital we made a promise that when she was well we would not return to the closet – we would not live a bifurcated life. She did not get well, but I am answerable to that promise, to my relationship with Louise. That relationship and that promise are woven into my new narrative, and also are foundational to my emerging story, which has in the intervening five years nonetheless slipped back into a frenzy of work, this time in academia.

7. Trace Between-The-Lines – Between the lines is a message that there are more forms of work than what bursts so violently from the American Dream narrative. Between the lines there is something that is not the new and popular narrative about work-life balance, which is about doing one thing in one moment (work), and then in the next moment accounting for it by doing its opposite (life). The between-the-lines message is that work can be life, is life, even or perhaps especially when that work that is life is attending to dying and death and grief. The between the lines message is that we can strive for a form of integration that is not a balance between two things but a way of Being in space that resists coercion from dominant, undead narrative in order to give attention what the dominant narrative had pushed to the margins.

8. Resituation – What begins to emerge from the steps above is the breaking down of the demarcation between work and life/rest/play. The breakdown can result in going forward motion that is less about balancing between extremes and more about noticing the extent to which our choices are made not unconsciously to the prescribed drum beat of the American Dream meta-narrative, but consciously to a personal rhythm that is more tonal, variable, porous, affective, and therefore more adaptive to our circumstance, energy, values, and – dare I say it – to our interests.

IV – NOTICING A NEW STORY ETHICS

This next inquiry into story noticing is a contrast between narrative ethics and story ethics. Narrative ethics focuses (see review at beginning of article) on the text, its poetics of structure and form. It is therefore akin to the kind of deconstruction we did above of our autoethnographies. Story ethics, by contrast picks out our answerability in the life world.

Story ethics involves an inquiry into our own acts of story noticing, which is about the reflexivity of our own moral answerability. Narrative ethics, by contrast is textual and intertextual deconstruction. The danger in textual deconstruction of workaholic narratives is that it marginalizes reflexivity on our participation in being.

The process of reflexivity Dan is using is mediation. Practices of mediation vary widely. Dan focuses on breath meditation in Jain philosophy of Pramoda and Gurudev Chitrabhanu.

Since meeting YYYYY YYY in 1993, I have been practicing Jain meditation. This included trips to India with Pramoda and Gurudev Chitrabhanu, who are leaders in Jainism. In brief Jainism is one of the major spiritual philosophies of India. Its tenets are vegetarianism, compassion for all life, and meditation as daily life practices. This practice of 15 years Jain meditation practice has helped to curtail, but not eliminate workaholism.

For several years, I have combined Jain mediation, with breath coaching by Toni Delgado (a Native counselor and author). Below are excerpts of reflexivity that have come as insights into my workaholism, its narrative reinforcement, and storying some pathways out of it. Toni's mediation practices are more about charka energy, and daily use of breathing sessions that focus on releasing workaholic thought patterns, and replacing them with different kinds of energy. Pramodaji Chitrabhanu's (2003) advice is to view life as a stream in which events are floating by, and to watch (in our terms, notice) which one's push and pull on our consciousness.

Meditation is useful in overcoming workaholism by relaxing, seeing how factors in our work environment control us. Meditation puts us back in our center. In workaholism we live outside ourselves. When we are in touch with our center of Being,

we are not going to react automatically to persons, places, or things. We work in a world of stress. Going in within ourselves allow us to be reflexive upon the nature of our conscious, focusing on why we react to certain things, and how to control those reactions, so they do not become automatic.

In Jain, there are four kinds of meditation (first 2 are negative meditation, where we focus more on what is outside ourselves. Each of the four meditations is a way to be reflexive about our answerability to the patterns of work, and its conditioning on our identity.

Push and Pull - Jain and the charka energy breathing approaches both focus on what can be called 'push and pull.' Pull of the good things, and pushing away of the bad things in our life. We live between pull and push of the mind. The mind is conditioned to like some things and not to like other things. In this meditation we reflect upon our moral answerability to our self, to not being conditioned into automatic response patterns of work. The first step is recognition of our workaholic conditioning. Second is de-conditioning the negative effects on our consciousness. If someone starts giving us words of praise for our work efforts and accomplishments, then as the word of praise is registered in the mind, there is a sensation of pleasure (or pleasantness) in the body. Our reaction is that we want more praise, more flattery, and more appreciation for our work. We become attached to the words of praise by our boss, subordinates, peers, and family. Anything that is a dislike or hate for our work becomes an obstacle in our way that does not allow us to experience pleasure-attachments. If the sensation is very unpleasant, and we push it away (except for people who like abuse). Pull and push is a mediation I can do daily. It is noticing my thoughts, words, actions, and habits. For example, as soon as someone ignores my work, how does my mind feel about that person? My mind may decide that if my work is not acknowledged, not to like that person; I don't like their lack of acknowledgement. I push away their criticism. If I am ignorant about how my reaction to work is condition, then I cannot change those reactions. Mediation allows us to revisit and then remove layers of conditioning of our push and pull to work, and people who value that work. It takes years to peel through the layers of conditioning. What are those obstacles that I need to remove? One is to not get into a cycle of others being the deciders of what is valuable in my work. Story noticing, here, is tuning into all the things I am

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watching outside my consciousness. I am not going to react automatically and get attached to praise by wanting more. When I don't' get the praise I am disappointed and even angry. What belongs to my self is the action I perform. I do not want to react to the praise or to the criticism. I don't want to get attached to the praise, which leads to greed for more, and to be being a people-pleaser. And I don't want to get into a cycle of hate at the people who are critical. The point is to do introspection, knowing why I am doing it, why I am having their reaction to the push and pull. If I want confirmation form others, all the time, then that kind of attachment, I believe, is fundamental to workaholism.

Envy and Comparison - This second type of meditation is to hurt the people we envy. It is a conscious want to hurt someone for his or her power, position, or material wealth. It's a kind of coveting. This is a moral answerability to how our envy and our comparison to others have consequences. It is an act of story noticing how envy and comparison weights our consciousness down into being a material object, into being indexed by comparison to others. It is a meditation begins with an act of reflexivity on all the moments of the day where we are drawn into comparison of our work to that of others. In workaholism, it is an act of comparison to others, where we work to get that which we do not have. When we do not react to comparison, to what others' have, then we are able to just watch, and not acquire the karma of envy. In academia, we have interactions with hundreds of people, whose job it is, to compare our work output (research articles, conference presentations, teaching evaluations, tier one and other tier publication, service, etc) to the work of others. We are rank-ordered by our university departments, journals keep statistics on our reviews being on time and complete. Students turn in evaluations on every course we teach. It is an environment that breed comparison, and envy. Those with a pedigree of graduating from more elite Ph.D. programs have an advantage to be hired in more elite universities, and to publish in more elite journals (Boje, 1996 review of ASQ publishing). University programs (especially MBA programs) are compared in several national magazine surveys. Administrators act to motivate faculty to attain better ranking, publish in better journals, get better student responses in courses, etc.

Understanding our Consciousness – The focus of this meditation is on our consciousness of infinite wisdom, energy, and bliss. Infinite bliss requires a love of self

that is not a matter of push-pull, or envy-comparison. If I have over a hundred published journal articles, and hundreds of positive reviews of teaching, then why am I striving for more, and more? It is one thing to enjoy the pleasure of the writing process, and quite another to identify with the outcomes (push & pull; envy & comparison) of that work process. It is a moral answerability for the state of understanding of our consciousness. I become answerably aware I am the author of my own bliss and understanding. Slowly, over the years, I have come to realize that my workaholism is a lack of understanding of love of self. It is awareness that I love for self instead of letting love reside in what others say about my work, is fundamental to bliss, as well as to having energy from the inside (inside of instrumental motivation). Since we do not always live in our true nature, we are not in bliss. We are affected by outside elements of our life that affect our consciousness (prevent bliss). Mediation is a way to purify our thoughts, and allow them to actuate deeds that are not in workaholic patterns of behavior.

  Absolute Knowledge – The final form of meditation is on absolute knowledge of past, present, and present. IN absolute knowledge and bliss consciousness, there is no anger, greed, or envy. To really our self, and to understand who we are in Being. Both Pramodaji and Delgado believe in the infinite soul, the eternal spirit. My ears want to hear true words of wisdom, not praise and not criticism, not comparison, and not flattery. Here moral answerability is more of a spiritual reflexivity about the search for wisdom and bliss. Bliss is a form of consciousness energy that is quite different form the energy of push/pull or envy/comparison. In Jainism, it's a belief in reincarnation. For Delgado, it's about past lives, and getting a sense of past lives through meditation on rebirthing. Meditation on absolute knowledge lets us enter a more transcendental relationship to our work patterns.

  In sum, mediating on the ever-increasing pile of work projects, it's reflexivity upon how our consciousness (that 6th sense beyond the other 5) is conditioned and programmed to be responsive to people's praise and rebuke. It is a matter of releasing how others are evaluating our work. If we let others become the judge and jury of our work, the danger is we become attached to those judgments (good or bad). We can become people pleasers in our work, working to get those bits of praise, and avoiding at

all cost, any negative feedback. We can cease to be authors of our own story, falling into roles that give us the positive work valuation (or avoiding its negative).

The process of reflexivity with which Jane is working is Kundalini Yoga, but I need to start my comments about reflexive noticing and answerability with a bit of story. Since 2002, I have been working on noticing where my gaze lands, and choosing where I focus my energy. This means choosing the work I do and, because it is a slippery process, it also means noticing when I am no longer choosing, when the work is choosing me. The first effort I made in this direction was quitting my job as a vice president at Armstrong with no job to go to. I wanted to experiment with creating my day anew each morning, filling them with only that which appealed to me. It was a romantic notion, filled with ideas of discovery and imbued with optimism, and for a time I was successful, writing a book with my partner Louise and taking on some small, novel consulting projects. It was interrupted by Louise's illness. The publisher of the book we were writing together rejected the manuscript and sued for the advance after her death, squeezing the joy from work. Alone, I felt compelled to take on consulting work that I knew I could do, even when it did not excite me, as a way of keeping going (and bringing in some money –both are things that Yankees value) in the aftermath of her death. The more I did this work that was not of my choosing, the more I longed for a social identity. I decided that I wanted to teach, to be a part of the university milieu. I was filled with notions of academic freedom, and I believed I was headed to Idea-ville, where my ideas would drive the creation of my days' work. The old optimism was rekindled, but I did not account for the tenure process, for the fact that I would once again need to prove my worth according to an external standard. In theory, I do have more control of my time, more choice, but my workaholic monkey is back and he wants tenure, the seal of approval. So the process, the monkey, robs me of choice, thrusting me in directions I often would not choose but for the pursuit of tenure, but for the need to substantiate my value. This is especially the case now that I am out of the closet, and my story is competing with the dominant heterosexist meta-narrative. I am reminded by my colleagues that statistically women are less likely to get tenure, that I will have to work harder than the men – just like I did in London – and in all my corporate life. And, I know it is worse than that. I am a lesbian, and I will once again need to insure myself with high performance. In this round, that insurance comes in the

form of extra articles in good publications and higher teaching scores. Being out has a price and it is remarkably similar to the one I paid at corporate when I was in the closet. I tell myself it is only four more years. I will be 52. Louise was dead at 50. There are days I secretly covet the simple life she wanted for us with its seasons and cycles of activity and rest. I remain answerable to my relationship with Louise, and the promise we made together.

I did not (and do not) want my days to have a sameness to them, but I longed for a rhythm, for balance (as in work-life balance). For a long time, I mistook this rhythm for a steady beat like the undead beating of the dominant narrative (ZZZZZ 2007). But why would I want the heart beat of the undead? For the past year, my reflexivity has been supported by yoga, and it has taught me something about both rhythm and balance.

I have a daily yoga practice that begins each of my days. It is a consistent starting point that grounds me and helps me prepare for both variety and the reappearance of the familiar. Facilitated by a number of yoga DVDs that draw on kriya, Sanskrit for practice or effort, for awakening the Kundalini, which is thought of as a life force (Selby 1992) or pool of energy (Morgen, 2005), I work through a series of postures and movements designed to open up the chakras or energy centers within the body, through which this energy flows. The videos set a pace for the movements, and initially I followed that pacing closely. As I learned the sequence of movements that move up the spine from the root chakra to the crown chakra, I began to feel my body more. I began to set my own pace – every day slightly different – staying longer in some postures and shorter in others depending on the response I notice in my body.

Some days the practice takes only 30 minutes, some days much longer. Some days I spend longer lying still on the mat when I am done, or in some meditation poses in the middle of the process. The yoga session is both rhythmic and arrhythmic. By this I mean not that it is lacking in rhythm, but that it is embedded in a noticing that is free to translate into irregular action, a slowing down or a speeding up. It is guided by a selection of postures, but each has variations for how my body feels in a given moment of a given day. Each modification allows me to challenge myself in the way that will allow me to feel successful in the posture, to go only as deep as possible to keep my body safe from harm. There is stress on my body, pushing and pulling, but it is the first form of physical

"exercise" that has truly felt good and satisfying to me as I am doing it, rather than feeling virtuous about it only after I am done. The mat creates a space for my choices. I am alone in the room, and free from comparison with others.

When I carry this over to my work, I make choices about whether to put unpleasant tasks first to get them out of the way, or to engage first in a task that appeals to me as a way of preparing for work that does not. I do not follow time management rules and restrictions. I do not force myself to touch each piece of paper only once trudging through from start to finish simply because I have begun. I do not force myself to work a "normal" day. I work when I have energy to engage deeply in the work that matters. Sometimes this is late at night. Sometimes this is on a weekend. I take time to be with my partner when there is a chance to do something that matters to us, because it is important or because it will be fun. Sometimes it is in the middle of the afternoon, when I thought I would be working. I am learning this. Sometimes deadlines prohibit me from working in ways that are sensitive to my energy, to my body, and sometimes my workaholic monkey is set free by worry that I am not doing enough. Then I am off on a downward spiral into frenetic work. But the next morning there is the mat and more yoga.

In the workaholism literature and in the narratives organizations produce to describe their culture, we often come across notions of work-life *balance*. It has become a common phrase and a popular goal. But as I have intimated earlier, it implies that we have to make a choice between work and life. Are we not living when we are working? Yoga has helped me to understand that the whole concept of balance is not the aim. We are surrounded by dualities that seem to demand choice. Selby (1992) relates a conversation he had with Alan Watts wherein Watts told him,

> You must expand your consciousness so that you realize you are living
> within a two hundred percent universe….Just expand your mind to include
> both of these traditions as one hundred percent true in and of themselves.
> Let your concept of reality expand to two hundred percent. Then both
> traditions can live harmoniously within you (p. 88).

In our context, what Watts refers to as traditions, we can consider the extremes of the work-life duality. Unless we are able to hold both extremes simultaneously, in some integrated way, we can only strive for balance. Balance is a problem because it is so

difficult to sustain. Let us take the example of a tightrope walker. On the rope there is only a narrow band of points were the walker is balanced. Shifting his weight to the right or the left just one degree beyond this narrow band will cause him to lose his balance. There are 360 degrees of choice, tiny angles that the walker could occupy, but only a few that are rewarded by staying upright. If the rope is cast across a rocky ravine, staying upright matters. But if the rope is close to the ground, what is the merit in choosing between up and down? Perhaps there is more to be learned from laying beneath the rope, or beside it. Bracketing the seven chakras in the body are the Root Chakra at the base of the spine, which connects us to the earth (Selby, p. 89) and the Crown Chakra which connects us with the heavens and is the chakra of the spirit or the soul. At the center of the chakras is the Heart Chakra, making it "the center of kundalini consciousness" (Selby, 1992, page 89). The chakras are paired on opposite sides of the Heart Chakra, such that the third and fifth (throat and naval), second and sixth (brow and spleen) are paired together. The final pairing then is the first, Root Chakra, paired with the seventh, Crown Chakra. Selby (1992) suggests that "not only is it a spiritual violation but an extremely dangerous practice to deny the bottom chakra while fixating on the top chakra" (p. 90). This means that even as we focus on the spirit and the heavens (and some would say the intellect housed in the crown) we neglect our connection to the earth and nature at our peril. It supports Dan's work with his animal guides (my own animal guide is the dragonfly) in harmony with his guiding consciousness. There is no separation, no choosing between, but a form of integration, a two-hundred percentness that transcends our metaphorical notions of physical balancing and, implicitly, falling off. Balance implies sameness on either side of the equal sign. Yoga is teaching me to *remove* the equal sign.

My reflexive story noticing has come to include my body, which is never mentioned in my 1999 narrative. In the parlance of work-life balance, the body is a subset of the life dimension, and is something that we take time out for separately. We carve time out of our day to "hit the gym," where our workaholic tendencies manifest themselves in measuring our progress – running further on the treadmill, lifting more and more weight – and engaging others in competitions of our physical prowess. In the gym I taught my body pounding repetitive rhythms and monitored my progress with weights

and measures. I set the machines to a fixed time, and stopped when the clock did. I knew exactly how long the weight circuit will take to complete. I scheduled just the right amount of time for my workout, squeezing it in before work or over my lunch hour, and got frustrated when the machines I needed are not immediately available. Moving my workaholic behaviors into the "life" dimension of the equation is not a helpful solution. I need to dissolve the equation.

V – IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKAHOLISM THEORY AND RESEARCH

Autoethnographies has not been the focus of previous investigations of workaholism. We have looked at deconstruction of workaholic narratives, that enable us to resituate and restory the workaholic self. Our contribution was to sort out the relationship of narratives of control that prompt workaholic behavior patterns and the kinds of living story that would leave such patterns behind. We noted that the mechanism of workaholic narrative is endemic to many movies, is part of the rags-to-riches, make it big in America narrative.

In the meditation analysis, we did an exploration of workaholic consciousness. When the consciousness is condition to workaholism, we are no longer the master-authors of our work. Our contribution was to look at moral aspects of answerability that can be assessed in four forms of meditation. We would like to suggest that future research projects can study various forms of meditation to assess their impact on changing workaholic patterns. Mediation on our ways of being pushed and pulled (motivated) to engage in workaholic patterns can be an eye-opener. We can also engage in answerability for our attitudes of comparison and envy, how they lead to greed for more work, to affect the rankings people make on us (and we on ourselves). Understanding our consciousness, as well as our meditations on Absolute Knowledge, are ways to be answerable for making our self the author and decided of how to engage our work, so it is not all consuming.

Research in the connection of the body and somatic ways of knowing/noticing to workaholism also seems promising, as indicated by the influence of yoga practice as a form of physical meditation that begins with breath and energy. Finally, we would like to see the research on the nature and perception of workaholism and differences among

genders be augmented with research focus on ways of dissipating workaholic patterns, and/or exchanging workaholic behaviors for more functional approaches, including an investigations of differences across different positionalities such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, faith orientation and levels of authority in organizational structures.

While we expected gender difference in the autoethnographies, we found that, instead, they converged in several ways. This may well be because we both pursued a living story analysis, as well as a deconstruction of the dominant American Dream narrative that runs our life (if we let it). We both, Dan and Jane, have taken different routes into our workaholism, but in this narrative we hold common causal themes in the development of our relationship to work. We both, for example, invoke the importance of our parents as role models with our parents and with other authority figures. We both lean heavily on our pursuit of education as way up the ladder, and credentializing as emblematic of our success or failure. Some may attribute this to a confluence of Dan working on feminism and Jane adapting over 25 years to carving out a successful path in a male-dominated milieu. (There is also the possibility that some may account for our similarities with the heterosexist assertion that lesbians are by nature more masculine.)

This autoethnographic work, narrative noticing and deconstruction, indicates to us that in our case there are indeed affective overlaps between our expressions and analysis of our experiences, but what is compelling here is the overlap in our struggle to extricate ourselves from grinding cycle of our workaholism. Dan's approach to addressing and redressing his addiction has been to turn to Jain meditation, while Jane's has been to engage in Kundalini Yoga, including Chakra mediation practice. (Note that both Jain meditation and Kundalini Yoga hold the Chakras as fundamental to their processes.) We have arrived at these approaches of integration, of slowing down, of breathing and noticing, independently, discovering only in the context of our restorying the strong similarities in our rehabilitative work.

We suggest that, importantly, these approaches intersect at the ethic of answerability. First, with respect to content answerability, we have taken our narrative and accounted for the way in which we have crafted it, noticing its structure, its flow, and its motifs. This had led us to an even deeper way of noticing, working through a deconstruction that has allowed us to see not only how our narrative is a function of our

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own choices, but how that narrative and those choices are further enabled by (and sometimes even borne of) the pervasiveness of the American Dream meta-narrative. That narrative is of our culture, our lifeworld, and we are answerable for our response to it.

This brings us to the second ethic of answerability, that of moral answerability, that Bakhtin (1990, 1993) calls us to address. This moral answerability focuses on stepping into the moment of Being. Here we have both taken the restorying process, the eighth move in Boje's (2001) process of deconstruction, to a deeper level even than resituating our stories. We are quite literally, through meditation and yoga, stepping into the moment of Being, and we are doing it in ways that are highly personal, crafted in that moment as we move through a process of discovery which requires reflexivity of mind, body, and spirit/breath without divorcing one from another. Our processes converge at the level of integrative noticing practice and at the level of answerability in our efforts to take responsibility for changing our narrative – including the ways in which it dominates, oppresses and otherwise affects those with whom we are in relationship. In our reflexive, moral answerability we step away from the Aristotelian notion of a golden mean that is perfect balance, since striving for this results only in a new workaholic pursuit that is rife with opportunities for failure. We step into a moment of Being that is uniquely ours alone to story. In this work here, we make an effort to fulfill our obligation to tell it.

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