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RESEARCHING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES: THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION IN VIGNETTE METHODOLOGY

S. Crafter (University of Northampton)
L. O'Dell (Open University)
T. Cline (University College London)
G. de Abreu (Oxford Brookes University)

VIGNETTE METHODOLOGY

- Vignettes are typically short stories about a fictional character or fictional scenario appropriate to a particular study.
- **Key Assumption**
- “narrative representations of emotional events can be treated as functionally comparable to the corresponding real-life encounters” (Parkinson and Manstead, 1993:296).

EXPLAINING DIVERSE VOICES IN THE DATA: DIFFERING THEORETICAL VIEWS

- Using vignettes for exploring dialogical voices of self and other (Bakhtin, 1973)
- **I-positions** (Hermans, 2002)
- Identity is perceived as a multiplicity of I-positions among which dialogical relationships can be established
- These I-positions create “voices” which relate to other I-positions: multivoiced-identity

THE CASE

- Louise
- 18 years of age at time of interview
- White British and caring for a disabled mother

Mary is 14 years old and lives with her dad and her brother who is 15 years old. Mary's dad is disabled and needs help during the day with activities such as getting out of bed, getting dressed and making lunch. Mary loves her dad and is happy to be there for him. However she also misses school some days if her dad has a bad day and needs extra help. Sometimes Mary wishes that she could see her friends after school like her brother does.

"I AS ME" IDENTIFICATION WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE VIGNETTE

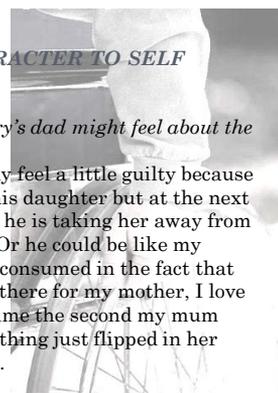
What do you think about what Mary is doing?

Tha' I didn't fit in well with other people because when
in h it came down to it the way I saw it was 'well I will
[...] try but they don't understand where I'm coming
from so it's very hard to relate to them because I
exp don't go through typical issues they do'. I mean,
they would come on to the school going 'oh my
mum's a bitch, she won't let me do this, she won't
let me do that' and I'm sitting there thinking 'oh
my God, how superficial are you, you don't even
know what the hell you're talking about'

MOVING FROM CHARACTER TO SELF

How do you think Mary's dad might feel about the situation?

I think Mary's dad may feel a little guilty because at one point he loves his daughter but at the next point he may feel that he is taking her away from being a normal child. Or he could be like my mother and be totally consumed in the fact that he's disabled. Cos I'm there for my mother, I love her, but at the same time the second my mum became disabled something just flipped in her head and she changed.



I AS 'YOU', THE GENERALIZED OTHER

What do you think will happen when she grows up?

If she, if Mary continues, cos it's difficult when you have a disabled parent because, it's true, you do have to choose what you're doing, you have to make your own choices but when it comes down to it your personality is always going to be split, [...] It doesn't matter whether you're in uni, whatever you're doing, when you've got a disabled parent of you always want to be there to help them.

CONTRADICTIONS: SHIFT IN POSITIONS

Like, for me, I used my, I hate to say it but I did use my mum as an excuse to get out of school because I was not having a good time and everyone thought I was dumb. But in Mary's situation she may, she may love school, she may be doing fantastic, or she may be like me and hate school and use it as an excuse. But at the same time she's still, she's still being, in a way, robbed of high school.

SUMMARY

- Explorations of reality?or understanding multi-positionality

