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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

NOT FINISHED YET

THE STORIES OF FOUR WOMEN'S CAREERS IN EDUCATION

BY

BETH YOUNG

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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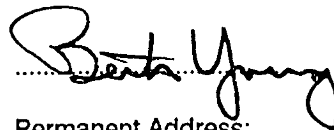

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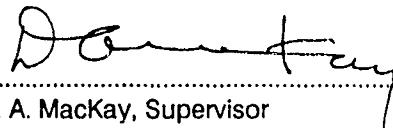

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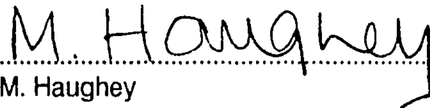

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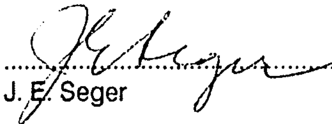

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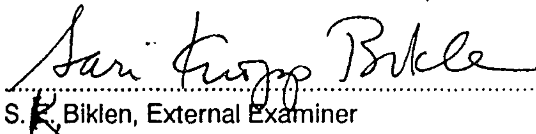

S. K. Biklen, External Examiner

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To the memory of my late parents

Lois Gainer Young

1911 - 1979

and

John Arthur Young

1904 - 1988

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes, anecdotally, the career development of four western Canadian women educators who have doctorates in Educational Administration. The anecdotes are derived from the biographies that I wrote about the women. I obtained the information for the biographies from the women themselves, by means of life-story interviews (Bertaux, 1981).

The thesis also describes the development of this life-story research project. After reviewing the literature on life history research in Chapter 1, I present in Chapter 2 a narrative account of the development of my own study. The account describes my own experiences as a novice researcher, as well as the evolving design of the project and of the related assumptions and issues.

Then, the anecdotes are presented in Chapters 3 (On Chance), 4 (On Choice), and 5 (On Careers). While the focus is the presentation of the anecdotes, each chapter is framed by brief introductory and concluding remarks that link the anecdotes to "the literature." I have drawn selectively from recent work in sociology, sociopsychology, philosophy, career development, and educational administration. In Chapter 3, I set out a selection of chance events that have had a significant impact on the four women's careers. And, I sketch out the women's reactions to the events. In Chapter 4, I look at the choices that the four women made in relation to the chance events just described. Each anecdote elaborates the choices that preceded and followed the chance events. In Chapter 5, I introduce some continuing, career-related themes that were understated or ignored in the preceding two chapters. Those themes are the counterpoint to the chances and choices in the four careers.

In the final chapter, I draw inferences from the stories about some needed structural (organizational, societal) reforms. Many of the suggestions involve "the systematic application of much of what is already known" (Kanter, 1977, p. 267). As well, I promote the re-definition of certain key concepts: "opportunity," "career," and "success." I conclude that we still have work to do in reorganizing structures and changing attitudes. We are not finished yet.

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Chapter 1

ON LIFE HISTORY RESEARCH

> A fine biography is first of all a work of scholarship, grounded in the virtues of diligent and scrupulous research, judicious evaluation of information, and a fresh vision of the connections between persons, places, and events.
>
> Beyond this, fine biographies give us both a glimpse of ourselves and a reflection of the human spirit. Biography illuminates history, inspires by example, and fires the imagination to life's possibilities. Good biography can create for us lifelong models. Reading about others' experiences encourages us to persist, to face hardship, and to feel less alone. Biography tells us about choice, steadfastness, and chance.

Matina S. Horner wrote those words in her Foreword to the book, *Women of Crisis II* (Coles & Coles, 1980, p. xi), a volume in the Radcliffe Biography Series. The biographical material presented in the book was collected by the authors as part of a "life-history" (p. 3) research project. Coles and Coles studied certain aspects of the lives of individuals through the stories that those individuals told about their experiences. The researchers recorded these stories during interview sessions, then wrote, or re-told them. Life history researchers are the biographers of the social sciences.

In *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), C. Wright Mills presents a manifesto on the importance of biography to the discipline of sociology. He asserts: "the orienting conception of social science [is] the study of biography, of history, and of the problems of their intersection within social structure" (p. 134). Mills argues that we gain meaningful knowledge by studying the living-out of the individual human life in its socio-historical context. That life consists, in one sense, of a series of roles. The roles must be understood in relation to the social institutions in which they are played out. But, there is also "human variety"--variation between groups of people and variation between individuals within groups (pp. 132-133)--and meaning for the individual in a particular context. Contemporary life history researchers often refer to Mills' essentially complete and succinct statement of support for biographical accounts.

Biography in the Social Sciences

The profile of (auto)biographical research in the social sciences, particularly in North America, has been an obscure one. Such research has been described by a variety of terms (see the discussion on page 6). Plummer (1983), and Bertaux and Kohli (1984) review that research tradition in anthropology, history, and psychology as well as in sociology. I have limited my references to the sociological and some social-psychological literature. Moreover, I address a restricted number of methodological issues in these pages. Life history studies are part of the larger tradition of qualitative research. Many of the methodological concerns of qualitative research are widely discussed in that literature. I confine my attention, therefore, to questions that are of unique relevance to life history research.

Bertaux (1981a, pp. 5-10) provides a historical overview of sociological life history research. Prior to the Second World War, such research was conducted primarily in Poland, and in the United States through the Chicago school of symbolic interactionists. Since the war, life history work in North America has been until recently eclipsed by the emphasis on survey research. Life history research in Quebec has provided one substantial exception (see Gagnon, 1981). As well, oral history, as a branch of history, has been flourishing in the United States. Meanwhile, life history research has received increasing attention in Europe, including Britain, and in Central and South America. Even so, Plummer (1983, pp. 2-3) notes that, in a generally positivist and realist intellectual climate, research which is so obviously grounded in "human subjectivity and individuality" has been readily dismissed.

Researchers in education have typically followed the prevailing trends in the social science disciplines. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) summarize American qualitative research activities in education during this century. They note the occasional appearances of life history research as one element in the continuing, but sometimes nearly invisible, tradition of qualitative research in education.

In the post-World War II intellectual climate, practical and political arguments against doing life history research have been plentiful. The arguments resemble those levelled against any qualitative research approach. Two, in particular, seem worth repeating. Writing in 1970 (p. 421), Becker argues that the very mobility of academic researchers has reinforced the appeal of large-scale, impersonal studies, because such studies could be carried on from any location, and in the absence of local community knowledge and connections. Bertaux and Kohli (1984, p. 233) note that the recognized contributions of life history projects have been attributed to the skill of the individual scholars concerned, rather than to the efficacy of a Method. That sociological inquiry might require such skills is seen as both intimidating and "unscientific." Thus, for many researchers, the demands and risks of life history research have outweighed its benefits.

Following Mills, contemporary proponents of the biographical account have emphasized the need for research approaches and products that comprehend the complexity of life, as it is experienced by individuals. Faraday and Plummer note that life history research falls within the tradition of Verstehen sociology, because it seeks personal accounts of how individuals "interpret, understand, and define the world around them" (1979, p. 776). They go on to say that life history researchers do not impose their own order, rationality, and consistency on such accounts. Instead, by focusing on "process and ambiguity," they uncover the "moments of indecision, turning points, confusions, contradictions, and ironies" that are part of everyday life. And, life history researchers are concerned with "totality." That is, they look at particular experiences in the context of an overall life, and they situate that life in its broader socio-historical context (1979, pp. 776-777). In the resulting detailed narrative account, the researcher synthesizes the dimensions of actor, acts, and context in a unique way (Denzin, 1978, p. 250; Ferrarotti, 1981, p. 19).

Biography and Women's Experience

In the last two decades, the life history approach has gained the attention of researchers interested in women's studies. Feminist scholars emphasize the need for research that is based on women's perspectives and experiences (Biklen & Shakeshaft, 1985; Howe, 1979, p. 413). Schmitz, in her review of the book *Theories of Women's Studies* (1983), summarizes feminist "methodology" this way:

> It would break down the hierarchical relationship between "researcher" and "researched" and take into account the opinions of the research "subjects" in all aspects of the research process. It would require of the researcher a conscious acknowledgement of subjectivity and a commitment to the outcome of the research. It would be based in the complexity and diversity of women's experience and would not compare this experience against a normative (male) standard. And it would result in positive changes for women. (1985, p. 102)

Discussing the in-depth interviewing of women, Oakley coined a phrase that states another characteristic of feminist research: No intimacy without reciprocity (1981, p. 49). The feminist critique of conventional social science research and methodology, and the counter-proposals, have implicitly and explicitly stated the case for the potential contribution of life history research.

Reinharz and Mies, two of the contributors to the book, *Theories of Women's Studies*, elaborate the feminist orientation toward positive change for women. Reinharz suggests that "making the private consciousness public and consequently empowered" is often a more effective path to social change than is formal public policy. At least, she says, we should look more closely at what is "policy-affecting research" (1983, p. 185). Mies, after Freire, asserts that research must be a "conscientization" (or awareness-raising) process. She adds that part of this process is the study and appropriation, by women, of their own individual and social history (1983, p. 127). For example, as one part of an action research project, Mies and her colleagues taped the life stories of several battered women. Then, they wrote out each story and returned it to the woman who had been interviewed, inviting heir revisions. That example is one illustration of the use to which feminists are putting life history research and of the basis on which life history studies have become popular in feminist scholarship (Gould, 1980, p. 465).

Clegg believes that there is not, and should not be, one definitive feminist methodology (1985, p. 84). She urges a new perspective on research, but not a new dogma. Reinharz notes that a range of suitable research approaches has long since existed, but "they have been so undervalued" that they periodically have to be "re-discovered" and refined (1983, p. 173). So it is with life history research. Indeed, Clegg concludes that one of the most significant contributions made by feminist researchers is "in papers accounting for and reflecting on their practices in doing research." Such reflexivity is not new, either. But, by providing detailed research reports, feminist writers are increasing substantially the documentation of research rationales and practices (1983, p. 91).

The feminist critique of educational research adopts the arguments that I have just summarized (Biklen & Shakeshaft, 1985). According to Biklen (1985), the "new scholarship on women" strives to describe and analyze women's experiences without imposing concepts and definitions that have been derived largely from the study of men. Shakeshaft (1981) reviewed the doctoral dissertations completed in the late 1970s on women in educational administration. She is critical of both the conceptual bases and the research approaches in many of the dissertations. With respect to research approaches, she decries the over-reliance on survey research. She notes that only 5% of the dissertations used historical or case study strategies (p. 18). She calls for more qualitative research, viewing the world "from the eyes of women" and growing out of "the personal experiences, feelings, and needs of the researcher" (p. 26). Shakeshaft emphasizes the importance of the oral tradition, not only in data gathering strategies but also for reporting purposes. The reporting includes taking back the researcher's conclusions to the study participants for their reactions. Despite the increasing attention being given to qualitative research, examples of life history research in education (particularly educational administration) remain somewhat rare (Biklen & Shakeshaft, 1985, p. 51).

Any research act imposes some structure and presupposes some conceptual orientation. From the identification of a subject area, to the selection of participants, to relations with those participants, to the data collection techniques used, many judgements are made long

before the researcher officially interprets the data. Life history research tends to seek and find the "ambiguity, flux, contradictions" of life, as it is lived and described by the individual (Plummer, 1983, p. 123). The approach allows women to give voice to their experiences, to reclaim their own stories, and, in so doing, to enrich our knowledge of human social life and structures. Life stories are one way of mapping the complex and varied terrain of human life.

Terms and Distinctions

A variety of labels have been used to designate biographical accounts of research in the disciplines. The terms "biography" and "autobiography" are used to describe established literary forms. In the social sciences, the terms include the "personal document," "life document," "case history," "life history," "life story," "oral history," "psycho-history," and "social life history." The application of a particular term to a given biographical account depends on the author's disciplinary orientation, research process, and, to some extent, personal preferences.

Certain terminological distinctions are significant for my own study of life stories. The distinctions are set out by sociologist Daniel Bertaux (1981a, pp. 7-9). The term "biography" generally refers to an account of a person's life written by another person. The term "autobiography" refers to an account written by the author about him/herself. The "life story" is an "oral, autobiographical narrative [of the entire life span or specified aspects of a life] generated through interaction" (Bertaux & Kohli, 1984, p. 217). That is, the only data are the accounts provided by the person who is being studied. The "life history," however, is a form of case study: the life story interview data are supplemented from sources such as extensive field observations, interviews with significant others, official records, and private documents (for example, diaries and letters).

Other writers do not make Bertaux's distinction between the life story and the life history. Most use the term "life history," although many so-called "life history" projects confine

their data collection to first-person narratives obtained by means of interviews (Bertaux, 1981a, p. 7). Bertaux's distinction is a useful way of sorting the range of existing practices.[1]

Differentiating between the life history and life story exposes some of the epistemological concerns or assumptions underlying a research project. A life history project usually has as its focus one person. Becker (1970, p. 420), Denzin (1978, p. 232), and Plummer (1983, p. 14), for example, all assert that the best life histories supplement or corroborate the life story with data from other sources. Bertaux, on the other hand, contends that an exclusive reliance on life stories is not an inferior but a different research approach (1981a, pp. 7-9). According to him, we should not assume that data from secondary sources enhance the validity of a first-person oral narrative. He points out that other sources for a given story introduce new sets of biases. According to Bertaux (and others), there is no reason to rank some sources as more reliable or truthful than others. He recommends instead that several life stories be collected, the better to depict the set of social relations that is being studied and to cross-check individual accounts for their coverage of relevant topics. Ultimately, Bertaux and Kohli insist that life story research based on narratives is the approach that "takes the dimension of personal history seriously" (1984, p. 216).

Obviously, no life history researchers dispute the value of the individual's perspective. None accepts uncritically the superior "truth" or reliability of documents such as official records, and none rejects the potential for enrichment of a story from other sources (see Bertaux, 1981a, pp. 8,9; Plummer, 1983, p. 104). The point is to obtain "as full a subjective view" as possible (Plummer, 1983, p. 14)--all the while acknowledging that the story is never complete (Bertaux, 1981a, p. 8), nor the totality captured (Faraday & Plummer, 1979, p. 778). It is a question of recognizing the life story for what it is and is not. Then, it is a question of assigning values to

---

[1]Because it is not a distinction that has usually been made, I have adopted the more widely used term "life history" in my references to the literature. I apply that term globally, except where a writer follows Bertaux's terminology.

different sources and types of information. Bertaux is pressing researchers to give priority to the life story as a source of the individual's perspective.

Respecting Bertaux's distinctions, I define my study as life story research. It involved the collection of several life stories. I used a selection, not a sampling process; I sought potentially contrasting stories, and acknowledged my analytical activities as I went along (Bertaux, 1981b, pp. 37-38). My interviewees were part of a birth cohort, loosely defined, justifying the expectation that I might observe some common experiences, attitudes, and behaviors (Veroff, 1984). However, as Veroff confirms, historical and age effects were also important. The narrative that I drafted and submitted to each interviewee for validation is a biography, the basis for further analysis and synthesis. And, in writing my thesis, I have attempted to use narration (Bertaux, 1981b, p. 44).

The Nature of the Life Story

Having chosen for the life story, it is indeed time to recognize what the life story is and what it is not. Referring to Bertaux and Kohli's definition(1984, p. 217), the three significant characteristics of the life story are that it is: (1) narrative, (2) autobiographical, and (3) generated through oral interaction. An examination of each of these three characteristics will elaborate our understanding of the life story.

Gergen and Gergen (1984, p. 174) state that a narrative account is characterized by coherence and directionality. That is, individual events/actions are organized in some purposeful sequence. The account has a point and its components are arranged to make that point. Referring to the autobiographical narrative, Hankiss (1981, p. 203) expresses the process as the building of a theory about oneself, or the creation of a personal ontology. There is a danger, then, that any single account will become dogmatic (Grumet, 1987, p. 324) or guided by some significant and undisputed bias.

The narrative is also characterized by "dramatic engagement" (Gergen & Gergen, 1984, pp. 178-180), which results from the ordering of events as well as from the content of specific

incidents. A sequence of events flowing in one direction, or a sudden change of direction, has some dramatic impact. A focus on certain events rather than others will also achieve a particular dramatic effect (p. 182). This view of the narrative, as a reconstruction, raises the complex question of distinguishing between fact and fiction.

Story-telling is an important and hazardous activity for the individual. Gergen and Gergen suggest that most people are capable of telling stories (p. 183). As Grumet points out, though, "even telling a story to a friend is a risky business" (p. 321). Given the risk--not to mention the possible need to make or score points, the pressures of time constraints, and the fallibility of human memory--it is not surprising that any given account is selective. Nor is it surprising, then, that no one narrative constitutes a person's whole story (cf. Joyce Carol Oates in Gergen & Gergen, 1984, p. 182). Grumet expresses it this way: "Every telling is a partial prevarication. . . . Our stories are the masks through which we can be seen, and with every telling we stop the flood and swirl of thought so someone can get a glimpse of us, and maybe catch us if they can" (1987, p. 322). She also contends, after Schutz, that experience becomes meaningful only when we reflect on it; as we reflect and give meaning, we are forming and re-forming ourselves (1987, p. 322). Gergen and Gergen, after Bettelheim, argue that these narrative formulations may be "essential in giving life a sense of meaning and direction" (1984, p. 174). This understanding of autobiography does not negate its value to the interpretive social scientist. Rather, it places the autobiographical account in perspective, just as Bertaux's distinctions put the life story approach in perspective.

There is yet a third essential characteristic of the life story--the interactive format. Eliciting the autobiographical narrative by means of interviews complicates the research process. Becker points out that the independent autobiographer chooses his/her material according to his/her own purposes. The life history researcher is guided by an interest in "the person's 'own story'" but has certain sociological questions in mind as well. Becker believes the effect of this is positive. The researcher will bring his/her own focus and sense of breadth to the

account and the interpretation of it. Becker claims that the researcher "keeps the game honest for us" (1970, p. 420).

Grumet, however, rejects that image of monitoring; she favours openly collaborative exploration. For example, she believes the researcher should tell the participant in a study "what the questioner is looking for" (1987, p. 324). Thus both individuals are agents in a joint search. Even Grumet's collaborative orientation, however, admits that the researcher gives direction to the search by formulating the questions, initially at least.

The Interview

A great deal has been written about interviewing. Much of what is said on the subject by life history researchers is drawn from the more general literature on interviewing. As well, Bogdan and Taylor point out that some people make better "research partners" than others. They note factors such as commitment, available time, articulateness, recall, and a readiness to talk freely (1975, p. 102). Regardless of the research partner, though, certain strategies, techniques and attitudes are thought to be especially appropriate or even fundamental to life history interviewing.

Bertaux and Kohli summarize the writings of a German sociologist, Schutze, on the characteristics of the "narrative interview" (1984, p. 224). Schutze specifies that the narrator/interviewee first tells the story, with minimal comment from the interviewer. Then, the interviewer poses questions. The questions are designed to help the narrator/interviewee elaborate and extend the initial narration. The questions are worded to elicit "more narrative detail," rather than opinions and speculations. When this approach "evokes more detail than the narrator originally intended or thought he/she would be able to give," it has been successful.

Bertaux notes that "a good life story is one in which the interviewee takes over the control of the interview situation and talks freely" (1981a, p. 39). Kohli remarks, however, that the interviewer should be well informed about the topics that may arise and about relevant aspects of the historical period. The well-informed interviewer will be more alert to gaps,

imbalances, conflicting evidence in the narrative, and more able to pursue appropriate lines of questioning (1981a, pp. 71-72; see also Dexter, 1970, on interviewing elites; and Gordon, 1980, on critical listening). To this end, Bogdan and Taylor recommend the use of a chronology (1975, p. 111). Gordon discusses, at length, the particular importance of knowing how and when to probe for more information (1980, pp. 368-388). Weber reminds us that the researcher's respect for the interviewee must undergird any theoretical and technical preparation (1986, p. 68). Even so, Plummer admits that the quality of his life history interviews depends in part on his mood and the meshing of the two personalities involved (1983, p. 97). In spite of preparation and commitment, then, chance remains a factor.

Catani describes the life story as "the product of an encounter . . . the result of a two-way seduction, a love story" (1981, p. 212). That description acknowledges the affective as well as the cognitive dimension of the life-story interviewing process. It captures the caution, the ambivalence, the enthusiasm that are part of the experience (Young & Tardif, 1988). It alludes to the issues of credibility and trust, of power relations, reciprocity and collaboration, disengagement (Glennon, 1983; May, 1987; Oakley, 1981; Weber, 1986). It suggests the way that apparently technical matters related to internal validity and the protection of identity become profoundly personal concerns. The technical and the ethical are inextricably bound together (Young & Tardif, 1988).

Getting Involved

Since personal involvement is an inevitable aspect of life history research, some attempt must be made to document and reflect on that involvement (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, pp. 86-89). Plummer provides one guide to the documentation and reflection by setting up categories of questions regarding "sources of bias" (1983, p. 103). He identifies three sources of bias--the informant/interviewee, the researcher, and the interaction. He lists questions that should be asked with respect to each. My own experience demonstrated that such a list may indeed assist

in structuring documentation and reflection on the research, and especially the interview, process.

However, Kohli's treatment of "The Problem of 'Truth' in Autobiography" points out the two major criticisms of an approach such as Plummer's (1981, pp. 69-72). First, the questions are somewhat superficial, given the reconstructive nature of the autobiography. Second, the notion that the researcher is capable of assessing "objectively" the interactions of which he/she is part has a positivistic ring to it. In Kohli's opinion, "For an interpretive methodological stance, the viability of any general theory of bias is doubtful" (p. 71). Plummer himself acknowledges that his "sources of bias" are aspects of being human and are, therefore, intrinsic to sociological research.

Thus, the researcher's own story is part of any research project, and should be reported as such. Bogdan and Taylor state that any major research report should include: an explanation of the methodology, from the broad type to specific techniques; the time, length, and work schedule of the study; a description of the settings and the participants, including the selection processes for both; the researcher's frame of mind over time; relations with participants over time; the researcher's checks on the data (1975, p. 143). Faraday and Plummer observe that all life history researchers must encounter ethical, political, and personal problems in the course of their projects. But, they note, reference is rarely made to those issues in formal reports (1979, p. 788). They identify and discuss three areas of particular concern to them. Those topics are the relations between the study participant(s) and the researcher; how the research fits into the researcher's life as a whole; and the various conflicting interests that emerge. Plummer comments that such personal accounts are becoming more common in other types of qualitative research, but they are rather sparse in life history research, where the potential "entanglements" are considerable (1983, p. 138). Finally, Bertaux enjoins life history researchers to tell their own stories as well as those of the people they interview (1981b, p. 44).

Telling our own stories might accomplish a number of things. Each one would, first of all, provide readers with a framework for the researcher's findings. The reader may understand

the findings better and make informed judgements about their credibility (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 142). That is particularly important if one believes the researcher to be a "constructor" as well as a discoverer of knowledge (Plummer, 1983, p. 136). Moreover, Plummer implies that published accounts of research-related dilemmas assist other researchers, by preparing them for the difficulties they may face and providing examples of coping tactics (1983, p. 138). And, such accounts demonstrate a certain honesty about the process of research--a process that is of sociological interest, in itself (Plummer, 1983, p. 137). For me, writing up my own story was also a memorable illustration of the autobiography as a negotiated reconstruction (sometimes negotiated in anticipation of others' reaction; see Gergen & Gergen, 1984, pp. 184-185). In general, the provision of such an account is important if one agrees with Mills that research is a craft, which places more emphasis on creative technique than on rigid procedures (1959; also, Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 101). If there is no rule book to direct our explorations, then let us draw on the experience of others to guide our way.

Telling the Stories

Speaking of the absence of rules or guides, Plummer remarks that the subject of data analysis in life history research has not been widely discussed (1983, p. 99). Most life history scholars refer to the general treatments of qualitative data analysis, such as the writings of Glaser and Strauss. Life history researchers do concur on one specific point: the activities of data collection, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis cannot and should not be distinctly separated (see, for example, Bertaux, 1981, p. 40).

Bogdan and Taylor identify two approaches to sorting and organizing life history data (1975, p. 121). The first is to arrange the data in one coherent narrative. The phases or periods of the life may be those identified by the interviewee, or by the researcher, or some combination of the two. The single-narrative approach has most often been used in life history studies of an individual. The other approach is to code the data in terms of themes and concepts, which may be pre-determined or drawn from the data. That approach is generally used for life story

projects involving several participants. Plummer comments on analytic induction and on grounded theory as systematic ways of uncovering themes and concepts (1983, pp. 125-126). He notes the importance of beginning with a thorough scrutiny of one history (see also Bertaux, 1980, p. 40). He and Faraday report that they have tried to implement such logical modes of analysis. However, they have often found that Ad Hoc Fumbling Around is more fruitful (1979, p. 755)!

Faraday and Plummer contribute their own "continuum of contamination" related to analysis and presentation (1979, p. 787). It depicts the degree of interpretation that the researcher imposes on a given life history account. At one extreme of the continuum is "pure" theory, which is not related to specific empirical research. At the other extreme is the "pure" life history, which is told in the narrator's own words without any commentary or editing. Next to "pure" theory is theorizing illustrated (usually supported, the authors comment) by carefully chosen examples. The mid-point of the continuum is thematic analysis derived from the life history. Closest to "pure" life history is the edited first-person account. Faraday and Plummer contend that all positions on the continuum are defensible. The life history researcher must acknowledge, however, where a given analysis/presentation is located on the continuum (1979, p. 788). In the next chapter, I trace the evolution of my own choice.

Bertaux and Kohli observe that validating the researcher's understanding of an account is a central issue in all interpretive research (1984, p. 233). However, neither of these authors discusses the procedures involved for life story research, per se. Denzin recommends that, once the material for the life history has been gathered, the researcher should draft the entire story and submit it to the interviewee for reactions (1978, p. 248). Plummer notes that sometimes a complete draft is submitted for comment (1983, p. 104). The researcher's draft must be understood to be a reconstruction of a reconstruction.

The presentation of the story has functions beyond validation, for the person who was interviewed. Mies believes that objectifying a life story gives one a new perspective on it and, therefore, an ability to draw new lessons from it (1983, p. 134). She (p. 134), along with Faraday

and Plummer (1979, p. 790), sees the account as important documentation of a life, both a memoir and a way of publishing experiences that have previously been ignored. Grumet sees this telling-back as an action that "returns a story to the teller that is hers and not hers . . . ." She regards it as a necessary mediation, since the experience of telling one's story is potentially alienating and diminishing (1987, pp. 322-328). So, for reasons of validation, mediation, and confirmation the return of the biography to its narrator seems well justified.

Some writers will also relate the individual life history or set of stories to the wider research literature, including other life histories (Plummer, 1983, p. 104). Bertraux's approach is cross-comparative between stories within a project (1981). Becker captures this attitude by saying that each individual life history is one piece of a larger research mosaic (1970, p. 421).

The individual life history may also be valued for its uniqueness. Allport, for example, argues that "acquaintance with the particulars is the beginning of all knowledge . . ." (1942, p. 56). He goes on to say that the individual life history, standing alone, provides significant insights about human life (p. 59). Plummer speaks of the humanities as the "baseline" for an attitude which favours the "uniquely subjective" as the source of understanding (1983, pp. 6-7). Making a case for an artistic approach to qualitative research, Eisner elaborates that humanities "baseline" (1981). He asserts that people do learn and generalize from the particular in a work of art. The "artistic" qualitative researcher should, like the artist, portray vividly the specifics of a given situation while pointing to those insights "that exceed the limits of the situation in which they emerge" (p. 7). According to Eisner, artistic research, like a work of art, strives both to inform and to persuade. And the quality of such a work should be judged on that basis.

There are two additional concerns related to the presentation of the stories. One is the disclosure of information. The second is writing style.

Plummer sums up the issue of appropriate disclosure with this question: "By what right can an academic enter the subjective worlds of other human beings and report back to the wider world on them?" (1983, p. 137). While he does not answer his own question, he does provide an outline of some ethical predicaments related to disclosure (pp. 137-146). He

discusses the problem of trying to modify factual descriptions in order to conceal identifiable characteristics, without sacrificing the detail and authenticity of the overall account. He talks about several kinds of deception. The deception may involve withholding information that points directly to an individual. Or, given the ease with which participants are usually identified, it may involve withholding information (even significant information) about some aspects of an individual's life. The issue is to recognize when a study participant may be vulnerable to harm, if certain revelations are made. Plummer notes that sometimes participants will choose to identify themselves, in any case (pp. 141-145)!

Plummer offers no solutions but he does make a couple of practical suggestions (1983, p. 144). One is that researchers should prepare different summary statements for different audiences; he cites as examples the participants, colleagues, friends, and general enquirers. Then, Plummer recommends that all deceptions be documented and held in confidence. More revelations may be made at a later date, when there is no risk to the study participants. Referring to his ethnographic study of high-profile educational administrators, MacPherson notes two other options (1985, p. 5). One is to restrict access to the report for an agreed period of time. The other is to have participants review any general articles that are drawn from the research for general publication, deleting anything they consider potentially harmful. Herein lies an extraordinary predicament for life history researchers and participants: there is no way of giving or receiving specific public credit without exposure to (unpredictable forms of) harm. And this, after much time-consuming effort, and while knowing that all efforts to disclose "appropriately" may still not prevent identification and damage. As Plummer says, the anonymity that seems to be a prerequisite for life history research may, in practice, be impossible to maintain (1983, p. 142).

Bertaux insists that the last step in life story research is not the writing of the stories, but the reading of them (1981b, p. 42). He and other life history researchers echo Mills' criticism that orthodox sociological writing is ponderous and unintelligible (1959, pp. 25-29). Bogdan and Taylor offer some guidelines for good writing; the suggestions, again after Mills, focus on clear,

direct writing that uses concrete examples, without over-working a small number of colourful quotes (1975, p. 145). The contemporary life historians openly admire the skills of professional writers and, more generally, the sociological insights that are presented so compellingly by fine novelists, poets, artists, and journalists (Bertaux, 1981b, p. 42; Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 144; Plummer, 1983, p. 106). The same people would agree with Becker when he says that the best life histories "have a sensitivity and pace, a dramatic urgency" that matches good fiction (1970, p. 420). Bertaux talks about "le recit" (narration) as a challenging way to move from analysis to synthesis while remaining anchored in concrete examples. Indeed, Bertaux argues for 'le recit' as a significant new form of sociological discourse: readable sociological stories (1981b, p. 44).

Chapter 2

ON DOING THE STUDY

Preface

Why have I written my story, as well as the stories of my interviewees? Writing the following detailed account has been a form of personal catharsis. My research has been protracted in its evolution and execution. For a period of more than 15 months, I conducted confidential interviews, then wrote and validated confidential biographies. After completing (most of) that work, I needed to make the transition from working with confidential narratives to writing a public dissertation. And, I wanted to make sense of my own experiences as a researcher. I needed to organize and recount those experiences, to clarify for myself and others the development of this research project and my part in it. Hence, the dual focus of this thesis.

I decided to continue using the narrative form because it was consistent with my overall research approach and because I suspected that my story would be, in itself, an illustration of several concepts that I have been studying. After all, the participants in the study and I--though different--also have much in common. I have thus attempted to detail the circumstances of my own decisions and choices throughout the course of the study. I have recorded my changing assumptions and convictions in relation to the study, as well as the continuing re-affirmation of my basic purpose and questions.

Finally, I have asked of myself something like what I asked of my interviewees. This demand on myself has had inseparable technical and ethical dimensions, just as the technical and the ethical have been inseparable so often throughout the study. For example, even in writing my own story, I have faced predicaments about selective recall and about appropriate disclosure. Doing this project has been an adventure. Here is the story of it.

My Story[1]

In early July, 1984, I walked into the Ph.D. suite in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. It was around noon and the spacious Ph.D. lounge area was crowded--with men. The men were of many shapes, sizes, and ages; typically, they were well dressed in a conservatively casual fashion. I felt that I might have stumbled into the men-only bar at a local country club. There wasn't another woman in sight. Thus began my career as a doctoral student in Educational Administration. Although I didn't recognize it for some time, my doctoral research topic had already presented itself.

My own background had not prepared me for the milieu in which I now found myself. The eldest of three daughters, I had always been expected to do well academically and to develop a paid-work career of my choosing. However, there certainly were not any academics in the family. During my early twenties, I took the option of working as a management trainee in my family's company. There, although there were no other women in the management ranks, I enjoyed the protected status of being the boss's daughter. No one questioned, openly, my presence or my future in the company. When I attended meetings with outsiders, though, it was frequently assumed that I was the plant nurse. I was amused. In my mid-twenties, the family business was sold. Although the new owners encouraged me to stay and move into middle management ("There is room for a competent woman manager here"), I also had an interesting option as a junior administrator at the local university.

I moved away from the business world into the field of education. Over the next eight years, I held various jobs related to education. Those included a term appointment as an administrative officer with a university faculty association, a three-year stint as a public school teacher in a large urban system, and several years as an educational administrator in non-profit agency settings.

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[1]As reconstructed from my journals, field notes, interview tapes, written assignments, the recollections of my colleagues, and my own memory.

Gradually, I came to see graduate work in Adult Education and then in Educational Administration as a natural complement to my teaching and administrative experience. Taking a graduate degree in a professional field seemed more possible, and certainly more practical, than doing graduate work in a traditional discipline, as my husband was doing. Nonetheless, having a spouse and his circle of friends who were graduate students increased my interest in pursuing academic studies. After taking occasional courses in Adult Education to test my abilities and inclinations, I became a full-time M.Ed. (Administration) student at the University of Alberta. At the time, I was also seeking a change from the political pressures of my administrative appointment. Later, with the encouragement of individual faculty members--female and male--I decided to stay on and enter the doctoral program.

Even as a Master's student, I was aware that there were few full-time female students in our department. Certainly, I would not have applied for admission to the doctoral program without the encouragement of some faculty members. Still, I was startled to find that there were only three other women in my doctoral class. I later discovered this was somewhat anomalous, even in our department, for the 1980s. Nonetheless, the university records (Data Book Supplement: Faculty of Education, Annual Publication) did show that, year after year, 75 to 80% of the students completing the B.Ed. degree were female. Where did all the women teachers go? I began to wonder, especially, about those few who had "made it" to the Educational Administration doctoral suite. How had they done so and why? My own route could hardly be typical: it had been circuitous and chance ridden. What about the others?

I had always thought of myself as a woman who took an interest in the careers of other women, but now I wanted to know much more. I asked around, and I read, discovering the burgeoning theory and research on women, the world of women's studies. I talked about my new interest, with both women and men, and became known in the Department for that interest. For the first time in my life, I was given and accepted the label "feminist." I was not very comfortable with the label, with my new reputation, with the literature I was exploring, with the issues and the controversy that were attached to this world of women's studies. It occurred to

me that I was inadvertently doing almost a double Ph.D.--the official program, plus my unofficial excursions into women's studies.

It was a predicament for me. Should I ignore the study of women's issues, when my awareness of such matters had just been heightened? The whole area was both important to me personally and it was professionally trendy (though not necessarily in our department). It was also conceptually and emotionally complex. Could I, Beth, handle the pressures of working on women's issues? Could I find a way through the academic and personal minefield of feminist theory and research? But, having recognized the challenge of such work, and believing in the need for it, how could I back away and move in some other research direction? My preliminary investigations suggested that very little scholarly work on women in educational administration had been undertaken in Alberta. Of the doctoral studies completed in our Department, for example, there were only two that dealt specifically with women. My advisor, Al MacKay, encouraged me to focus and articulate my own research interest within the area.

I hesitated, vacillated, and reluctantly decided that I would give it a try. I would study the careers of some women with doctorates in Educational Administration, find out how they had lived their lives and done what they did. To mark my decision, in January, 1985, I began keeping a journal, a sporadic record of my adventure. I was launched on a new intellectual and personal journey--a tentative, exploratory mission.

Just as the scope of my study was wide, so, of necessity, was the range of my intellectual explorations. Although Al urged me to decide on a disciplinary home, I felt that I didn't know enough to do that. So, I roamed restlessly in and out of many academic territories. I was examining feminist work in sociology, psychology, philosophy, and education as well as the career development literature. I was getting caught up in the controversy about paradigms in the social sciences and in the methodological literature on qualitative research approaches. My explorations were influenced in direction and disciplinary content as much by the interests of my friends as by my own curiosity. As I read, thought, talked with other women and with men

about careers and education, I began to develop the convictions and questions that would shape my research.

My first conviction was that not all careers are rationally planned, tidily progressive sequences of positions. Although the "ideal" career seemed to be, my own certainly wasn't. For one thing, the personal and the professional aspects of life were closely interwoven, not neatly compartmentalized. The notion of a career could not be limited to paid-work activities. Home-making and volunteer work, for example, should be considered together with paid work. Where did they fit? And chance might be a big factor in careers, as it is in life generally.

More specifically, I began to ask, "What constitutes a 'career in education'?" Limiting one's definition of education to formal, organized education, there are still many educational activities occurring outside the basic and post-secondary educational systems. And, there are many people engaged in forms of educational administration outside the school systems. Given my own varied career in education, I wanted my research to reflect, somehow, these broader notions of education and educational administration.

Many researchers investigated by means of questionnaire surveys. When I had done such a survey for my M.Ed. research project, I had become sceptical about that approach. I had learned to my dismay that people's connotations of apparently specific words varied a great deal. Their individual variations in background and organizational context had influenced my respondents' understanding and usage of many terms. As a result, it was difficult to know what a respondent meant by selecting a given answer. I speculated that many findings from structured surveys on women and educational administration would suffer from similar problems with regard to meaning in context. For example, given differences in personality, career development, and context (organizational and socio-historical), one person's idea of a mentor might be another person's idea of a busybody. Moreover, that first problem of meaning aside, I wondered if the development of a career could be accounted for adequately by some pre-conceived list of factors, multivariate and sophisticated though the analysis of those factors might be. I thought not.

In general, then, I felt that much of the research I had seen on careers was limited and limiting in its conceptualizations and methodologies. We needed research that acknowledged and welcomed uniqueness as well as generalizations. I wanted to trace the individual educator's working out of a professional life, without imposing structures and labels on it.

I was also struggling with questions and convictions related to feminism. As I noted in my journal [February 18 and 22, 1987], there were two strands of feminist thought that seemed especially relevant to my research interests. One strand was concerned with women's entitlement and access to a bigger piece of the existing pie; for example, women holding more of the hierarchically powerful positions. The other strand was concerned with re-writing the recipe to provide institutional options that would serve everyone (or, at least, more people) better. Which strand was I going to follow in my own work? I noted in my journal that my orientation would be to examine the experiences of some women who are working within the established structures and use that examination as an opportunity to reflect on alternatives. It did not seem adequate to follow either strand exclusively. But could I handle the tension and complications of dealing with both?

I faced other potentially undercutting questions. Perhaps, as some people said, it was just a matter of time and women would take up administrative studies and positions in greater numbers. Was this kind of research now superfluous? Was there a strong enough connection between doing the doctorate in Educational Administration and being an educational administrator? Degrees in Educational Administration were not the exclusive ticket to administration, nor any guarantee of such appointments. Are all male teachers equally likely to have the opportunity to become administrators, if they want to? Aren't there many people who simply do not want to be administrators within the existing structures? The issues and connections seemed slippery and amoebic. My own idea--that inviting certain women to tell the stories of their careers would somehow clarify these connections--seemed naive and simple minded.

Still, the statistics and my own observations continued to haunt me. Surely it was odd that so many women went into school classrooms as teachers and so few emerged to become administrators or to take doctorates in administration. I kept returning to my original question: what were the stories underlying the statistics?

Early in 1985, as a short field assignment for a research and design course, I undertook some practice interviews. I arranged one 45 minute interview with each of my three women class-mates to talk about her career. The idea was to test out and practice unstructured interviewing. I was also seeking topics or themes in these women's lives that I could then investigate in the literature, before starting a major study. As well, I was looking for criteria that might be significant for the selection of interviewees. I had quite a bit of experience in personnel interviewing, and had taught the subject, but I knew that my technique was rusty. My interviewees were cooperative and encouraging, but it was intimidating for me to be interviewing sophisticated colleagues. The women proved to be articulate and organized about telling their stories. In each case, I was given what seemed like a lot of information, and we had a good time.

I wondered at the trust these women placed in me. From the time of the first practice interview, I began to live with professional, but very personal, confidences. From then on, whenever I was in casual conversation with various classmates, I often had to stop myself from referring to information that I had acquired in confidence. The information was not damaging; it was simply information about a person's background or experience that was relevant to a given discussion. The right to disclose that information, however, was not mine.

The stories I was told caused me to wonder even more about what other women would have to say. The element of chance was a continual presence in each story. The inter-connections among personal and professional choices and opportunities were also well illustrated. One interviewee said that her career was a combination of accident, opportunity, and planning (Journal, January 28, 1985). The other stories echoed that combination.

For several reasons, I requested an additional session with each interviewee. I knew that I needed more practice to become comfortable doing open-ended interviews. I also wanted to tape record the sessions this time. And, I wanted to test what could be accomplished in a second session: it was obvious that at least two sessions would be necessary in order to obtain a detailed history. All three of my classmates agreed to meet with me for a second time.

Tape recording the supplementary sessions was helpful. I had previously taken notes by hand. That had been distracting. And, although my notes proved to be quite accurate, they were fragmented. The data were difficult to retrieve. Tape recording allowed me to relax (almost! I never did stop worrying about technical malfunctions) and to secure more complete documentation. My sophisticated interviewees were initially conscious of, but not troubled by, the recording. However, I found that I needed practice in using a tape recorder unobtrusively. One interviewee gave me permission to have an expert interviewer review her tape and provide me with a critique of my style. The other interviewees declined to allow anyone except me to listen to the tapes. Even so, my technique improved with each interview, especially once I had tapes that I could review. In particular, I reduced the frequency of my own "positive-reinforcement" remarks in favor of silence. And, I decided to invest in a good compact tape recorder and many good quality tapes. If interviewing was to be my primary source of data, then both my technique and my technology should be unobtrusive and trustworthy.

At the beginning of the second session, the interviewee reviewed and elaborated a simplistic life-line that I had constructed from my notes of the first session. This life-line consisted of a chronological listing of the dates and locations of significant paid-work-related decisions that the interviewee had identified. Reviewing the life-line with the interviewee allowed me to check my own interpretations of the data I had collected. As well, it provided me with the comfort of a possible structure for the interview. Then, toward the end of the session, I asked several more theoretical questions based on the literature about women in educational administration.

I learned a great deal from the second round of practice sessions, each of which was about one hour long. The presentation of the life-line was generally a good opening activity, providing a starting point for more discussion, and also a recap of the previous interview. The interval between the sessions had afforded the interviewees an opportunity to reflect on what they had said to me initially. I was surprised by the amount of additional information that emerged, quite spontaneously, during the review of the life-line. I was being offered quite a detailed elaboration of each career. I noticed, though, that too many probing questions imposed an artificial structure and broke the flow of the story. Yet, at times, I felt the need to dig deeper, to get beneath a rather superficial account. But my theoretical questions only promoted that superficiality. Being theoretical, such questions invited rather abstract responses from these sophisticated women. I had begun to struggle with one of the central challenges for the life story interviewer: how to promote both depth and flow in the narration.

Indeed, I was troubled about my own role as interviewer. I noted in my journal the question, "What is 'neutral' behavior?" I was beginning to search for appropriate rather than neutral relations with my interviewees. With regard to the length of the interviews, I found that I could not be effective as an interviewer for longer than one hour. But two sessions, then, were not sufficient to obtain a detailed account of an interviewee's career. Would I need to schedule three sessions for each person?

With considerable difficulty and trepidation, I drafted a proposal to do "A Follow-up Study of Women Doctoral Recipients in Educational Administration." It was March by then. I composed the draft in response to a course requirement. I proposed to document the career-related experiences of some of the Canadian women doctoral graduates. At that stage, I was thinking of women who had studied at the University of Alberta. I proposed to undertake a "naturalistic inquiry." That is, I would record the stories from the perspectives of the women concerned, rather than imposing or seeking general patterns. The research would be collaborative--the interviewees would be partners in, not subjects of, the investigation. I would

report my procedures and findings in the first person singular as a way of acknowledging my own role as the research instrument.

Regarding the design of the study, I proposed three stages of data collection. I would send a brief questionnaire to the women Ph.D. recipients to obtain some demographic information. On the basis of that information, I would somehow select interviewees, although I was quite vague about what demographic characteristics would be significant in the selection process. Then, I would interview about one-half of the women who were found to be residing in Canada. I anticipated that would be about 10 women. With each woman, I would schedule a series of three one-hour interview sessions, spread over three to five days. This proposed schedule was based on my experiences with the practice interviewing. My approach would be similar to that of the practice interviews. After analyzing my interview data, I intended to send the interviewees a summary of the common themes and significant differences that I had identified. I would ask the interviewees for their reactions. Once my analysis was validated by the interviewees, I would write up my findings. It all sounded so clear cut and straightforward!

When I was drafting the proposal, only one person actively questioned my ability to do the study. She was herself a doctoral graduate, a nurse-administrator with psychiatric training. She felt that I didn't have an appropriate background for in-depth interviewing, because I wasn't a trained therapist. Her remarks sent me delving into the literature on in-depth interviewing as a research technique. I emerged with the knowledge that people from many disciplinary backgrounds had successfully used in-depth, unstructured interviewing. I achieved valuable clarification of my own stance. I would not be attempting to engage in therapeutic interviewing!

After I had circulated the draft proposal, I received constructive advice, provocative criticism, and encouragement from many quarters. My classmates and others who had gone before, my advisor, other faculty members, my husband, all helped me to clarify and focus my thinking. I started a reference file of comments on my proposal. The general direction of my exploratory mission might be decided, but the details of my itinerary were not yet established.

I needed the regular advice of some experts as I worked out my itinerary. Putting together an examining committee was the next task. Al and I considered various individuals throughout the university community. I was immediately faced with a predicament. The only woman on staff in the Department of Educational Administration was a sessional. She was known for her interest in women's issues but, as a doctoral graduate of the Department, she was a member of my defined research population. Because of that, I decided against inviting her to sit on the committee, even though it meant excluding the only woman in the Department. I approached two other faculty members. One was Ed Seger, who was sympathetic to my topic but favored quantitative studies. I valued his friendly criticism of my methodology. The other was Gordon McIntosh, who had experience doing qualitative research and had supervised a recent interview study on the careers of some nurse-doctorates. Both men agreed to sit on my committee. I now had my quota of Department members.

Then, Al and I discussed potential members from outside the Department. My lack of a clear disciplinary focus for the study made it more difficult to decide on the external members. However, certain criteria were becoming significant to me. First, I wanted committee members who knew the world of formal education and educational administration. I wanted people whose paid-work experience included teaching outside the university. I wanted people whose current scholarly interests were in the study of education, but who also had experience themselves as educational administrators. And, of course, I wanted people who thought that my topic was worthwhile. However, I did not want committee members who, because of their ideological commitments, might force my own explorations to premature closure. To my surprise, Al suggested that I approach Myer Horowitz, the President of the University and former Dean of Education. I approached Dr. Horowitz and he agreed to sit on the committee. I now had four men on a thesis committee for a study of women's careers in education.

There must be one suitable woman at the university, who would sit on my committee! In my own graduate course work, I had chosen to concentrate on adult education and then educational administration. I had not explored other options. Therefore, I had no direct

knowledge of the women academics on campus. What I sought was a woman who knew the world of education and educational administration, first-hand, and who would look at that world with critical understanding. AI reviewed a list of the academic staff in the Faculty of Education. Aha! Peggie Platt from the Department of Elementary Education had been appointed an Associate Dean of the Faculty. She was, as she later told me, only the second woman ever to have been appointed at that level in our Faculty of Education. I approached Dr. Platt. She agreed to sit on my committee. I had what I wanted--a committee of academics who were educators, every one with experience as an educational administrator and with a scholar's interest in the topic of women in educational administration.

At Dr. Horowitz's request, I prepared a five-page summary of my research proposal, although I was still puzzling over certain aspects of the study. The request forced me to make a few more decisions, at least tentatively. I specified a "career-choice-chance" focus and made explicit my interest in linking the woman's experiences to policy questions. I proposed to introduce a new stage in my data analysis. I would draft a confidential "case history" of each woman's career, based on my interviews with her, and submit it to her for review and verification. From the case histories, I would draw out themes.

Committed though I was to the project, the issue of maintaining the interviewees' anonymity already haunted me. Because of the personal nature of the research, I proposed several safeguards. I would not state where the participants had taken their doctorates. I would not publish individual demographic profiles of the interviewees, or their case histories. If a given direct quote was likely to identify the interviewee, I would obtain that interviewee's permission to use it. After doing and reflecting on the practice interviews, I had come to realize that both anonymity and confidentiality were easier to talk about than to maintain. But anonymity and confidentiality were no longer just desirable theoretical ideals for me. If an interviewee was willing to give me her time and her story, I owed her as much protection as I could provide.

By now, it was the summer of 1985. I was still working to complete the course requirements for the doctoral program. I applied to be a graduate student intern, working in the

Department of Advanced Education during the fall term. I arranged to do my last course that term, as well. And, my husband moved to Toronto to pursue his own doctoral studies. With his move, I lost my closest travelling companion at an early stage of my explorations.

During the late spring and summer, I had four encounters that were especially significant to my study. In the first instance, Al arranged for me to meet a doctoral recipient who had been one of his students. On hearing an outline of my proposed study, she commented that the women she knew had entered and completed the doctoral program without having any "grand plans" in mind. Like me, perhaps? Then, Al referred me to a recent doctoral graduate in Educational Psychology, who had done a career study. She was encouraging, and provided me with useful current references on career development from a social-psychological perspective. There was an acknowledged need for developmental studies of women's careers. I felt re-affirmed in my research interests. Through a classmate, I met a sociologist named Ray Morrow. He was well versed in feminist and critical theory. He took an interest in my study and agreed to give me a reading course in sociological theory. He also referred me to some sociological literature on life-history research. Mainly British and European in origin, these writings gave a much more specific focus to my research approach.

My fourth important encounter was with a book, a birthday gift from friends who knew about my proposed study. The book, entitled *Hard Choices*, was written by a sociologist named Kathleen Gerson. Gerson studied the ways that a cohort of women arrived at decisions about work, careers, and motherhood. She found that such choices were often made in the context of "constraints and opportunities" which are often unanticipated (1985, p. 42). Her thorough and balanced feminist treatment of the findings set the standard for my own work.

I wrote a formal research proposal in preparation for my candidacy examination. The proposal was the distillation of my thinking, my reading, conversations with many people, and the practice interviews that I had done. It was a distinctly personal document, reflecting the next stage in my distinctly personal exploration.

With regard to the research design, my candidacy proposal differed from earlier drafts in several ways. I defined my population by treating the completion of the doctoral program in Educational Administration as a collecting point for women with a wide range of career experiences in education and educational administration. In that way, I could define a population without focusing, as so many studies did, on one particular employer/institution, level of education, or type of position. I had decided to do a pilot life-history cycle, with a member of the population. The cycle would include interviews, a biography, and verification of the biography. After that, I still proposed to send out a preliminary questionnaire. Then I would approach five of the respondents and do a series of interviews with each one. Once I had analyzed the interview data, I intended to approach an additional 10 of the questionnaire respondents. I would ask them to review and react to a summary of the major themes and significant differences that I had identified. In the candidacy proposal, I discussed the life-history research approach. I argued that the approach is especially suitable for a developmental study such as I proposed to do.

With respect to a conceptual orientation, I elaborated my previous writings. Along with my treatment of the notions of "career" and "choice" as central concepts, I introduced again and in more detail the questions of chance and of structural constraints. I noted that chance as a factor in career development was rarely discussed. I suggested that, if there were structures of opportunity, there might also be structures of chance. Linking the life stories to policy making, I suggested that the stories might provide new perspectives on the complexity and the developmental nature of career experiences. Thus, they would provide important data for use in the structuring of policy problem statements on the relation between women's careers in education and women's under-representation in educational administration. My proposal was well received. The committee members continued to be interested and supportive. My candidacy examination was scheduled for early November, 1985.

After passing my examination, I expected to make arrangements for a pilot study almost immediately. Instead, I allowed my work as a Research and Development intern with Advanced

Education plus some teaching contracts and a disintegrating marriage to absorb my time and energy. Although I continued to talk and think about my proposed study, I did not act on it again until late January, 1986. The next entry in my journal was on February 10, 1986. This was the first of several intervals that might be described thematically as the Bogging Down of Beth. My exploratory mission had been halted for nearly three months, as I occupied myself with maintenance tasks and conflict resolution that cut across the personal and professional dimensions of my own life.

In late January, 1986, I modified my design again by broadening my population slightly. I decided to include any woman who had entered the doctoral program before 1984 (my year of entry), whether or not she had completed the degree. I was excluding those who were not Canadian residents and those who were nurses. This set of criteria left me with a population of 32 women. The enlarged population was another attempt to increase my options for potential interviewees and to obscure the identities of the actual interviewees. I was also working to develop a mailing list, a satisfactory preliminary questionnaire, and an accompanying letter.

Although I still was not sure what information was actually relevant for the selection of interviewees, I did draft a questionnaire. I was ambivalent about its value. As an experiment, I completed as much of it as I could for each woman who had been a doctoral student in our Department. I found that, for many of the women, there was quite a bit of basic information available as general knowledge. For others, I didn't even have a likely current address. I would have to trace the whereabouts of those women even to send them questionnaires. There were the uncertainties of response rate and time. Would I acquire enough new information to justify delaying the interview phase of my study by several weeks? A class-mate who was also doing in-depth interviews thought there was yet another problem with the very idea of a questionnaire. Her population was also a sophisticated one--academics. She decided that sending out a preliminary questionnaire would only give her respondents something to criticize, thus prejudicing them against her study.

Moreover, I could not settle on the criteria that would serve as my basis for selecting potential interviewees. Was I going to attempt some pseudo-scientific sampling approach based on factors such as location, marital status, and age? Why? My own practice interviews had not turned up any consistently significant demographic factors. Even if I supplied myself with a little more information about a few more women, I would still be flailing around in a fog. In such an open-ended study, limited to a very small number of participants, what would I really gain by sending out a questionnaire?

In early February, Al suggested that I drop the questionnaire phase of the study. He proposed that I simply pick some names, telephone those people, and ask to interview them. I was flabbergasted by the idea. I was also horrified by it; if I dropped the questionnaire, I would have to start dealing with real people, face to face, right away! I tested out this modification with my two in-Department committee members. Given the amount of information that was already available as public knowledge about the women, Gordon and Ed agreed that there was no strong argument for doing the questionnaire.

I felt that I had to press on and do the pilot study. The questionnaire had become just another delay tactic. It was late February by then. I was living with the nearly complete disintegration of my long-distance marriage. However, I was determined not to let my personal problems incapacitate me professionally. Meanwhile, several of my class-mates were completing their theses, as I still contemplated my pilot study. I had to get moving.

Based on the information that I had gleaned around the Department, I chose Claudette Tardif as a possible interviewee for the pilot study. Claudette was a member of the staff at the Faculté Saint-Jean. She was a recent graduate of our Department who had done a highly regarded qualitative study, supervised by Al. According to several accounts, she sounded like an interesting person who might be quite helpful to me. Moreover, her affiliation with a French-speaking university faculty made her immediately identifiable. I would not be able to involve her as one of my five official interviewees, so why not try to involve her this way?

On February 25, 1986, I mustered the courage to telephone Claudette. She wasn't in her office. I had a carefully prepared opening statement and no opportunity to use it! I telephoned her several times that day without reaching her. To keep myself occupied between attempts, I started reading her dissertation. I enjoyed the dissertation and felt better acquainted with Claudette already. I especially appreciated some comments that she made about the difficulties of doing qualitative research.

I telephoned her again on February 26 and reached her. I introduced myself, then told her about my study. I had written out my remarks beforehand in my journal. As I noted in the journal, Claudette "was great! Receptive, pleasant, willing to get started. She said that she wouldn't have enough to say to fill three hours" (Journal, February 26, 1986). Every woman I approached after Claudette reacted as Claudette had done. Claudette and I made three tentative one-hour appointments for the following week. We would meet at her office. I was moving into my riskiest reconnaissance yet, and wondering how my personal situation would affect my capabilities as an interviewer.

The interview sessions with Claudette were my first attempt to do life-history interviewing with a stranger. If I revealed too much of myself, that might influence Claudette's account of her life; if I refused to engage in a dialogue with her, that would be just as likely to affect Claudette's disclosures. Besides, I did not like the image of the mysterious "neutral" interrogator. On the other hand, I was there to hear Claudette's story, not to tell mine.

Not only would I be dealing with a stranger, but my life-history focus would be sharper than it had been before. I was seeking a detailed account of Claudette's activities, her daily life. From that, I would draft the decision-making network. I would also identify some concepts, themes, and issues to raise with Claudette. Those structured questions would be derived from her own story, not superimposed on it. I was nervous about my ability to carry off that kind of interviewing.

Some of the technical and mechanical challenges were less ambiguous. What equipment should I purchase? I looked only at Sony tape recorders, because I had found Sony

products reliable in the past. Reliability was a very important characteristic. I considered a range of Sony products, eventually choosing a compact $200 machine that had an auto-reverse feature and a built-in microphone. The machine accepted regular cassette tapes and operated with batteries or a wall plug. I decided that, since my entire study depended on the interviews, the financial investment was justified. Over the months of interviewing, I often had reason to be pleased with my choice.

I addressed another obvious technical detail. I began the pilot study using 60-minute tapes. Although each appointment was booked for one hour, the length of our sessions varied from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. It was distracting to have to change the tape in mid-interview, although Claudette was disconcertingly alert to such mechanical details because of her own work as a researcher. After two sessions, I switched to 90-minute tapes.

From the beginning of the first session, Claudette's reactions made me aware of the pressures that life-history interviewing placed on interviewees. It was time consuming, for one thing. But it was demanding in other ways. Claudette apologized for leading such an ordinary life. She worked to make her stories interesting. When I probed for details, she could not always recall them to her own satisfaction. Or, I might be exploring (in some cases, inadvertently) private matters that she had avoided previously. Claudette did say, though, that most people never have such an opportunity to talk about themselves and reflect on their lives. But I wondered if many people would see it, not as an opportunity, but as a presumptuous intrusion. Perhaps some of each.

Reviewing the tapes between the sessions was an important part of the interview cycle. I had to do the review in order to draft the decision-making network. Besides, the review gave me an opportunity to criticize my own interviewing technique. Consequently, my technique did improve. I noted the value of questions that encouraged the recall of concrete details. Judiciously used, probes such as "What triggered your decision?"; "For example?"; "What was a typical day like, then?" were indispensable aids to the story-telling process. I realized, too, the value of the decision-making network, as a device for "grounding" the interview in specific

information. Even so, there were times when Claudette's talent as a story-teller was the sole reason that I obtained so much useful data. Clearly, my debriefing between sessions was essential if I was going to do good quality research.

Meanwhile, the decision-making network was evolving into a valuable research tool. Originally, it was my intention to depict the choice points in the interviewee's career development. What I actually depicted were the change points. It was difficult to determine when a choice had actually been made, but it was quite straightforward to illustrate a change in behavior or circumstances resulting from a choice. This emphasis on the observable was not my usual preference. However, I decided that I would have to address the complexities of choice as a developmental concept in the biography, not the network.

I could, however, acknowledge the concurrence of the personal and the professional in the network. I used two parallel lines on the same page to chart chronologically the personal and the professional in Claudette's story. Doing the charting brought to my attention, and then to Claudette's, certain gaps and conflicts in the data, particularly dates and places. The use of two lines was helpful in drawing out multi-dimensional information about a given period.

The review of the network was our usual opening activity, although sometimes Claudette would begin with comments that had occurred to her between our sessions. I saw the chart as a means, not an end. Claudette's main criticism of it was that the depiction was much more logical and linear than life itself. I agreed but decided that it was still a useful tool, like a map. I felt that the network could be further improved by the introduction of a third line. I labelled the three dimensions then represented as "personal," "professional," and "extra-curricular." Both the labels and the distinctions they implied were inadequate, but they would suffice for heuristic purposes. The chart gave me a valuable chronological overview and a mechanism for validating the basic chronological information quickly. I expected it to serve as an outline for the biography.

In the early stages of the pilot interviews, I worried about many things. When I introduced my study to Claudette, I stated my interest in choice, in chance, and in the

interweaving of the personal and the professional in the development of a career. At various times during our interviews, Claudette acknowledged that she was being selective about what she told me. She was making judgements according to what she considered relevant to my study. I became aware of her selectivity only when I probed or she elaborated without prompting later in the cycle. However, if I probed too persistently, I interrupted the flow of the story. Likewise, if I began a session with too many questions arising from the previous session, we shifted from narration to structured interviewing. A series of three one-hour sessions was not enough to obtain any but the most superficial account from Claudette, even with her selectivity. We added three more sessions, which averaged 75 minutes each. Could I possibly ask that much time of the study participants? And yet, if I did not, I felt that I would not have much confidence in my data, even though my interviewing technique was improving.

Those were primarily technical worries, but I had concerns of a more theoretical nature, as well. Between sessions, I always listed some concepts or themes that seemed significant in Claudette's life to that point. I wanted Claudette to react to my analysis and apply supporting or contradicting incidents. We rarely had time for such discussion and, again, the imposition even of that structure seemed to constrain rather than enrich the narration. Claudette's responses became very general. The theme questions seemed necessary in order to validate my understanding of Claudette's story. And yet, dealing with those questions seemed to take us away from the story, to waste our too-limited time together.

On the whole, I felt that the data I was collecting was "good stuff" (Journal, March 13, 1986). However "good," that assessment about the data worried me. Was Claudette's story "good stuff" simply because it supported my own biases, gave me the sort of data that I had been secretly hoping to find?

By late March, it was time to try writing a biography; I had completed six sessions with Claudette. Should I transcribe the interviews before I attempted to write a biography? I had learned from other students and from calling various office machine stores that transcribers were difficult to rent and expensive to buy. Some transcribers were available on loan from the

Instructional Technology Centre in the Education Building, but I was warned that those machines were not in good operating condition. Other people warned me about the difficulties of getting transcripts typed. My committee members did not consider verbatim transcripts a necessity. In their opinions, typed verbatim transcripts were often just busy work. I chose instead to listen to the tapes several times, making notes for the biography. I was able, with some difficulty, to draft the biography from my notes.

When I began writing Claudette's biography, it was my intention to sketch only a summary of Claudette's career development in the context of her life as a whole. I saw the biography as an elaboration of the decision-making network, describing the contexts in which she had made choices/changes. In a sense, it was a "second cut" at the data, a second attempt to draw out and organize the basic facts of Claudette's life. In the biography, I intended to separate events from opinions, the concrete examples from the general statements. Life is not that simple.

When I reviewed the tapes, I was surprised to find such a detailed story of Claudette's life on record. Listening to the tapes was enjoyable. Hearing our interviews again gave me a sense of being in Claudette's presence, and it reminded me of my debt to her. That made it even more difficult for me to decide what to include in the biography and what to omit. In the end, I wrote far more than I had planned. Even so, I was not very satisfied with the result. My summary ignored the very richness and complexity of life that I claimed to be seeking in my study. Claudette's life was multi-dimensional, but my account of it was flat.

The biography did serve as another data-gathering tool. Like the decision-making network, it pointed out some of the gaps and conflicts in the story. I indicated those gaps in two ways. For missing details such as names and dates, I inserted short lines. If I had a more general or complex question, such as "Why did you do that?", or a concern about my interpretation of the data I had available, such as "Is that right?", I "talked" to Claudette by inserting my remark into the text in square brackets. Obviously, I would need to schedule and

tape a follow-up interview with Claudette to record her elaborations on and other reactions to the biography.

The biography that I submitted to Claudette for review was 10 single-spaced, typewritten pages, or about 4,000 words long. I single spaced the document to make it look shorter. I was horrified by the length of it and thought that Claudette would be, too. After some hesitation, I wrote the biography in the third person, using real names. I was worried that such an approach objectified Claudette, the story-teller. However, the only alternative I could imagine was to write the biography as a letter to Claudette, thus preserving the sense of a dialogue. The device seemed artificial, though, when I would ultimately be using the material in a formal document. I delivered my draft biography to Claudette in a package that included a covering letter, a refined decision-making network, and a cassette tape in case she wanted to record her comments orally rather than in writing. I asked her to meet with me again, for a follow-up interview.

There was an interval of six weeks between the time that Claudette and I held our sixth interview and the day that I delivered the biography to her. That seemed far too long to me. Not only had my work on the biography taken more time than I had anticipated, but my personal affairs had absorbed much of my time and energy. My husband and I were ending our marriage. The decision, painful for both of us, was made and re-affirmed that spring. However, we did not translate that decision into a legal separation until the late summer. I was exhausted by the process. Referring to a hypothetical version of the decision-making network depicting my own life, I wrote in my journal that "the combination of my own 'personal and professional lines' [was] wearing me out" (March 18, 1986).

When I realized that my "turn-around" time was lengthening, I wrote Claudette a note advising her of that. Previously, I had written her a note thanking her for her assistance to that point. She later said that my efforts to keep her informed about my progress had been important. Those gestures showed an appreciation of what she had done and were an indication of my commitment to her as well as to my own ends. That increased my

trustworthiness, in Claudette's view. I, on the other hand, had thought of the notes as simple courtesy.

It was some time after I delivered the biography to Claudette that we met again for our follow-up interview. We agreed on a day in late May, two months after our previous session. Claudette had reviewed the biography and given it to her husband and her daughter to read. She was ready with several comments.

Claudette had a number of positive things to say about the biography. She complimented me on my writing style and the accuracy of the material that I had included. She said that this evidence of what I had learned about her made me more of a "presence" in her life. Because of that, she was willing to tell me more, building on our shared knowledge. She asked for a fresh copy of the biography as a keepsake for her family's records. I interpreted that request as one significant validation of my work.

Claudette's criticisms of the biography were articulate and helpful. She thought that I had condensed the treatment of the most recent years too much. She commented that the "why's" of her choices and the affective aspects of her life were not apparent. She also felt that, because of its brevity, my summary gave her life too orderly and rational an appearance, glossing over the complex pulls and pushes, the configurations of circumstantial factors that had been very much a part of her career development and decision making. She quoted her husband's reaction after reading the biography. He asked, "Who's the person behind the story?"

When we closed our seventh interview session, Claudette and I parted amicably. Claudette agreed to be available to me as a "consultant," if I needed to talk some things over during the main study. She also agreed to give me a "character reference" if any potential interviewee wanted to make enquiries of her. She urged me to document the issues relating to this research process and then write up my experiences as part of the thesis. Through the combination of chance and my own initiatives within a given structure of opportunity, I had found in Claudette an invaluable pilot interviewee. As a gesture of appreciation, I sent her flowers.

As a result of the pilot study, I realized that the relation of the biography to the other elements of my research design was ambiguous. The biography did show up some gaps in the data. It did pull together the basic information in a developmental form that was consistent with my developmental perspective on career choices. It did allow me to "tell back" her story to the interviewee, as a story. The interviewee could then validate a coherent narrative, rather than reviewing transcripts. But that was where the difficulties became apparent. A great deal of what Claudette said during the interviews was omitted from the biography. That was also important data. Could I use that additional data, when it had not been reviewed and validated by the interviewee? How many times was I going to "work" these data, anyway? Could the biography become my primary analytical effort, as well as a personal story?

Here was a predicament. I could see the value of writing more comprehensive biographies. But if I did, the task was a monumental one, quite different from anything I had proposed. And yet, if I did not modify my treatment of the biography, its role would remain ambiguous and I would be working more from unvalidated interview transcripts than from an organized, "authorized" narrative. How long, detailed and "complete" a re-telling should I attempt?

If I was becoming uncertain about the proper function of the biography in my research, I was remaining uncertain about my proper role as a researcher/interviewer. I liked the idea of collaborative research, of being a "fellow traveller," as I had put it in my journal (February 25, 1986). It seemed appropriate, given the sophistication of my interviewees. But I was, after all, the investigator with the research agenda. That was why we were there. So, I decided that my job was to bring focus to our sessions. Bringing focus meant that I was influencing, to some degree, what Claudette said. Or, could it be called educating Claudette about her role as a storyteller (even as I, in turn, learned from her)? Otherwise, we might spend a great deal of time together without accomplishing much. This venture might be a cooperative exploration, but it was not and could not be a leaderless expedition.

Conducting, taping, and reviewing the pilot interviews provided me with a good deal of information that might be relevant to future life-history interviews. General categories for discussion soon became apparent, such as paid-work activities, personal/family life, "extra-curricular" pursuits. However, revelations about any one dimension of life at a certain time were interspersed with remarks about the other dimensions. Not only did Claudette's account move back and forth among these various dimensions, but it swung back and forth from the past to the present and then occasionally slid into speculations about the future. Sometimes, my probes triggered those travels through various dimensions of activity and time. Other times, Claudette linked the dimensions quite spontaneously. Similarly, Claudette often volunteered information about a given socio-historical context as part of her description. From time to time, I grounded her account in its socio-historical context, usually by referring to the decision-making network and clarifying dates and sequences. Likewise, Claudette herself identified what she saw as important themes in her life and in her career development. And, once in a while, I proposed a theme and she reacted to it. As we became used to working together, and as we developed, almost implicitly, an understanding of this type of interviewing, Claudette's accounts became increasingly anecdotal and amusing.

The pilot interviews also provided me with important information about myself as a research instrument. My greatest asset, I thought, was my genuine and unflagging interest in Claudette's story. I was fascinated, and said so. As well, it seemed to me that my own knowledge of the western Canada context, especially in the field of education, was invaluable. My ability to probe, interject, or summarize appropriately was partly a matter of generic skills. But the dominant factor was my own knowledge of the professional context. That ability seemed quite significant in establishing my credibility with Claudette. I also made personal revelations by this means: I sometimes combined a question or observation with a comment about myself. Being a rather private person, I found this a comfortable way of sharing some information about myself. My knowledge, then, was significant to the quality of the interviews. But so was a sense of humour. Claudette and I laughed together many times over her remarks

or mine. Our amusement tempered the intensity of our sessions and, at times, confirmed our understanding of a particular incident or issue. On the whole, I did try to "act naturally," from the conviction that my general interest/curiosity and openness were assets, not liabilities.

I realized that my behavior as an interviewer was not consistent. Sometimes, I was too "laid back"; I overlooked opportunities to elicit more detail or to clarify remarks. At such times, the quality of the interview relied heavily on Claudette's now established habits as a life-history interviewee. I over-compensated during other sessions, going in with a list of supplementary questions arising from the previous session, or pressing too frequently for elaboration so that I became an interrogator. I was often tempted to allow the interviews to become reciprocal exchanges, by interjecting comments about my own experience and views. I avoided doing that, then wondered if my silence was fair to Claudette. Moreover, while I tried to note and respond sensitively to non-verbal behavior, Claudette was just as alert to those indicators as I was. I felt cautious about interpreting such things. I could only hope that the liveliness of my exchanges with her and the disclosures she made were indications of healthy interviewer/interviewee relations.

It did become clear to me that technical and ethical issues could not be separated. I might use my technical "communications skills" to assist me in establishing trust. But once trust had been established, reassuring Claudette of my trustworthiness was not just a technical matter but a moral obligation, because of the disclosures she had made to me. By doing this kind of research well, in a technical sense, I was incurring debts in the form of moral responsibilities.

The problem of appropriate disclosure was the focus of considerable discussion between me and my committee members. I would use pseudonyms in the dissertation, of course. But the problem was more complex than that. After interviewing Claudette, I wondered if it would be possible to obscure the identity of any interviewee, yet retain and describe important aspects of her career. If each story was unique, then the unique characteristics of it were a significant part of my data. I anticipated many predicaments, because I did not want to

forfeit either the anonymity of the participants or the precise descriptions that would be important to the presentation of my findings. As Al put it, anonymity might be the "impossible dream" (Journal, March 11, 1986). Other committee members urged me not to over-emphasize the problem. They suggested that, by doing so, I might end up distorting or eliminating some data unnecessarily: people who agreed to participate in studies like mine are often less worried about the revelations than the researcher is. And I could, if necessary, have the dissertation classified as secret (all that work to produce a secret document!). People reminded me that I, the researcher, must control the use of the data. I would simply have to negotiate, at my discretion, particularly revealing passages on a case by case basis. Their stories, my data. The relation between the two would be resolved only in the writing of the thesis, if then.

I wondered if I should undertake another pilot study in order to clarify some aspects of the design and reduce my own anxiety. Conversely, some committee members felt that the data from my pilot study should be incorporated into the main study. Their rationale was that the pilot had been a major task, resulting in a substantial amount of data. Would I consider approaching Claudette with the idea? I hesitated, partly because I had already identified Claudette to my committee members as my pilot interviewee. Then, I said that I might approach her after I had interviewed the other women. I would make the request only if I felt that her story provided significant additional data. But, I was uneasy even about doing that. We had made a contract. Claudette had told me her story with the understanding that I would not use it outside the pilot study. I felt that it would be a breach of trust even to suggest changing our terms.

Because of the open-endedness of my design and my research approach, I was living with a great deal of ambiguity. Such ambiguity often led to predicaments, and also to the anticipation of more predicaments to come. I now realized that each interview cycle would differ and make different demands on me, because each interviewee would be different and so would her circumstances. I knew that the nature and role of the biography was unresolved and would remain so until I sat down to write the next one. I knew that I would be negotiating with my

interviewees throughout the study regarding appropriate disclosure. My committee members encouraged me to remain open and flexible in my approach. What were my limits?

In spite of the climate of ambiguity, I did emerge from the pilot study with some definite convictions about my research approach. In sociological terminology, I had shifted from a positivistic to an interpretive perspective on research. I was interested in what an individual had to say about her life, at a certain point in that life. I would not worry about whether she was typical or her story was generalizable in any way. And I recognized that the account would be selective, that there was no such thing as "the whole story." I still believed that we could learn as much from individual stories as we could learn from massed statistical data, especially if we wanted to understand the complexities of human life. Moreover, I wanted to hear the interviewee's story as she chose to tell it. I was committed to building on and from what was given to me, rather than imposing any structure that was external to the story I was hearing. My role would be to encourage her to relate a detailed account--descriptions, daily routines, critical incidents, anecdotes. I wanted the account to focus on what she had done, her actions in all of the dimensions of her life that were relevant to her career development. I would ask only for an overview of the interviewee's story at the first session. And I knew that, when I approached potential interviewees, I must be honest about the time involved and about the open-endedness of my design.

I believed that if I was going to have confidence in my data, it would be for certain reasons. My confidence would come from hearing the gradual revelation of detail in a story and the cross-references of one detail to another as the story unfolded. It would come from reviewing my own role, during the formal taped sessions especially, and hearing myself ask simple questions that fit into the narrative. Presenting brief summaries to the interviewee and hearing her affirm their accuracy, or correct them would reassure me. And, my confidence would come from developing the decision-making network between sessions, so that I could cross-check the chronology and identify the socio-historical context. My confidence in my data,

like an interviewee's trust in me, was a fragile thing. Both would be tested and re-affirmed many times over.

My convictions led to another modification in my proposed design. When it came time to do member checks on my findings--going to other members of the population--I would carry through somehow on the life-history approach. I would seek confirming or disconfirming incidents from the lives of other women, rather than seeking their opinions of my interpretations. As much as possible, I would avoid inviting any of the participants in my study to theorize about theorizing.

During the period of my pilot study, I recorded in my journal a number of influential experiences that were not directly connected with my pilot activities. Among those were two Brown Bag Lunch seminars in our Department. The seminars featured and/or discussed women in educational administration. Some of the women who were guest speakers denied experiencing gender-based discrimination or benefitting from being women in the contemporary socio-historical context. Others were more critical about their own experiences and the contemporary scene. One (Hewes, Journal, April 4, 1986) emphasized that women bring a richer career texture to work, citing the Abella report on that point. Another (Thomas, Journal, April 4, 1986) suggested that women are guilty of refusing to accept full partnership with men. Meanwhile, one of my colleagues was conducting a study on mentorship. He noted that female respondents claimed not to have received mentorship and support. Male respondents were more satisfied with their circumstances in that respect. I wondered aloud how much of that response indicated a structural bias that favored men and how much was a difference in expectations and needs. After finishing the book Women Like Us (Gallese, 1985), I recorded several points of interest. One was that, in her study, many basic demographic factors had no correlation with career path. Other points related to a fairly wide-spread ambivalence about the importance of "successful" careers; to the "ordinariness" of those who rose through the administrative ranks; to the "growth company" as the most welcoming environment for the

energetic and ambitious woman; and to the rarity of "truly equal" relations between spouses or partners. I would hear the echoes of those voices through to the conclusion of my thesis.

While I carried out the pilot study, my approach to delimiting a population for the main study continued to evolve. Largely because of the concerns about anonymity, I cast around for new delimitations. I considered including women who had completed or enrolled in an M.Ed. (Administration) program at the university. I considered including women who had completed doctorates in any department within the Faculty of Education. From the statistics I could obtain, it was obvious that my population would be enlarged considerably by either re-definition. However, pursuing those alternatives would further delay the interview phase of the study.

During this period, various acquaintances were mentioning to me women (in the Edmonton area, usually) who had completed doctorates in Educational Administration. From a few cursory inquiries, I confirmed that there were several women living nearby who had completed doctorates in Educational Administration at other universities. Some were local people who had done an M.Ed. (Administration) or part of one at the University of Alberta. Then, they had continued their studies elsewhere.

I decided to keep certain options open, while eliminating others. I would select women who had completed doctorates in Educational Administration, somewhere, and who were now living and working in western Canada. I did feel that my own western Canadian background fitted me for studying other women in western Canada. I would seek practitioners, not academics. Educational administration is, first of all, a field of practice. I wanted to study women who were out practising in that field, not other women who were teaching about and researching educational administration. Moreover, I had a sense that most of the few women with doctorates in Educational Administration who were pursuing academic careers were just getting launched. I would rely on word-of-mouth to inform me about possible interviewees. That had already been a good source of information both within the Department and outside the University. In a rather unorthodox manner, then, I gradually delimited a population.

I was becoming more interested in the women as individuals and less inclined to think of them as symbolic representatives of a certain population. I was moving, with the support and even the urging of most of my committee members, from the notion of "sampling" to that of "selection." I still could not establish a satisfactory short list of demographic characteristics as a basis for selection. Did I want as wide a range of characteristics represented as possible or did I want all of the women to share certain characteristics? What characteristics were significant? The selection was really a series of bets or risks, as Al put it.

I intended to choose four interviewees. The reduction from five to four women was another revision in my design. It was based on my experience with the pilot study. I believed that I would increase the quality of my study by extending the number of hours that I spent with each interviewee. Therefore, to make the size of the project manageable, I decided to reduce the number of participants.

Slowly, in a series of conversations with my committee members, I developed a set of criteria. Many studies had populations delimited by membership in a particular organization, or by a designated formal role, so I wanted to try a different cross-section. My criteria emphasized the central concepts of my study, career and choice. I decided to focus initially on an individual's present paid-work position. First, I looked at the conventional definition of success in administration--holding a senior, powerful position in the hierarchy. I sought women who fit that description, in Western Canadian educational organizations. I looked both for women associated with basic education and for women associated with post-secondary education, because there was a suggestion of different career paths and environments of choice. Also, my own background spanned both of those "levels" of education and I believed that they should not be treated as two solitudes. I did not want to confine my selection to women in the Edmonton area. I knew that, while distance brought with it problems of accessibility, proximity might be quite uncomfortable for both the interviewee and me. Moreover, I did not want to limit my exploration of choices by making residence in one city a factor. Once I had established these

broad criteria for my selections, I stopped discussing the issue with the members of my committee. The decisions from then on were private and my responsibility alone.

No matter what criteria and procedures I chose for selecting interviewees, I knew that my set of participants would be "biased" in certain ways. Because of my experience to that time, I believed that the women who agreed to collaborate with me would likely be those who saw the experience as an opportunity to reflect on their own lives and learn from that activity. They would likely be women who were committed to helping other women and/or other graduate students doing research. They would be women who valued qualitative research approaches. They would be women who were willing and able to spend several hours being interviewed. Such biases seemed unavoidable.

I chose one senior administrator in a publicly funded school system and one senior administrator in a post-secondary institution. I wrote to the women (for a sample letter, please see Appendix A), then followed up with a telephone call. In each case, I had to make more than one attempt to reach the woman. That reminded me quite sharply that I was a very minor element in their complex and busy worlds. Nonetheless, to my excitement, both women agreed to be interviewed.

I was then ready to approach two more women. I had decided to match each of the senior administrators with someone whose career activities were apparently concentrated in the same sector--basic education or post-secondary education--but who had not risen to similar heights in an organizational hierarchy. I hoped that the matches would show some contrasts in career development, personal priorities, and the environments of choice. Even so, I was troubled by this filtering-out process. I was opting to study only the careers of women who had worked in the mainstream of institutional education. However, at least I had a focus, and one that did not rely strictly on conventional definitions of success.

There were two women who seemed to be logical matches. Both were engaged in educational administration, if one defined the term in a general way, but not as senior officers. As far as I could determine, these two women were over 40 years old and under 50, like the two

women who had already agreed to participate. That pleased me. The limited age range should give me a cohort with some comparability in socio-historical context. I suspected that many women's careers were not well developed before the age of 40. And yet, I wanted to confine the participants to women whose careers had developed since the second World War. I wrote and then telephoned each of my new prospects. They both agreed, as well. By mid-June, 1986, my selection process had unfolded, resulting in a group of participants who reflected the broadening of the original population. Due to a combination of luck and effort I now had an interesting set of interviewees, whose identity was known only to me.

In 18 months (January, 1985 to June, 1986) I had interviewed four women and discovered many of the complexities associated with life story research. Now, I would interview four more women. Would this intriguing but protracted process yield any worthwhile findings?

From this point in my story, I shall refer to the study participants as a group. (See Appendix B for a collective profile of the four participants.) I have faced a series of predicaments regarding appropriate disclosure not only throughout the data-gathering phases of the study but also, of course, in writing the thesis. For example, just relating my story of the project presents one set of predicaments. Choosing not to report on each interview cycle or biographical effort individually does sacrifice some, possibly significant, detailed description. It also appears to dilute my commitment to uniqueness as well as patterns. At the same time, the loss of individual flavour assists in blurring the identities of the interviewees. I have provided a detailed description of the pilot study partly as compensation for the more general account of the main study. Many of the issues related to the research process were similar, although with individual variations. I have chosen, then, to summarize the remaining phases of my story as a "blended" case rather than as a series of individual ones.

Both common themes and unique elements characterized my interviewing activities in the summer of 1986. All four of the women I interviewed led extremely busy lives, in which I recognized that I was playing only a small part. Yet they all found the time to cooperate with me. Each woman protested that she could tell me her story in an hour or two, that we would not

require the seven or eight hours I requested. In each case, I reported on my experiences with Claudette in the pilot study. I suggested that we schedule a number of sessions and then cancel any that we did not need. In each case, the woman acquiesced, at least tentatively, and made a proposal for interview arrangements.

The life-history interview cycles spanned the period from mid-June to mid-August, 1986. The taped portion of an individual session ranged from 50 minutes to 150 minutes. The taped portion of a full interview cycle ranged from a total of five and one-half hours to a total of eight and one-half hours in length. The amount of conversation we had before and after the taped sessions varied from day to day and from person to person. The schedules and locations were chosen by the interviewees. I saw it as my job to be wherever the interviewee wanted me to be, whenever she was willing to talk. By mid-August, I had 30 hours of life-history interviews on tape as well as notes from about 15 additional hours of conversation and observation in the field. On the completion of an interview cycle, I wrote the interviewee a thank-you note and outlined my tentative (and, as it turned out, totally inaccurate) time-line for writing and validating the biographies.

The interview schedules varied considerably from one cycle to the next. Some sessions took place in the interviewee's office, during regular office hours. Other sessions occurred over the lunch or dinner hour. Still others took place during evenings and on holidays. I completed one cycle by meeting daily with the interviewee for five consecutive days. In another case, I met with the interviewee twice each week for three weeks. One cycle was completed in three intensive days. In all but one case, I was able to observe my preference for completing one cycle before starting the next. By contrast, although I preferred to interview for a maximum of one and one-half hours at a time, there were many occasions when an interview was longer than that. Extremely long interviews were predicaments for me, but fortunately, my resilience as an interviewer increased with my experience. I hoped that I could afford to be flexible about the interviewing arrangements without seriously compromising the quality of the sessions.

Not only did the schedules vary, but so did the interview settings. I met with the interviewees in private offices, private homes (theirs and mine), and public dining areas. I interviewed indoors and out, through heat waves and unseasonably cool days. Usually I felt that I was dressed appropriately for the situation. At other times, I shivered in a cotton jacket or sweltered in a knit top. Wherever I went, I carried my tape-recording equipment (including spare cassettes, batteries, and an extension cord) as inconspicuously as possible in a black leather shoulder bag. As an explorer, I did my best to anticipate the unknown, go prepared, and fit into the situations I encountered.

Although my purpose as a researcher was to obtain information, I also volunteered information or provided it on request to the interviewees. The information generally had to do with the study itself: what my research foci were; details about my research process; some comments on tentative findings to date. Sometimes, the information was about myself--my career, my personal life, my experiences while doing this research. I was, after all, interviewing sophisticated women who were interested in the research and in the researcher.

Early on, I offered each participant some written information about the study. First, there was my letter of approach (Appendix A). Then, prior to beginning the interviews, I gave each interviewee three short documents for reference. One was an "Introduction to the study," a summary of the research foci, and the design as I envisaged it at that time (Appendix C). The second hand-out was a list of "Measures being taken to protect the identity of interviewees" (Appendix D). The third was two copies of a statement of "Informed Consent" for the interviewee to sign, retaining one for herself and returning one to me (Appendix E). None of these documents elicited much reaction.

However, during our sessions together, beginning with our first telephone conversation, I made statements that elaborated the documents. Early in our contact, the information was often in the form of reassurances about my interest in the details of ordinary lives, the realities of unplanned careers, the presence of chance factors, the complexities of life. I reiterated many times my belief that such things needed to be searched out and documented. As we

progressed through a cycle, an interviewee would often wonder aloud how some aspect of her life compared with that aspect of the other women's lives. I responded with brief comments about similarities and differences. Occasionally, I volunteered a statement of what seemed to be a developing theme/issue/significant contrast in my overall findings. I tried to remember to preface such statements with the comment that most similarities were at a rather superficial level and should not be over-emphasized. And, occasionally, I commented on some unique aspect of a woman's story, as a valuable addition to my data. I was doubtful about those initiatives, except that they often generated more life-history data.

The women volunteered information about their own research and experiences as researchers and were curious about my design and experiences. I was always haunted by the conflict between using up our limited time on "irrelevant" matters and recognizing that such exchanges were a welcome opportunity for me to share something of myself and to engage in a conversation with an experienced researcher. I felt that many efforts to be an unobtrusive researcher in these circumstances would be flagrantly obtrusive.

Although I did not volunteer much information about my personal life, I did respond to enquiries. One prospective interviewee asked for a copy of my resumé prior to our first session, so that she would know something about me. I sent a short resumé to her. Others simply asked specific questions about my background, my studies, my plans. There were instances of intense sharing with some interviewees. Generally, I talked more about myself when I met with an interviewee away from the office setting. On those occasions, the time available to us was more flexible and the conversation ranged more widely.

After the pilot study with Claudette, I felt a definite obligation to put my own life on the line now and then. For example, at the time of the interviews, my husband and I were separated, but not yet legally. I volunteered that information on certain occasions. I became legally separated at the end of the summer and changed my last name. When I next wrote to each interviewee, I notified her briefly of the changes in my life. I provided this news about myself partly because I recognized that the shifts in my own personal life were a possible source of bias

in my research. I felt that the participants in my study should therefore be aware of those changes. Mainly, though, I did it as a courtesy to these women who were so open with me.

I refined the interviewing approach and techniques that I had been developing during the pilot cycle. At the first session, I requested an overview of the woman's career. After that, I reminded myself in writing before each session to encourage detailed descriptions of daily life as well as elaborations of choices and their surrounding circumstances. I now felt confident I needed that much detail. I still probed too much now and then, interrupting the narrative and setting up some defensiveness. I tried to balance my probes with quips and brief summaries, feeding back to an interviewee my understanding of her account. My comments were often the catalyst for clarifications or additional recollections. In each cycle, I accumulated an increasingly detailed account of a career.

Such an account was an antidote to the general theorizing, the opinions, and the speculation about the future that also surfaced. Every woman told her story through certain theoretical filters, joining the past and the future in the present. Some of the theorizing was obvious from the language or the emphasis on certain themes. However, each woman willingly adapted to the life-history orientation, volunteering more and more specific information as a matter of habit. For my part, I was surprised again and again by the "thick description" and corroborative detail that were disclosed over time. Themes identified by the women themselves were valuable data.

The decision-making network was a useful tool, but not entirely in the ways I had expected. Most of the women did not choose to spend much time reviewing it at the beginning of each session. They did, however, respond promptly to questions that I raised as a result of my charting work between sessions. So, I found that drawing the network was helpful to me in reviewing and clarifying the multiple dimensions of the story to date. My grasp of the story and my questions about it were better, as a result. In that sense, it was integral to my on-going validation process. Referring back to the chart from time to time did "ground" our conversation,

but the chart itself was not a focal point for the interviewees. That was hardly surprising. It was mostly a way for me to bring some structure to the stories of their lives.

By mid-August I had concluded that the network would be useful to me in another way, later. The charts would illustrate, for comparative purposes, the respective socio-historical contexts of the women's lives. I decided that when I re-drafted the networks to accompany the biographies, I would draw them all to the same scale. Then, simply by laying them out parallel to one another, I could examine the activities/choices that were occurring in each woman's life at a certain age and during a given chronological period. Thus, I considered that both the process of charting and the chart as a document were valuable aids to my research.

In each case, I had some other documents available to me, as well. I succeeded in locating and reviewing a copy of the interviewee's doctoral dissertation prior to my first session in each cycle. That provided background clues about the woman as a person and as a professional. Being able to refer to the specific dissertation also seemed to enhance our mood of collegiality. Three of the women offered me copies of their resumes. They did it spontaneously, part way through the interview cycle, as we laboured over the details of dates and sequences for the decision-making network. In the fourth case, I requested the resumé towards the end of the cycle and the interviewee provided it with no hesitation. Some interviewees offered me recent publications about their organizations, brochures and annual reports. I accepted those, too, using them to increase my understanding of certain organizational contexts. I treated all of the documents I had as resources for enriching the interview process, and for giving me cross-checks on the interview data. However, I did not treat the documents as epistemologically superior (Smith & Heshusius, 1986) to, or more reliable than, the story I was hearing.

By the end of the interview phase, I had a motley collection of project records. The records included the interview tapes themselves, transcriptions of some interviews, correspondence, resumés, and a scattering of brochures, annual reports, and news clippings. Then there were the first-draft decision-making networks. And, of course, my field notes and

journal entries (hand written or on tape). I had transcriptions of many of the interview tapes--some hand-written, some typed, some entered into a personal computer. However, the transcriptions were not verbatim. They were topical indexes that included summary comments, key words, occasional quotes, and facts that were helpful for the construction of the decision-making network.

With respect to my records, there was an important categorical distinction that I did not resolve during the interview phase. What information was "off the record?" Was everything that was on tape, on the record? And everything else, off? That did not always make sense. Sometimes, I waited a few minutes to turn the tape recorder on because our conversation was quite general and a move toward the tape recorder seemed intrusive. I did not want to be, or seem to be, too single minded. Still, those preliminary exchanges often included helpful context for the story. Likewise, if the tape ran out, I did not always insert a new tape immediately. Nor did I tape conversations that seemed to be primarily social, although they too provided useful background. Frequently, the interviewees did refer to that background during the taped portions of the interviews, apparently confirming that the information was on the record. If an interviewee requested that I stop the tape recorder or not use a certain comment, I honored that request. But I thought that there were likely other comments and stories that she might regard as being off the record. I did not get around to proposing or negotiating any guidelines about that aspect of appropriate disclosure. I resigned myself, once again, to a lack of closure on disclosure.

Throughout the interviews, I looked for signs of each interviewee's engagement in our joint endeavor. For me, the degree of engagement was one reflection of the level of trust between us. And the level of trust had implications for the interviewee's willingness to speak openly about her life. The first sign was an interviewee's willingness to go the full cycle. No one demurred or withdrew. Quite the opposite--once we had begun, each woman showed considerable determination to complete the interview cycle, even when that entailed adjustments to her own schedule. The women all became very independent interviewees,

accepting both the freedom I offered them to narrate the story as they wished and my request for a detailed account. They rose to the challenge and became story-tellers.

There were other signs that an interviewee was, as I put it to myself, "hooked on the experience of telling of her story" (Journal, June 19, 1986). One was an interviewee's surprised acknowledgement that she was recalling things she had not thought about in years. Sometimes, her recall was stimulated by my probes, and sometimes, just because she was so immersed in her own story. Occasionally, she would relate something that she had rarely told anyone else, but that she considered significant to her story. Or, she would ask me to remind her later on to tell me about some item that she had not previously mentioned. Given fewer time constraints, one would have passed on to me a collection of her letters, written during a particular period. Another delved into the journals she had written over a number of years, in order to refresh her memory on some points. Such initiatives reassured me that we were jointly committed to the life-history project. Each woman, in her own way and for her own reasons, used the interview cycle as an opportunity to review and reflect on her career in relation to her life.

During the interview phase, I gained a sense of my own fitness for the work I was doing Being well organized was a necessity. I lived according to lists--things to do, things to take with me. Being knowledgeable about educational administration in western Canada frequently enabled me to formulate spontaneous probes that generated pertinent information. Believing that research should reveal the complexities of life helped me to tolerate the complexities that I encountered as a researcher.

Being a woman talking to other women seemed very comfortable. More than one interviewee stated or implied that she talked more easily with me, as another woman, about some matters than she might have talked with a man. Moreover, our meetings could be informal--without fear of misinterpretation--because we were two women. In some cases, I had the impression that the interviewees welcomed the interest of a female colleague who was not in

her immediate professional circle. I was neither a direct competitor nor a subordinate. I was treated much like a junior colleague. And I enjoyed it.

The rigours of the different interview schedules and settings tested my adaptability and resilience. I was grateful for the pilot-study experience as preparation. And, I was grateful that my longest interviews occurred later in my experience, when I was better able to discipline myself to be an active listener over a long period of time. Even so, by the fourth cycle, I had a bad cold. Prior to that, on one occasion, I had a mild allergic reaction to a cat who was present at an interview. These reactions were mainly indicators of my own fatigue.

When I was in the field, my existence was a solitary one aside from contact with the interviewee. I drove by myself to each interview location. I stayed by myself in local hotels/motels. Between sessions, I recorded field notes and journal entries, reviewed and indexed tapes, drafted sections of the decision-making network, contemplated the data, and prepared questions for the next session. Every hour of interview time required several hours of preparation and follow-up activity. In my rented room, I sipped scotch, smoked cigarettes, massaged away the writer's cramp, read the local newspapers, and hoped that I would not lose any of my materials to fire or theft. (On my return to Edmonton, one of my first acts was always to duplicate the tapes, transcripts, and charts I had accumulated. I then stored the spare set in my university office. It never did occur to me to copy my long-hand field notes and journal entries.) And, I rested. I knew that my own alertness and capacity to enjoy an interview were essential to the quality of my research. Indeed, I recognized that being sequestered away from the demands of my ordinary life helped me to become immersed in the story of another person's life.

Along with the pleasures and satisfactions of doing this research came stresses and anxieties. Driving western Canadian distances (albeit, in summer), setting up my shop in strange hotel rooms, and establishing rapport with one stranger after another was a demanding business. It was not surprising that I slept fitfully and succumbed to a cold. I worried about everything, including whether or not the tape recorder would function. When I felt that my

energy level was low, I worried about my capacity to remain both organized and relaxed, creating the necessary ease between us. When I had more energy, I worried about my capacity to remain a critical researcher, whether interviewing or interpreting the stories, because I had become so engaged with the participants in my study. Would I be influenced by a fear of giving offense to these women who had taken me into their lives?

I knew that the fact of our being colleagues--educational administrators and educational researchers--had been a valuable entree for me. But did that very colleagueship lead to unjustified assumptions about common language and theoretical frameworks? And did it make me careless, relying too heavily on my image of them as experienced researchers and sophisticated women? I assumed too readily that the interviewees had read and retained the written information that I had given them about the study. After all, the study was a much bigger part of my life than of theirs. In one case, the written material was incomplete; there were pages missing. I was embarrassed by my sloppiness, when I wanted to be and appear competent. I was not always meticulous about introducing the concepts I was studying and thereby justifying my interest in the personal along with the professional. By the last cycle, especially, I suspected that my weariness and my assumptions weakened my approach.

Throughout the study, I worried about prying into private matters, when I was merely trying to be thorough. And I worried that I was not thorough enough. Even so, I found remarks about their durable marriages and supportive husbands difficult to handle when my own marriage had disintegrated beyond repair. Now and then, it seemed that the personal dimensions of a story were taking over. Was that an accurate reflection of life at certain times, or was I sliding into the role of an "amateur psychologist" (Field Notes, July 10, 1986)?

I always had a sense of the incompleteness of a story. The interview time seemed to pass too quickly. On some occasions, it seemed to me that with more time there would be more detailed revelations. On other occasions, it seemed that more would not necessarily be better. The incompleteness was not due only to time constraints. Sometimes, there was overt censorship by an interviewee. Other times, it just seemed to me that the conflicts and the

politics of a situation had been glossed over. Then too, I would have liked to talk with the colleagues and families of the interviewees. I was curious about their versions of these women's stories. Sometimes, I felt dissatisfied just because a story did not seem vivid; therefore, it did not seem complete. But not everyone chooses to tell her story in an equally vivid way, or even to think of her life as a story. I had to guard against developing unfair and inappropriate expectations of the interviewees.

Early in the interview phase, I read Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. I was struck by the applicability of her observations to my own case. She claims that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (p. 6; London: Panther Books, 1977 [1929]). Did the same apply to writing a dissertation? I had generous scholarships and a private income to subsidize my project. Moreover, I needed and enjoyed the solitude that Woolf considered so essential for writing. Yet, the contrast with the experiences of my interviewees was startling. For them, even as doctoral students, almost every day was extremely busy, highly structured by commitments, and filled with people. Most of the women had even written their dissertations while sitting at their kitchen/dining room tables, with family members coming and going around them! How had they done it?

The question was, of course, a version of the question I had asked two years earlier. Then, I had many questions and no answers. Now, in August, 1986, I had many questions and a lot of data. Perhaps a few tentative answers. But, in search of answers, I tended to seek patterns across the stories, even though I claimed to value uniqueness. I wanted simplicity, even though I asserted that life was complex. It was the stories themselves that prevented me from retreating to the oasis of sweepingly simple answers. Each time I began to assume a commonality (such as those I stated in the previous paragraph), I would hear a voice relating a contrary or at least a different experience. Still, what might be described as almost-patterns seemed to be emerging.

Both choice and chance were abundant elements in the development of the four careers. Each woman faced many decisions, each one from a range of options that was

structured developmentally by her own previous decisions and those of other people. Reason, emotion, chance, all played parts in the making of decisions. Life was not just a series of attractive opportunities, either. Each woman faced difficulties and obstacles at various times. Various structures of opportunity/choice and of chance were becoming visible to me. Indeed, they were much more evident than any definitive long-term plans. For one thing, the structures were influenced by husbands' careers. But many other factors were significant too.

I noticed a certain "small-universe" aspect to the structures of these careers. The universe of education in western Canada is not large, even with basic and postsecondary education combined. Then, within that small universe, there are many small worlds, interest groups within the profession. The smaller worlds within a small universe seemed to afford support, opportunity and visibility to these four energetic women. The smallness was also restrictive. Not only did the size limit the opportunities, but it ensured that one's past would always be very present. Former colleagues popped up everywhere. Former superordinates became peers or subordinates. The connections were byzantine and endless.

How would I interpret this aspect of the careers I was studying? What did it mean to be promoted, for example? Was it a reward for being inoffensive, for conforming? Surely that was not fair to the women I had studied. But, what did it mean if one fit, or did not fit, in these cozy environments? I knew that, like all feminists, I would face some predicaments in my interpretation of "success."

The "small-universe" aspects of the story presented me with technical and ethical, as well as intellectual predicaments. I found that my own professional and personal connections overlapped in unexpected ways with those of the participants in my study. At times, that provided me with useful background knowledge on which to base questions. More often, it left me feeling uncertain about what to reveal to an interviewee. My additional knowledge, although innocent, seemed illicit to me.

Whatever the structures of choice and chance within which a woman negotiated, a key characteristic seemed to be the ability and willingness to recognize and capitalize on

opportunities. These lives were subject to various external structures, undoubtedly. But these women were not themselves passive subjects. Personal strength and resilience interacted with choice and chance and were essential qualities for coping in lives that were characterized by change. For instance, every woman with whom I spoke was a relative newcomer to her current paid-work position.

Those were some of my reflections as I moved into the biography phase of the study. I would continue, of course, to reflect and record my reflections through the next phase. The later reflections are apparent in the organization of the anecdotes, which constitute Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the thesis.

It was a year from the time I completed the interview cycles until the time I completed the biographies. And it was two and one-half months from the time I mailed the fourth biography until I completed the last validation. That period, from late August, 1986 until mid-November, 1987, was entirely different from anything I had expected, even knowing that doctoral studies rarely go according to plan. It was a time of frustrations, delays, discoveries, steady slogging, revised plans, and receding horizons.

There was a time when I had planned to complete an interview cycle and write the biography immediately after the cycle. Given the demands of my interviewing schedule, and the amount of data that I was gathering in each cycle, my original plan was not feasible. So, I began to talk about writing all four of the biographies in September and October, 1986.

I worried about the time lapse between the interviews and the receipt of the biographies by the interviewees. On the other hand, there had been a similar delay in the pilot study. Why was I surprised? The interval did create some distance between the interviewee, the researcher, and the interview data, reducing the intensity of the relations that had marked the interview phase of the study. That distance would contribute to more balanced treatments of the stories, I thought. Moreover, I could write all four biographies and compare them quickly before I sent them out for validation. The comparison might show gaps in one story or another, which I could fill in during a follow-up interview. That way, I would worry less about imposing structure during

the interview cycles. And, the follow-up interview would become the first stage in a member-check process that would consist of structured life-history questions. In keeping with the interview cycles themselves, I would seek specific accounts during the validation phase, rather than seeking opinions of themes and issues. I worried, though, because the fall was a busy time for people in education. Could I even ask my interviewees to take time out for validation activities then?

My hypothetical question was not answered in the fall of 1986. Although I began working on the first cycle/biography promptly at the beginning of September, I had just completed indexing the tapes for that cycle by the end of the month. As usual, I had underestimated the task and the time it would require. I revised my tentative time-line again, estimating that it would take until late November to complete the biographies and compare them. Then, I would do the follow-up interviews in December and January. I suspected that even this plan was optimistic. It was.

I fought my depression about these dismal prospects by establishing a daily work regimen that seemed tolerable for the long haul. I decided that I would spend a minimum of two hours a day, any five days of the week working directly with my data. It seemed little enough to expect of myself. I decided that I would work at home, because there were too many pleasant distractions once I went to the university campus. And, I learned that it was best to do my two hours before I did anything else. Otherwise, my will to work dissipated. I bought a track suit, which became my writing uniform. Donning it prevented me from spending time and energy deciding what else to wear.

Even with these self-imposed restrictions, I often did not finish my two hours until early afternoon. Indeed, by early November I had completed only the first biography. It was much longer and more detailed than I expected, over 15,000 words. Even so, I worried that I had omitted too much, oversimplifying complexity and context.

As I wrote the first biography, it became a comprehensive "telling-back" of an interviewee's story. That was a significant evolution in the function of the biography, and my

way of resolving the predicament about its relation to the data. The comprehensiveness was consistent with the practice of many other life-history researchers, although their biographies were often the final--and published--product of the study. My original concept of a summary biography was fuzzy and inadequate for the study I had undertaken. My efforts to skim off a superficial account (I even experimented with a point-form summary) were frustrating. In a development study of choice and chance, almost everything is relevant, if not in moving the story-line forward then in providing context. I was faced, once again, with the complexity that I had sought. Moreover, I had learned a great deal about each woman's career. It seemed to me that I should be honest with her about what I knew. Then she could make the decision to take something "off the record" if she wanted to do so. For additional veracity, I used real names although none of them would appear in my dissertation. I did notice that expending so much effort on each individual life was counteracting my earlier tendencies to generalize.

Choosing to be inclusive meant that I was writing four short books in preparation for writing a thesis. Why? Because each biography would be read by only one other person--the woman whose story I had been told in confidence. Since no one else would have access to the biography, each woman's judgement of the way I retold her story was the only assessment available to me. It was solitary and demanding work, writing a total of 80,000 words for a total audience of four. Still, I could not resolve my methodological concerns any other way, and be satisfied. This way, once the biography and its accompanying decision flow chart had been validated by the interviewee, the two documents would, in turn, became the sole data for my thesis. I was--perforce and with some trepidation--being guided by Bertaux's arguments for reliance on the life stories, individually and collectively, as the legitimate source of the individual's perspective.

Writing adequate biographies was clearly such a major task that I modified the design of the study. Al and I agreed that I would send out each biography as I completed it. Otherwise, the interval between the interviewing cycle and the telling-back of a story would be even longer. I would write biographies in the same order that I had completed the interview cycles, to

minimize the time interval. That also happened to mean that I did the two older women first, thus dealing with the longer stories (or so I thought). Al and I also agreed that I would not expand my data gathering activities nor my validation process beyond the four women with whom I was then working. I already had what seemed like an unmanageable amount of data.

Meanwhile, I initiated a pattern of communication with the study participants. That pattern would be repeated several times. I mailed the one completed biography, together with the decision flow chart and covering letter, registering the whole package. I placed the biography and chart in a sealed brown envelope inside the mailing envelope. I also sent "slow-progress" letters to the other interviewees. (For a typical letter, see Appendix F.) I indicated that the biographies were much longer and more detailed than I had originally intended them to be, and that, consequently, some of them would not be ready until the end of March. These initiatives generated some response, as did each future round of communiques. Part of the response was related to arrangements for validation, but some comments were simply notes of encouragement and comment. As I said in one of my slow-progress notes, I had not stalled but I did seem to be lurching along in first gear.

There were several reasons for my slow progress. Obtaining the data I needed from the interview tapes was a time-consuming process, no matter how I did it. Writing the biographies was even more time consuming, because I made them so comprehensive and detailed. Then, I faced a series of anticipated and unanticipated interruptions to my work schedule in the early months of 1987.

Expecting to have the biographies completed by December, I had agreed to teach a number of short courses, mostly at a local community college in January and February. This was my way of resolving a professional predicament. I had opportunities to work as a free-lance instructor and I might need contracts as a means of earning a living some day. Although I did not need the contracts, or even the money, then, I could not afford to decline every offer and still expect to be considered for work in the future. I also made the error (from the point of view of progress on my study, although the experience itself was worthwhile) of agreeing to coordinate

field placements. An unprecedented number of students enrolled, and some did not complete until June. My principle of concentrated paid-work activities withered away. Finally, I was helping to write a paper that would be presented at the 1987 AERA conference. Although I had agreed earlier to be a co-author, I had not really expected our proposal to be accepted. It was and there I was. Just when those obligations were becoming manageable, my elderly father became ill. I suddenly assumed the role of coordinator for a complex new set of family responsibilities. As I wrote about the juggling acts performed by the women whose lives I studied, I had to become a juggler myself. The others seemed to juggle with greater success.

Transcribing interview tapes turned out to be an unavoidable preliminary to any mapping process. The work absorbed a great deal of time, but it also had benefits. Listening to a tape, I was able to recreate vividly a woman, an interview location, and our relations. It was a good way to approach the writing of the biography, immersing me again in that one story. I had indexed some tapes during each cycle, but I reviewed all of the tapes. I expanded on the notes I had already taken and tried various degrees of transcription. I was wary of reducing my data too quickly by omitting too many remarks. When I did only a sketchy transcription, as a way to save time, I found that I was continually returning to the tape for a more complete account as I wrote up the story. One way or another, this process took time. Therefore, I usually chose to work from fairly complete transcriptions, about 100 pages for each interview cycle. Generally, the more complete a transcription, the better the resource it proved to be when I was drafting the biography.

I developed my own systematic approach to analyzing and organizing the interview data for use in the biography. I worked chronologically through a life. I chose a unit of time, as short as seemed reasonable. I reviewed all the transcripts for references to that period. I noted each reference on a chart. The chart was subdivided into apparently natural categories for that identified period. The categories included such things as paid-work life, family life, formal academic studies, and the spouse's activities. I developed other categories that were specific to an individual's life at a particular time. As I noted a reference on the chart, I placed a check

mark beside that section of the transcript. I noted on an index card any remark that did not seem to fit into the framework I had created but that did seem germane. I numbered the cards and cross-referenced them to the transcripts. Once I had extracted from the transcripts all references to a given period, I wrote up that period in narrative form. I used the chart as an outline and then filed it for reference. I made limited use of direct quotations in the biography, but if I did use a quotation, I cited the tape footage in brackets. By the time I had completed a draft of a biography, I could review the transcripts and see immediately what I had not checked off--that is, included in the narrative. There usually was not much.

When my draft of the narrative revealed a gap or conflict in my information, I did two things. First, I cross-checked the chronology in the narrative with that of the decision-making network. If I still had a question, then I mentioned it in brackets. If my subsequent work on the biography did not resolve the problem, I left the bracketed remark in the text for the interviewee to answer.

I used a few other resources to aid me in drafting a biography. I referred to an individual's resumé and any other documents the interviewee had provided. I obtained maps for every location that was relevant to the story. The maps helped me to "situate" myself geographically and they provided me with the correct spellings of place names. And, of course, I drew on my field notes and journal entries.

When I had completed a draft of the biography, I turned to the decision-making network, which I had re-named the decision flow chart. The more general term seemed to be a better description of what I actually produced. I re-drafted the chart to a standard scale, using the original version together with the transcripts and the biography as my sources of information. Sometimes, this final cross-check resulted in revisions to the biography. After editing and re-printing the biography, I mailed it out together with a copy of the chart. My work was ready to be reviewed by the interviewee.

As I wrote and wrote, I felt increasing confidence in my comprehensive approach to the biography. I was organizing and analyzing my interview data in a holistic manner, without

"reducing" it prematurely. The organization was sequential--a chronology of a woman's choices and careers described in their socio-historical contexts. The organization was not one-dimensional and linear, however. I attempted to capture the many dimensions of life at one time and over time. I tried to integrate the dimensions, to show the interweaving threads. The analysis, on the other hand, "unpacked" the data. Setting out the configuration of factors bearing on one choice frequently required a lengthy paragraph. Moreover, it was my task to detail the activities and complexities of daily life. For example, it was not enough to state that life was busy and stressful. It was my job to demonstrate that. Otherwise, I was just summarizing and theorizing, the very activities I had set out to avoid. I did distill the interview data, certainly. And interpretation blended with my analysis, inevitably.

Some of the interpretation came from the women themselves and some was mine. Each woman identified themes and patterns in her own life. Although I did not use those themes as a basis for organizing the narrative, I acknowledged them as part of the story. To have done otherwise would have been to deny these women the right to interpret their own lives to me. And, it would have been dishonest to overlook the theoretical filters through which they told their stories. Other themes emerged as I wrote. At first, it felt risky to state such interpretations. But I realized that I was already interpreting more subtly, anyway. My choices of words, decisions about emphasis, formulation of opening and closing sentences for paragraphs, sequencing of those paragraphs, links and transitions were all interpretations. Therefore, it became another imperative for me to make explicit any themes and patterns that did occur to me. Such statements did not dominate a biography, but they were there. They awaited verification or correction by the woman herself.

Writing the biography helped me to clarify what information I had and did not have, and what I was going to do about all of that. If I had not written a full biography from the interview data, I would never have known how much information I had about some issues and aspects of a career, and how little information I had about other aspects. Gaps, conflicts, and the absence of detail were all illuminated. As I have already noted, the theorizing--mine and theirs--became

more apparent. I also became aware that I was not doing an intellectual or a political history. Nor was I telling the story of each woman's husband, or her story according to him. The woman was, appropriately, the central figure in the story. And the orientation of the story was developmental, emphasizing change not stability. Still, this problem troubled me: how could I do justice to the stable and stabilizing factors in a life?

There were three other types of information that I minimized in the re-telling of a story. One was comments that I defined as gossip, or what satisfies the curiosity but is not otherwise germane to the narrative. The other was information about the woman's life at the time of the interviews. The subject of my investigation was the development of a career to the present time, rather than life in the present. Moreover, the current information was revealing of individual identities and largely off the record, I felt. Nor did I discuss a woman's speculations about what would have happened if she had made other choices, or about her future beyond the summer of 1986. That too was another study.

The decision flow chart was a good complement to the narrative in some ways, but not in others. It was valuable for cross-checking dates and sequences. It provided a simple, graphic demonstration of development. It illustrated the multiple layers of a life, the changes in those layers, and, to some extent, the connections among the layers. It would aid in doing historical comparisons and contrasts between stories. However, my charting had certain limitations. I included some dimensions of a life, but excluded others. For example, I did sketch in the spouse's career activities but little else about his life. I did note the birth of each child, but not many of the subsequent decisions relating to that child, such as child care arrangements and schooling. I did identify decisions to buy houses and other properties, but I did not illustrate the on-going responsibility associated with ownership. Moreover, I clumped together the choice/decision/action elements as a single point. On the other hand, one of the virtues of the chart was its relative simplicity. Trying to do more with it than I did might have destroyed its value. As it was, the chart's analytical, segmented depiction of a life did complement the more synthesized narrative description.

Constructing the biographies and charts spanned the period from September, 1986 to August, 1987; validating them spanned the period from December, 1986 to November, 1987. The interval between the completion of a biography/chart and its validation ranged from one to four months. The length of the interval and the scheduling of the validation interview depended on the interviewee's own time constraints. The interviewees waited for a long time to see the biographies, so I felt that I should be prepared to wait some time to hear their reactions. I was occupied with other aspects of my thesis, anyway. The time lapse between the completion of a biography and its validation was apparently not a sign of ambivalence about or retreat from the project. Although the biographies were lengthy and detailed, every woman showed remarkable commitment to reviewing her story and seeing the project through with me.

The validation process was a risky venture for all of us. My entire study depended on the women giving me permission to use their stories as data, and they were giving me final permission to do so. The long interval between an interview cycle and the receipt of a biography offered a participant many opportunities to think better of her involvement in my project, especially if her own situation changed radically in some way. I worried that, at the very least, some of the women would want to revise their stories significantly. On the other hand, they were entitled to reflect on and clarify the relation of their own stories. It would be up to me to negotiate compromises that seemed both honest and fair. After all, why should I assume that statements made in the context of the interview cycle were "true" and statements made after a period of reflection were "false"? My job was to tell the story of a career in a way that "rang true" for the woman concerned. Both as a feminist and a life story researcher, I recognized the reciprocal "telling-back" as a central part of the project.

In consultation with Al, I established a set of general procedures to guide the validation process. Along with each completed biography and decision flow chart, I sent a covering letter that set out the explanations, questions, and steps for the validation. (For an example of a covering letter, please see Appendix F.) I followed up the letter with a telephone call, usually about two weeks after I had mailed the biography. That call was often the first in a series of calls

before a date for the validation interview was set. I believed that regular contact during the interval was important in strengthening the link between the two of us. The calls also allowed the interviewee to pass on her initial reactions to me informally. I, in turn, could respond to any concerns she expressed. Eventually, we set a date for a validation interview.

My validation procedures for the first biography differed somewhat from my subsequent procedures. I asked the first interviewee to give me her reactions orally, during [illegible] in-person interview. I wanted to test the validation process in person, not by telephone. However, those arrangements meant that I did not have any advance notice of the interviewee's reactions to the biography and could not think out my own responses in advance. Moreover, although the biography seemed very long and detailed, at about 30 pages, it turned out to be the shortest of the four. That was no accident: the biography had revealed a number of topics that needed a more thorough treatment. The questions I had inserted in the text of the biography elicited lengthy elaborations by the interviewee. So did any cursory summaries that I attempted. We had two tape-recorded interviews, the first over two hours in length. That was primarily a follow up interview, enlarging the biography. The next day, we had a validation interview, which was much shorter. Having the second interview also allowed me to review the tape of the previous session and reflect on our discussion before we completed the validation.

I learned from this first experience with validation that the narrative might as well be even more inclusive from the start. The three subsequent biographies were about 10 pages longer than the first one. And, I offered the interviewees the option of sending me their written comments and revisions prior to our interview. In each case, I proposed a telephone interview, but indicated a willingness to meet in person, on request. All three women chose to send me written comments and then speak with me on the telephone. Seeing their comments in advance of the interview assisted me in negotiating compromises and it expedited our process. In each case we had only one formal session, and it was less than one hour long. I used a Marantz 65 tape recorder, replete with knobs and cords, in order to tape record our telephone interviews.

My introductory remarks were quite similar from one validation interview to the next. I thanked the interviewee for her careful review of the lengthy narrative. I requested permission to tape our conversation. I reiterated that no actual proper names would appear in the dissertation, although I had used them in the biography to avoid confusion. I emphasized that I was not seeking villains or heroes, just the story as the woman herself understood it. I stated that the woman's decisions about wording and inclusiveness would be final, although I would like to propose some compromises. Also, if she had added, deleted, or revised something and we did not discuss it, then I accepted her version as the final one. I indicated that I had revised the decision flow chart according to any relevant new information. And, I offered to mail the woman a copy of the tape (no more transcripts!) of our validation interview, if she wanted it.

After that, we embarked on a page-by-page review of the biography. We discussed and agreed on the revisions one at a time; then I would confirm our agreement about that page as a whole. Once we had completed our page-by-page revision, I asked the final validation question. I phrased it one of two ways: "Are you satisfied to let this (revised) version of your story stand?" or "Are you satisfied to allow me to treat this as your story?" Each woman confirmed that she was. Of the many acts of trust and collaboration that permeated our relations during this project, I found that this final agreement on the story was the most striking.

The women reacted initially to the experience of reading about themselves. Each one seemed to find it an interesting but emotionally draining experience, a "shock," as one put it. Some women stated frankly that they found it difficult. Others mentioned that they enjoyed re-living happy times. One woman said that she was drawing on these reflections about her own career when she spoke with other women about their careers. Two of the women, like Claudette, requested fresh copies of their biographies to place in the family records.

With respect to the content of the biographies, the women had a variety of reactions. Each was amazed (a polite alternative to "taken aback," I think) by the length and detail of the biographical account. The women seemed to be equally surprised with themselves for having revealed so much, and with me for having pulled so much detail together in an accurate

narrative. The women were generally complimentary about the writing style, although occasionally they corrected my grammar--not to mention my typing! In each case, the interviewee corrected a small number of details and supplied a few additional ones where I had requested them. They all elaborated briefly here and there. Some of the elaborations were in response to my questions. Other elaborations were simply volunteered. Sometimes, the women corrected false impressions that they or I had created by a choice of words. They offered explanations of terms and remarks, which clarified certain ambiguities in the narrative. At times, they queried the relative emphasis that I had assigned to various dimensions or experiences of their lives, or the tone of the narrative. They affirmed some themes and patterns that I articulated, and they contested others. In more than one case, women pointed out that the importance of their husbands and families was under-emphasized. (That was, in my opinion, one of the chief limitations of the biographies. I attributed the weakness partly to the necessary focus on the woman herself and partly to my efforts to document change, thus overlooking stability.) They commented that they had been depicted as more passive, competitive, successful, or unequivocal than they felt themselves to be. They requested that some items be taken "off the record" and I either agreed or proposed a compromise wording. I noted both our specific agreements on wording and their more general concerns, as part of each "validated" biography.

Even so, there was no closure. Anonymity, or identifiability, remained a worry for all of us. I could only reassure the women that I would be citing excerpts, grouped together according to concepts. Their stories would appear in fragmented form. I would do my best to blur their identities. One woman requested a copy of my "findings" chapter to review. I agreed. But I indicated that, having sent it, I would leave it up to her to pass on reactions to me, if she wanted to. Meanwhile, as a gesture of appreciation, I sent each woman flowers.

I described the year during which I wrote and received confirmation of the four biographies as "a time of frustration, delays, discoveries, steady slogging, revised plans, and receding horizons." So was the next year, when I wrote my thesis.

During the fall of 1987, I continued my regimen of daily writing. While I was negotiating the validation agreements on the third and fourth biographies, I was writing my own story about doing the research. Then, I explored more extensively the literature on life history research, reflecting on my own experiences in relation to those of other researchers. I completed a review of that literature. And I moved on to the vast array of feminist theory and, more specifically, research on women in education, and in educational administration. The range of theory and research that had potential relevance to my study was overwhelming. I read and read. I did some preliminary writing, then lost any sense of focus, along with much of my energy.

After Christmas, I took several detours on the way back to my thesis. I worked with Claudette Tardif on the development of a paper to be presented at the AERA meetings. We called the paper "Interviewing: Two Sides of the Story." Our joint venture provided a fascinating opportunity to re-visit our individual and shared experience of the pilot study for my doctoral research. And, it was a time for Claudette to come to know me in some of the ways that I had already come to know her. I also did some contract teaching and carried on with my family responsibilities. Not until late February did I return to my thesis. I found the "space" to do so by retreating to a borrowed cottage in the Gulf Islands.

Leaving town to write forced me away from the "lit. review" and back to the biographies. The biographies were more portable. And I felt the urgency of time passing. I could review the literature forever and still not have a thesis. I was ready, finally, to tackle the project of translating four life stories into the substance of a thesis.

I decided to begin with the chance aspect of career development. I thought that aspect of the biographies was probably the most unusual element of the study. I reviewed the biographies, one by one, noting each chance element as it occurred. At times, I struggled with the question of what to categorize as chance; I knew that, from this point on, I had to make my own judgements about the interpretation and presentation of the biographical material. I forced myself to proceed in the belief that some parameters would evolve as I worked with the biographical material. I made long lists of examples and was struck by a number of themes. In

particular, the chance aspects of marrying and moving to new locations, and the connections between chance and opportunity were evident right away. The themes really did "emerge" from the collected stories. I was sceptical about the notion of universality: my study was designed to provide scope for uniqueness. Nonetheless, there were several clusters of examples that did each illustrate a different version of chance. I just strung the clusters together.

I wrote many pages, summarizing what I saw. I avoided using any names, even pseudonyms. I avoided mentioning any details that were potentially identifying or very specific at all. What I produced seemed flat and disjointed. It read like an inadequate summary of an inadequate questionnaire survey.

I wanted to make the four individual women "live," as they did in the biographies. I realized that I would have to use pseudonyms and make specific and repeated references to each woman. I chose, on a whim, to re-name the women using the names of my two sisters: Lois Jeanne and Margo Elaine. Then, because my father's name was John and my mother's Lois, I chose to match Lois with John in my thesis. And, I chose additional "J" names for the other men, as a signal that it was not part of my project to portray the spouses as distinctive individuals. I was, after all, giving voice only to the women, who were the study participants.

Frightened by my own choices, I returned to Edmonton. Al read what I'd written, talked with me about the "myth" of anonymity, and encouraged me to keep writing. I did, for a while. From conversations with various people, and because of my own distaste for my initial summary attempts, I recognized with dismay that the biographies were, in themselves, the story I wanted to tell. I re-constituted my summary on chance as a long narrative, drawing a series of verbatim excerpts out of the biographies. I lived in anxiety about telling too much, thus betraying a trust, and in hope that the brief excerpts were "appropriate disclosures." I completed the chapter on chance. Al and I agreed that I should be able to finish a rough draft of the entire thesis by late June. I began to think about applying for jobs--perhaps I could be available for a position that started in the fall.

Then, upon my return from a brief holiday in late April, I found that my father had died. As the eldest child and incumbent coordinator of our family's business affairs, I had recently agreed to be named the sole executor of my father's will. But I hadn't expected to be called upon so soon. From the time of my father's death until mid-June, I made no entries in my journal. I was completely absorbed by my grief and my legal obligations.

Briefly, in June, I returned to my thesis. I reviewed and revised what I had written on chance. I knew then that I wanted to build the next chapter, on choice, by elaborating the biographical excerpts on chance. I wanted to show the women's choices, their actions, as they related to chance occurrences in their lives. I wanted to demonstrate that the women were active agents in their own career development, not just passive victims or beneficiaries of their circumstances.

My plan posed some technical and ethical problems. I tried pulling out more material from the biographies to provide a context for the chance occurrences. The approach was fruitful, I thought, but I identified several hazards. How would I link the anecdotes on chance with their parallel illustrations in the choice chapter? I didn't want to be too repetitive. I began to develop the narrative on choice by elaborating the anecdotes in the same sequence as they appeared in the chance chapter. Still, it was rather confusing. And that framework would not be sufficiently comprehensive. How was I going to incorporate the examples of important choices that weren't directly connected to chances? Should I plan to add a section/chapter dealing thematically with those choices? Then, too, there was the difficulty of deciding where to start and stop each anecdote on choice. I wanted to avoid sliding into presentations that were too extensive, to resist the very real temptation to let the story roll on. Finally, I could see that the latter third of the narrative on chance fell apart, structurally. I would have to do something about that before I could write a parallel section on choice.

After recognizing the structural flaws, I did review the chance narrative and insert section headings. That editorial activity helped me to see ways of improving the organization of

the narrative. And, it provided me with a probable outline for the chapter on choice. Having accomplished that much, about mid-June, I was drawn back into my executor role.

On August 1st, I returned once more to my thesis. By then, a friend had suggested to me that I should be viewing my thesis positively as a comforting source of continuity in my otherwise disjointed and unpredictable life. To me, the thesis seemed more like a recurring nightmare. Exhausted though I was by the relentless demands of my executor role, I knew that I literally would not sleep until I had made substantial progress on my thesis.

I wrote like a woman obsessed. I was a woman obsessed, the more so because I turned 40 that month. There I was, 40 years old and still writing my thesis.

In one month, I wrote the lengthy chapter on choice while concurrently revising the chapter on chance. I became more technologically adept with the computer, so that I could move biographical excerpts around from file to file, and from disk to disk. As well, I devised a tracking system for the excerpts. Employing strictly "low" technology, I used colour-coded highlighter pens to indicate on the original (hard-copy) biographies what I had excerpted and where it appeared in the thesis. I moved decisively to an anecdotal format. I made a detailed topical outline of each chapter, identifying the anecdotes by person and event, within each section. I added choice-only anecdotes to some sections. I spread out the decision flow charts on the floor and moved them around, comparing choices and opportunities at similar ages or dates, and confirming sequences and configurations of activities. The thesis grew and grew.

Even so, I feared that the interweaving of the personal with the professional was not generally apparent. Nor did the anecdotes deal much with relatively recent developments in the women's careers. I saw the need, again, for an additional chapter to fill in some gaps.

Meanwhile, I was trying various ways to demarcate one anecdote from the next within a section. Eventually, I accepted the suggestion of a friend and simply labelled the anecdotes by numbering them. Initially, I thought that the numbering seemed very quantitative and intrusive. But I had to do something to link the choice anecdotes with their counterparts in chance. And, some way of clarifying and cross-referencing the individual anecdotes was needed. The

process of numbering was itself another valuable editorial exercise. The anecdotes were becoming more defined.

Suddenly one night, late in the month, a Table of Contents for the thesis sprang from my brow. It even included a title for a third central chapter. Following the chapters On Chance and On Choice, the third one would be called On Careers. To my amazement, this open-ended study of mine was now quite sharply focused--on the very concepts that I had stressed initially in my candidacy proposal.

I intended to write a short chapter on careers. For one thing, after Al had reviewed On Chance and On Choice, he pressed me to set a target completion date for the whole thesis. With a mixture of breeziness and foreboding borne of superstition, I assured him that he could expect to see a draft by mid-November. For another thing, I was scheduled to take holidays in late September and I wanted to complete the chapter before I left. Besides, this chapter seemed to be an appropriate place to reduce the presentation of biographical material and increase the presentation of related literature.

I started with the first of the proposed themes for the chapter, "Competing Urgencies." To orient myself, I extracted the illustrative material from the biographies. It was so graphic, I had to use it. I couldn't resist the pull of the stories. Before I allowed myself to stop and reflect, I had begun to put together yet another chapter of anecdotes. I continued as I had begun.

Somewhere, I felt that I must address some of the related literature. I questioned my own compulsion to do that, given what I had already accomplished. But I concluded that, in a doctoral study, I should demonstrate some of the connections between my own research and what had been done by others. I compromised by de-limiting my review primarily to the collection of books and articles that I had close at hand. Those included the materials that I had sought out over several years from libraries, bookstores, and conferences. And, the collection included the (as they proved to be) highly serendipitous gifts and loans from supportive friends and colleagues. With my own focus sharpened by the construction of the three anecdotal chapters, I had little difficulty selecting relevant materials for review. To my satisfaction, I found

some interesting connections between my own reflections on the anecdotes and recent publications on the subjects of career development, and women's careers in education and administration.

Obviously, there was room for an extensive critical review and integration. The prospect paralyzed me. Fortunately, I encountered by chance my sociologist friend, Ray Morrow. He mentioned that one of his students was reviewing a famous life history publication. The student was linking that narrative account to the existing theory, as a doctoral project. With great relief, I decided that I had done my job by conducting life story interviews, writing the biographies, and then organizing the presentation of the anecdotes--giving voice to these women's experiences. I decided simply to frame each anecdotal chapter with an introduction and a conclusion drawing on concepts from the current literature. That, I felt, was enough.

But I wasn't finished yet. It was time to bring my own story up to date. A year had passed since I wrote about the process of validating the biographies. Meanwhile, a friend--Sue Campbell--had reviewed My Story as I had written it. At my request, she suggested ways of shortening it. Her editorial comments arrived just when I felt that the "competing urgencies" in my own life would overwhelm me once more. Sue's helpful remarks provided the impetus to complete my own story.

As I reviewed what I had written a year before, I continued to wrestle with the issue of appropriate disclosure. The issue related to my own story, certainly, but also to the stories of the participants in the study. Did my extensive use of anecdotes from the biographies constitute inappropriate disclosure? I believed that I had exercised care and caution when formulating the anecdotes. Yes, there would be some curiosity and speculation about the identities of Lois, Jean, Margo, and Elaine. But, neither my thesis nor my responses to questions would provide proof or confirmation that a guess was correct.

What additional responsibility did I have at this stage? I would send the three central chapters to the one participant who had requested them. But what about the other participants? I had done what I had said I would do. That is, I had illustrated themes with excerpts from the

biographies. I had taken precautions to protect identities but still provide detailed illustrative accounts. Ought I to consult the participants again? I was loathe to complicate my life and theirs. But I concluded that I owed all four women a progress report, including notice that my thesis was anecdotal. Early in November, I wrote them each a letter. (See Appendix G for an example.) Any responses to my letter could be recorded in an Afterword. Now, I felt free to conclude my story, and the thesis.

Afterword

One day in mid-November, I received a telephone call in response to my progress report. That call--from "Lois"--was an expression of continuing support for and interest in the project. Lois treated the anecdotal thesis as a fait accompli. We had a lively conversation, exchanging comments about recent developments in our careers, and parted amicably. I was delighted by Lois' gesture, and also a little relieved by her reaction. When I heard nothing from the other three women before the end of November, I took their silence for assent to the anecdotal thesis[1]. Meanwhile, Al reviewed a draft of the document and asked me to forward it to my supervisory committee. I did.

At an earlier stage in the study, I believed that I was dealing with four life stories--those of the four women whose careers I was researching. Or maybe there were five stories, since my pilot experiences with Claudette had been so influential. Gradually, I came to realize that my study involved six stories. The sixth was my story. Including some references to Claudette and the pilot study, my story has been told. The rest of this thesis draws on the biographies of the four women who participated in the main study. It's time for their stories.

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[1] In mid-February, I heard from Elaine. She had reviewed the anecdotes, which I had sent in as part of our agreement at the time we validated her biography. She suggested a few minor changes and wished me well.

Chapter 3

ON CHANCE

Introduction

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1961), the word "chance" is derived from the Late Latin word "cadentia," which means "falling." Definitions of "chance" include expressions such as the "falling out or happening of events"; and, that which "falls out or happens" or "befalls a person." The occurrence may be positive or negative for a given party, the term "chance" being neutral. However, implicit in the term, there is an "absence of design," a matter of possibility, not planning. One's attribution to chance is sometimes, but not always, closely related to one's knowledge and perspective.[1] What is for one person a chance occurrence may result from a pre-determined course of action or a particular choice on the part of someone else. Such an occurrence may therefore be unplanned, but not entirely unpredictable. Differing perspectives on what constitutes a chance event arise from having or taking into account different information. Attributions to chance also vary with differences in values that influence one's willingness to acknowledge random elements in life and with differences in power or rights to decide on a given matter. Whatever our framework, though, most of us do admit that chance is a part of life.

Elaborating one category of chance, Bandura (1982) discusses the impact of chance encounters on people's life paths. He notes that psychologists have generally overlooked the importance of chance encounters, which do decrease the predictability of human life. Bandura's social psychological treatment of the subject serves as a useful introduction to the evidence of chance elements in the careers that I studied.

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[1]Special thanks to Sue Campbell for pressing me to clarify and elaborate this distinction.

Bandura defines, subdivides, and remarks on the potential impact of chance encounters. He defines chance encounters as "unintended meetings of persons unfamiliar to each other" (1982, p. 748). Such encounters may be direct, person-to-person contacts or "symbolic" (p. 749) ones such as the gift of a book. In either case, he regards the encounters as fortuitous intersections of separate chains of cause and effect. Having occurred, however, the encounter becomes another "cause" or influence on subsequent events. The intersections exhibit differing "degrees of fortuitousness" (p. 748), related to various configurations of influential factors. Among his examples are the initial chance meeting of two people who later marry, and the entry of a particular university student into a particular instructor's classroom. Bandura also talks about the "branching power" (p. 749) of a given chance encounter. That is, encounters vary in their impact on one's life, from a brief encounter of passing interest to one that substantially changes one's future prospects. Bandura argues that the impact of the encounter varies according to the set of personal and "milieu" factors (p. 752) that form the context of the encounter. While the encounter itself is not predictable, Bandura thinks that its impact may be, when those factors are taken into account.

In this study, I extend the examination of chance elements beyond "chance encounters," as defined by Bandura. Bandura notes that life-span theorists take into account a wide variety of unpredictable events in their developmental research on lives. Those include "irregular life events" at the level of the individual (for example, illness, accident, divorce); and upheavals in the wider physical and social world (for example, earthquakes, wars, depressions, technological revolutions). Sometimes a chance occurrence leads to a new option or range of options for choice, or the reverse. Sometimes a chance occurrence forces or strongly influences a subsequent choice, or the reverse. Sometimes one chance occurrence triggers or creates the circumstances in which certain other chances occur.

While such factors can have a significant and unexpected impact on our lives, Bandura (1982, p. 749) points out that even the possibilities for chance encounters to occur are delimited by other factors. Basically, that configuration of factors is our life context. As Bandura puts it,

our "personal bents and social structures and affiliations make some types of encounters more probable than others." So does the cumulative effect of preceding choices and chances. It might even be said that different structures of opportunity exist with respect to chance encounters.

In this chapter, I set out a selection of chance events that have had a significant impact on four women's careers. Often, I place those events in their socio-historical contexts. And, I sketch out the women's reactions to the events. Those sketches note but do not emphasize choice and personal agency (the initiatives of the individual), which are the focus of the next chapter. My selection of anecdotes[2] is illustrative rather than exhaustive of the examples embedded in the four stories. Even so, there are 38 anecdotes on chance.

As each woman recounted her life story, she identified what she saw as occurrences of chance that were significant to her career. While writing and reviewing each biography, I have also identified additional chances that I regard as significant. What follows is my account--based on the biographies--of significant chance aspects in the development of four women's careers. The anecdotes are organized in four major categories, each of which forms a section of this chapter. The sections are called "Early Events and Later Developments," "Meeting and Marrying," "And Then They Moved," and "Environments of Chance and Opportunity." The anecdotes are not presented in a sequence that reflects the chronological development of any one woman's career. Indeed, this topical approach is intended to demonstrate that even chances of one specific type may occur at very different ages and stages in life.

Early Events and Later Developments

This brief section presents two anecdotes about chances that occurred quite early in life, and proved to have peculiar relevance later on. Although the chance events are very

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[2]An anecdote is a short narrative, an excerpt from one of the four biographies. The anecdotes are numbered consecutively throughout the thesis, beginning in this chapter. This chapter contains Anecdotes 1 to 38. When an anecdote from this chapter is mentioned or elaborated in subsequent chapters, it will be identified by the number assigned to it in this chapter.

different, both trigger or reinforce interests that will remain significant throughout the lives of the two women. And the significance of those interests will permeate the personal and the professional dimensions of life.

Anecdote 1. When Lois was eight years old, her family moved from a small town to a farm. The impetus for the move was Lois' mother's concern about Lois' father's health. Lois' father, who was in his fifties, left his position as the operator of a grain elevator because the grain dust was causing him severe lung problems. It was important for him to take up a more healthy lifestyle, and farming seemed the best alternative.

Lois did not find the move traumatic. Indeed, she believes that her love of animals, of gardening, and of the outdoors in general grew out of her life on the farm. The move had an impact on her future in another way. The man Lois married did not grow up on a farm but, through his association with Lois' family, he discovered farming as an avocation. Because of his interest in farming, he and Lois would eventually buy the farm from Lois' mother.

Anecdote 2. Elaine mentions a chance connection in her late teens that triggered a decision with important long-term consequences. It was a passing remark that motivated Elaine to go on from teachers' college to a university, where she completed an arts degree. She had finished her teacher training, but she "didn't feel ready to go into the classroom." She felt, and was, young. For the summer, she was hired as an inventory clerk in a retail store. She was given the job when the student for whom it was being held did not re-appear. One of Elaine's work-mates was a university student. She suggested that Elaine go to the same university, since she had done so well in teachers' college. She thought that Elaine should enrol for an Honors degree. The idea had not even occurred to Elaine. She applied, was accepted, and entered a university Arts program that fall.

Meeting and Marrying

Much has been written about the relation of marital status to career development. That question is a simplistic version of the complex issue regarding the relation between public and private life (Midgley & Hughes, 1983, p. 26). The following observations from the literature represent, at best, an introductory and superficial treatment of the question.

There are diverse opinions on the salience and impact of marriage on women's careers. Larwood and Gutek (1987, p. 176) note that "marriage has been viewed as neutral for men but one of the most damaging elements to the careers of women." The damage appears, for example, in the form of career interruptions to fulfill domestic roles, and stereotypical assumptions about lower career commitment. And, as Biklen (1986) reports in her research on teachers, some husbands actively oppose their wives' return to work even after the women have devoted several years to child care. Woo (1985, p. 286) reports that one woman educational administrator, although happily married and with children, considered marriage to be the major obstacle in her career because of the necessary trade-offs between work and family demands.

However, in the field of education, the majority of women administrators are married (McGee, 1979; Pfiffner, 1979; Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 59). And Porat (1985), among others, finds that many women in educational administration regard their husbands as supportive and, indeed, enabling partners. Moreover, Shakeshaft (1987, p. 48) and Marshall (1985, p. 138) speculate that the image of the woman educational administrator who is married and living out a conventional family life is now the preferred one. Gallese (1985, p. 137), relating her survey of the literature to her own study of the careers of women MBAs, concludes that "there was no correlation between success on the job and choice of life style." After Gallese, it seems reasonable to assume that no simple and generalizable correlations may be supported. What may be said of the stories I was told, is that having met and married as she did, each woman triggered an intricate new structure of chance, choice and opportunity in her own life.

The decision to marry and the act of marrying a particular person are matters of choice, not chance. However, there are embedded in the circumstances leading up to those choices a variety of chance factors. The circumstances in which these women met their future husbands illustrate varying "degrees of fortuity" (Bandura, 1982). As well, the ages at which these women met their future husbands, and at which they married range from about 15 to 30 years old. While meeting their respective husbands was a matter of chance, two women also identified chance factors that influenced them significantly towards marriage. So, these anecdotes are about the chance elements related to meeting (Anecdotes 3, 4, 5) and marrying (Anecdotes 6, 7) certain men.

Anecdote 3. Jean and Lois met their future husbands in Grade 11. At the time, each girl was entering a high school in a small western Canadian town. The students at the schools came from the surrounding area, and so had not necessarily been acquainted prior to high school. That was true for one of the couples in question. Jean came into town from a farm to attend the high school. Jim was already a student there, and the two soon began dating. Lois and John, on the other hand, became re-acquainted in high school. They had both lived in the town with the high school some years before, but their families had had only a minimal social acquaintance. Then, Lois' family had moved to a farm. Lois did not spend time with the town children again until she went back there for high school. Not long after she returned to the town as a high school student, she began dating John.

Anecdote 4. Margo met her future husband while they were both undergraduates at a small eastern Canadian university. Margo's attendance at that university was seen by her parents as the obvious follow-up to high school, and Margo had gone along with the plan. That university had also been the best local option for Jack. The two met simply because they moved in the same social circles. Eventually, they drifted together and became a steady couple.

Anecdote 5. Elaine met her future husband while she was a graduate student, although Jeff was not. He had just dropped out of a graduate program in another city. Elaine had chosen to attend graduate school in an eastern Canadian city that was not her hometown. She met Jeff because he was living in the same coop house as one of her class-mates. And, she enrolled in the department she did because she was not accepted in the department to which she first applied. In search of a job, Jeff had recently arrived in the city where Elaine was studying. Shortly after his arrival, he had been referred to the housing coop by an old acquaintance whom he accidentally encountered. Not long after he moved into the coop, he and Elaine started dating. Although one of them had been born in eastern Canada, and one in western Canada, it turned out that Elaine's and Jeff's families had come from the same eastern Canadian city, with some roots in the same neighborhood.

Anecdote 6. Jean's parents wanted her to acquire some job training--in teaching or nursing--before she married. Although many of her classmates were marrying as soon as they finished high school, Jean did consider going on to nursing school. But when she investigated, she found that she would not be admitted until she turned 18, nearly two years in the future. So, she married instead.

Anecdote 7. Margo, on the other hand, had been drifting along through university in a steady relationship with Jack. She was not particularly happy with the situation; she thought that being a couple was mostly a matter of convenience for both her and Jack. She confided that to Jack's mother just before going away on vacation with a girlfriend. When Margo returned to town, Jack was waiting with an engagement ring. Margo had been ready to break off her connection with Jack. In a state of shock, she accepted the ring. Although she was uncomfortable with her own decision, she allowed her mother and future mother-in-law to proceed with plans for the wedding, which occurred at the appointed time. Only after she and Jack had married did Margo learn that the engagement was instigated by Jack's mother.

And Then They Moved

In what ways have their marriages structured the subsequent life-chances of these women? The women's lives have been similarly affected in one way: each of the women moved with her partner to at least one new geographical location chosen by him for career reasons. Such moves, oriented to the husband's career, have been common and widely accepted. Tague and Harris (1988, p. 238) report in their study of Canadian library directors that several of the married women had moved in order to accompany their husbands. Sometimes, they also worked to support husbands, who had become students. In a survey of Ontario teachers and administrators, Reich and LaFontaine (1982, pp. 74-75) found that men continue to be more willing than women to make career-related moves and to expect their spouses' support in doing so. Thus, choosing to marry a particular man has often implied a woman's willingness to "take her chances" and accompany him wherever he goes.

Each move described in this section placed the woman in a new environment that was not selected with her own career purposes/work opportunities in mind. Yet, according to their own accounts, most of the women benefited from most of the moves. Among them, the women made 12 such moves in the period from 1956 to 1986. Five of the moves were related to education, and the remaining seven to jobs. Some of the moves were more predictable and/or more negotiable with respect to rationale, timing, and destination than were others. In general, though, the moves were unexpected shifts for these women.

Nor were the career-related events that followed such moves predictable. Each of the women, though, faced the challenge of becoming established or re-established as a classroom teacher subsequent to a move. As well, there were cases in which unexpected moves on the part of husbands provided their wives with socially acceptable "outs." In different circumstances, and with different consequences, three of the women welcomed such a move as an excuse to withdraw from a situation that she found unsatisfactory. The final anecdote on moving stands as a unique illustration of a move triggered by a chance event unrelated to a

partner. However, that very move placed Elaine in the city where she then met her future husband. And so, to the stories.

Becoming Re-established as Teachers

Anecdote 8. Lois, for example, experienced quite a radical shift early in her marriage and her career. When she and John married, John was working for his father in the family business and Lois was teaching the primary grades in a nearby rural school. Lois and John built a house in the town where the business was located, and Lois settled happily into her life there. Within two years, Lois had quit teaching to care for their first child, and John had decided that he wanted to go to university instead of remaining in the family business. He and Lois would move to the nearest city in which a university was situated and Lois would teach in order to support them.

Around Christmas, while they were visiting that city to attend a wedding, Lois arranged to have an interview for a teaching job with the school system there. She was looking for a job beginning the next September when John would be starting university. She was offered a job beginning immediately after Christmas, with a guarantee of continuing work the next fall. However, if she chose to wait until the fall to start, the school system would not guarantee that work would be available for her. Since John could not go to university unless she worked, Lois decided that she should take the offer of immediate employment. She and John moved into the city right after Christmas.

Suddenly, Lois' role shifted from that of a rural homemaker to that of a principal income-earner, teaching in an urban system. At the time, she did not expect to remain in that school system beyond her husband's completion of his university program. But, although she did not realize it then, the shift launched a long-term professional association with what she terms a "nurturing" organization.

Anecdote 9. In a different story, Jean's husband, Jim, decided after nine years of marriage to make a career change that was the catalyst for a subsequent career change on

Jean's part. Jim had been taking night classes while he was working full-time as a technician in a large company. He had decided that he wanted to go to university; he and a friend were both thinking seriously of law school. During Education Week, the local newspaper did a series of feature articles on students who were taking night classes. Jim's story was among those reported. Personnel recruiters in a rural school division noticed his story and approached Jim with an offer. They needed vocational teachers in their school division, so they offered Jim a substantial bursary to take a year of education and then teach for them.

The offer was like "manna from heaven" for this young couple. Otherwise, if Jim studied law, they faced the prospect of raising their children while relying only on the salary Jean might earn doing office work. As Jean says, "we sold our souls to Education right there." They made the necessary move to the city in which the university was situated, and Jim attended school while Jean worked.

A few months later, Jim came home one day and suggested that Jean go to university, as well, and obtain a teaching certificate. He encouraged her to investigate the vocational education pattern and see if she, too, could get a bursary from the same rural school district to pay for her training. Jean made enquiries. The Chairman of the university department agreed to admit her and even advocated on her behalf to obtain a bursary similar to Jim's. Without that bursary, Jean could not have gone to university then. She did proceed with her teacher training, the beginning of what was to be a continuous career in education.

Anecdote 10. In a contrasting story, Elaine made a move with her partner, Jeff, that left her without paid-work options in her profession. Prior to that move, she had worked as a teacher in a school system and in post-secondary organizations, and completed a Master's degree. She did not have a definite career plan, or even a next step, in mind. Jeff, on the other hand, did. He had applied to a western university to enter medical school. He was accepted. It was his intention to move to a certain province in order to study and then practice medicine there. Elaine accompanied him.

The move was a big risk for Elaine. At 25 years of age, she found herself in a strange city thousands of miles away from central Canada, unemployed, and with no friends nearby except Jeff. Her family had not been pleased with her decision to move west with Jeff. Therefore, she was not even corresponding with them regularly. Meanwhile, Jeff quickly became immersed in his life as a medical student. In many ways, Elaine was on her own.

She set about looking for a teaching job. She applied to the public school system and was interviewed. That year, there was "a glut of teachers . . . they weren't hiring." There simply were no jobs. The situation came as a shock to Elaine. She had obtained her first teaching position very easily; it really had not occurred to her that getting a new teaching job might be a problem. She had her name placed on the substitute-teacher list. She "sat at home for three weeks and waited for the phone to ring." It did not. For the first time in her life Elaine "had not gone to school in September, in one sense or another . . .." Whatever was happening out there, she was not part of it.

Yet, she needed to get a job, soon. For the time being, she and Jeff were living on their savings. However, they were both relying on Elaine to become the chief income-earner while Jeff studied. With teaching eliminated, Elaine recalls that "there didn't seem to be terribly many options." She concluded that she would have to do office work. Where Jim's move had subsequently drawn Jean into education, Jeff's move (temporarily) drew Elaine away from education.

Anecdote 11. Elaine's return later to paid work as an instructor in a publicly funded institution is a story with its chance elements. Two years later, she received an unexpected telephone call from a local post-secondary institution. The head of the academic upgrading program had been given Elaine's name by the local school system, where Elaine's teaching application was on file. The program head was looking for qualified people to teach upgrading courses. Elaine was qualified. Was she interested in coming over for an interview? She was, indeed. She was "bowled over . . . excited . . . terrified" by the possibility of returning to her

profession. She set off for her interview, with a committee of staff members from the institution. One of the members of the committee was a man who had been one of Elaine's instructors when she attended teachers' college in another province, several years earlier. That instructor had in fact recommended Elaine for an academic award that she received there. His presence and support at the interview encouraged Elaine. The interview went well. Within days, Elaine was offered a job. Ironically, she received offers from two other educational institutions right around the same time.

Anecdote 12. At the beginning of her marriage, Margo moved from one eastern city to another. Unexpectedly, Jack was offered the opportunity to become a faculty member at a small university, although he had not yet completed his Master's degree. One of his professors from undergraduate days, who had switched to this other university called Jack and encouraged him to go there for interviews. Jack leapt at the opportunity. For Margo, making the move with Jack seemed automatic and appropriate.

As soon as Jack was hired by the university, he and Margo began exploring the teaching opportunities for Margo. She was interviewed, hired and assigned to a congenial school. The newly-weds rented a house near the school and settled into their life together. Margo taught happily at the same school for three years. After her third year, she was offered an appointment as a consultant. She took the offer and thoroughly enjoyed the work. She began to entertain the novel idea that she might actually have professional stature and a career of her own.

Anecdote 13. Then, in the spring of her first year as a consultant, Jack was offered a promising job opportunity in another city. Although he was happy and successful where he was, this offer improved on his position; it was an appealing career move. He accepted. Of course, Margo went with him, but regretfully this time.

Socially Acceptable Outs

Anecdote 14. Margo was spending the year at home with a new baby, her first. She describes the year as "changing diapers and staying home. . . . I didn't work. Well, I worked hard, but . . .." Taking care of the baby gave her pleasure. Staying home to do just that was something she and Jack had both assumed she would do. Once there, however, she drifted around feeling uncertain about herself and her life, convinced that she was "getting left behind."

When Jack decided to attend graduate school, Margo was not too surprised. It was his western Canadian destination that was unexpected. He had applied to more prestigious graduate schools and been turned down. Meanwhile, he had met and been impressed by a professor from a university in the west. He arranged to study with that person. There was not much discussion about the decision. Since she was dissatisfied with her present life, Margo found the prospective change of scene a little scary, but intriguing. The move, which was intended to be a temporary one, proved to be permanent for Margo.

Anecdote 15. Jean had recently crossed over from the school system to a post-secondary institution. She was striving to adjust to her new post-secondary environment, but organizational factors outside her control were making the adjustment difficult. Moreover, she found herself involved in political machinations that she did not understand. As she says, "it wasn't a fun year."

In the early spring, as Jean struggled on, Jim came home one day and announced that he had accepted a transfer to another city. Jean "couldn't believe it." It was the only time in their life together that he had made such a decision unilaterally. Jim said that he knew Jean wouldn't mind moving because it would give her "a nice easy out" from her own rather messy situation.

Startled though she was by Jim's decision, she had to acknowledge that his assessment was correct. The move was to a centre with comparable educational organizations, where she could reasonably expect to find work. She immediately took steps to obtain a job there.

Because of her existing professional networks, she was interviewed and hired very quickly for a position at a local post-secondary institution.

Anecdote 16. Elaine's "socially acceptable out" had rather different results. Elaine had been happily employed in one educational institution for over five years. However, there had been a number of changes within the organization, and Elaine did not see the prospect of any interesting new opportunities there for herself. Meanwhile, Jeff was discontent with his own professional situation--so discontent that he left it before arranging an alternative. He and Elaine sat down and discussed their options.

They agreed that he would look for an opening in a certain other city, one where there were good prospects for him. The city also had many educational organizations so Elaine assumed that it would be easy for her to find a job there. Following Jeff to a new city would be an agreeable and respectable out for Elaine.

After Jeff found work and they had moved, Elaine began making inquiries. She was surprised to find that there were not very many professional opportunities for her. Although she did find work in education, there were no permanent appointments to be had. She had unwittingly exchanged a secure but limiting position for much riskier, if challenging, options.

To Move or Not to Move

Anecdote 17. When she was a single teacher in her mid-twenties, Elaine had dinner one night with a friend who was passing through town. The two young women went to a restaurant where Elaine got food poisoning. She became violently ill and had to stay in bed for several days. She describes the situation this way: "I just couldn't move, I was so sick. It was at that point that I started really considering what I was going to do next . . . while I was lying in bed . . . ." Elaine's friend seemed to be drifting through life. Elaine was not interested in doing that. She considered three inter-related dimensions of her life: her desire for greater independence

from her family, her pursuit of a challenging career, and her love life. She was ready to make changes in all three areas.

Environments of Chance and Opportunity

Embedded in the very notion of opportunity is a sense of timeliness (*Oxford English Dictionary*). That is, an opportunity might be thought of as a well-timed chance. Not only is timing an element of opportunity, but so is a sense of purpose. A chance is opportune when it is "adapted to an end or purpose or the circumstances of the case" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Whether the purpose is explicit or implicit, short term or long term, singular or multi-faceted, it exists. The anecdotes in this section relate chances that, in all of the above respects, were also opportunities.

They are chances and opportunities which occurred within the "structures" that existed after a woman had moved from one centre to another. And, the chances and opportunities occurred within an organization where the woman was employed or studying, or within an institution that was a potential employer. The examples range from passing remarks to unexpected resignations, from particularly stimulating assignments to equally unsatisfactory ones. In many cases, they represent the "kinds of serendipity" (Boardman, Harrington, & Horowitz, 1987, p. 68) that mark significant changes in careers.

Sometimes, a casual remark made by a friend or a colleague was the catalyst for a major decision that resulted in concrete action (Hackett & Betz, 1981, p. 332). In Anecdotes 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25, the information and/or encouragement provided by friends and colleagues spurred the women to consider moving to a new position or even a different organization. In Anecdotes 19 and 20, the remarks stimulated new academic endeavors. While the comments exhibited varying "degrees of fortuitousness" (Bandura, 1982, p. 748), each one came as a surprise to the woman concerned. And the women recognized the comments as signposts to opportunities.

Then there were the positions that opened up unexpectedly within a woman's employing organization (Tague & Harris, 1988, p. 239). The positions were not always ones to which that woman had aspired. They might be new positions, or moves in new directions. Those directions might or might not be conventional moves up the organizational ladder. If the position was one that already interested the woman, hers was a somewhat hypothetical interest. That is, the woman had no reason to expect that the position would become available. But, sometimes, it did. Moving into these positions was not part of a formal career plan. Indeed, sometimes there was not even a formal competition for the position, merely a surprise invitation to take the appointment. Other times, the women applied for positions without believing that they were likely to be appointed. One way or another, though, the women in these stories were unexpectedly presented with the opportunity to take on new formal roles.

There were instances in which new dimensions were added unexpectedly to a woman's existing formal role. Each of the women cites at least one such professional situation as being especially significant in widening her career experience and increasing her self-confidence. These are chance versions of what Hall names "strategic misfits" (1986b, p. 123), which may benefit both the individual and the organization. That is, due to special circumstances, being in a particular formal role at a particular time turned out to be of particular value as a "learning experience" and link to future appointments.

Not all chance occurrences had a positive impact on these women's lives, in the short term. As well as the doors that opened, there were doors that closed. As well as the new avenues of challenge and opportunity that the women discovered, there were the unexpectedly blind alleys and dead-end streets. Some examples of this phenomenon are embedded in anecdotes that have already been told (see Anecdotes 15, 16, 22). The following anecdotes are additional instances. They are also stories of learning and discovery, of resilience and resourcefulness, of knowing when to move on (Tague & Harris, 1988, p. 239).

Chance Remarks

Anecdote 18. Because of a passing remark made to Elaine when she was a graduate student, Elaine entered a new area of instruction. After completing her first year of courses, she took a short-term job invigilating undergraduate examinations. While doing that, she met someone who had been doing supply teaching at a local college. One branch of the college was dedicated to upgrading programs. Elaine's acquaintance suggested that Elaine apply to do substitute teaching there. Elaine did. As a certificated and experienced teacher, she was a welcome applicant. She was hired. It was her first professional experience in adult education, and a positive one.

Anecdote 19. Margo identifies a casual suggestion from a respected acquaintance as the key factor in one of her decisions regarding post-secondary education. Struggling through a crisis-ridden period in her personal life, Margo was also faced with making some career-related choices. As she was pondering her options, the acquaintance commented briefly during a conversation that she should think about becoming a full-time Master's student. Margo says that she "didn't hear him very well. It sunk in . . . a couple of days later." She mentioned the suggestion to her mother, expecting disapproval in the circumstances. To her surprise, her mother reacted positively, dispatching Margo to pursue the idea. Margo did.

Anecdote 20. Jean's choice of a thesis topic was triggered by casual references made to another study. While engaged in full-time doctoral studies, Jean attended a national conference with Jim. They met some of Jim's former classmates from graduate school. Naturally, these one-time colleagues traded stories about the completion of their own and others' theses. They referred to a study done by one of their number in a different profession. The topic and the research approach were unusual. Jean was intrigued. After considering her own research and career interests and discussing a variation of the earlier study with several people, she realized that she had indeed found a focus for her project.

Anecdote 21. One comment from a senior administrator was the catalyst for Lois' decision to apply for a school principalship. Lois was a consultant then, attending a regular meeting of central office staff. The Superintendent announced the new appointments to principalships. None were women. Lois, feeling "way out of line," said, "Wouldn't it have been nice if some women had been appointed?" Lois does not remember the Superintendent's reply, although he was certainly polite. She does remember that she hurried out of the building right after the meeting. One of the Assistant Superintendents followed her and said, "Why don't you put your money where your mouth is? When was the last time you applied for a principalship?" Lois responded that it had not occurred to her that she was qualified or suited to administration--it was, after all, very much a male-dominated field. But Lois began to think seriously about the possibility of entering it.

Anecdote 22. A telephone call from a friend alerted Margo to a job possibility and spurred her to apply for it. Margo had been feeling "stuck" in a particular post-secondary teaching situation. She had no intention of remaining there. So, she had made her restlessness known among her professional acquaintances, "casting around" for alternative employment. One day a friend of her husband's called to say hello. An educational administrator himself, he had just heard the news that some new administrative positions were being created. All he knew was the titles of the jobs, the salaries attached to them, and the man Margo should call to find out more. Indeed, this friend urged Margo to pursue the matter. Margo decided it was worth making an enquiry. An unexpected interview and a few days later, Margo had a job offer.

Anecdote 23. After spending several years in a demanding post as a school administrator, Lois was tired and ready for a change. Her friends were aware of that. One of them, a regular bridge partner, was teaching in the Faculty of Education at the local university. This friend was making plans to take a study leave. As a result, there was going to be a one-year opening in the Faculty. Lois' friend suggested at a bridge party that Lois apply for the term

appointment. Lois liked the idea and, after being interviewed, was seconded from her school system to the university for a year.

Anecdote 24. Another casual conversation with friends during a bridge game provided the impetus for a radical change in Lois' and John's life. The conversation occurred on a winter's evening. The subject was a recent newspaper advertisement: the Canadian government was seeking teachers and other professionals for overseas positions. One of the bridge players said half-jokingly that he intended to apply and would, therefore, spend the next winter in warmer climes. Lois had for some time been interested in the possibility of teaching in another culture or country. John had steadfastly opposed the idea. This time, she persuaded John that they should apply. Eventually, they did, although their friends did not. John was offered a posting.

Anecdote 25. In one case, a friend urged Lois to apply for a position that was of particular interest to Lois, even though it was in a geographically distant location. Lois was ready for yet another new challenge, and she knew what she wanted that challenge to be. For some time, she had been interested in moving up to a central office administrative position in the curriculum/instruction area. Because a friend of hers already held such a post, Lois knew what the job entailed and found it attractive. The Superintendent was aware of Lois' aspirations and he encouraged them. He assured Lois that she was heir apparent to the next appropriate position that opened up. According to him, that could happen any time. The problem was that Lois had been back in the system for two years, doctorate in hand, and there was no concrete evidence that a position would open up soon.

She noticed that a school system in another Western Canadian city was advertising two such positions. She thought little more about it. Moving to that city "seemed like going to the moon" to her. Then, a colleague mentioned the jobs to her and pointed out that Lois was quite an appropriate candidate for one of them. The day before the deadline, Lois submitted her

application for the position. She did not expect to get the job, but she did expect to learn from the application process. After all, what did she have to lose by applying?

Unexpected Openings

Anecdote 26. When Margo was approached by a central office administrator about the possibility of stepping into a consultant's position, Margo was surprised at the suggestion that the post might become available. The long-standing incumbent was not doing a good job but there was no indication that she was leaving. Nonetheless, Margo agreed that, if the job opened up, she would be delighted to move from classroom teaching to consulting. A while later the incumbent was "promoted" to another position and Margo was appointed, without further comment, to the consultant's job.

Anecdote 27. Reluctantly returning to work after a leave of absence, Elaine was unexpectedly offered a secondment. She was not keen on slipping back into her position as an instructor in a department where she had recently been passed over for an appointment as a program head. Luckily, a former superordinate and "old pal" of hers had become the Director of another division. He seconded her to do a provincial study. It was Elaine's first independent research project and one that was of absorbing interest to her. The secondment provided a respectable, if temporary, way to stay out of her previous position and department.

Anecdote 28. Jean and Jim had returned somewhat reluctantly to a city which they believed they had left permanently one year before. It proved, however, to be an exciting time to return. A new composite high school was being opened. Jean was hired as a staff member and soon found herself actively involved. Then, part way through the year, the long-time program head in Jean's department decided to retire from the post. Jean was offered the job of program head by the principal. She accepted the appointment; it was her fourth year as a teacher and her first in that school.

Anecdote 29. Similarly, Jean was named program head at another educational institution. It was five years after she was offered her first appointment as a program head. Once again, it was her first year with the organization. Once again, the incumbent wanted to be relieved of the hassles of administration. Once again, the senior administrator asked Jean to succeed to the position. Once again, she agreed.

Anecdote 30. Not long after Lois made a move to a new organization, the senior administrator there announced his impending retirement. The announcement came as a surprise to Lois. When she had taken a relatively senior post with the organization, she had not known that her superordinate was near retirement. Moreover, it did not matter to her. She had "thought for a long time in terms of being [in the position to which she had just been appointed]," but she certainly had not pictured herself in any more senior position than that. Indeed, she was just settling happily into her new role when the announcement was made.

Unexpectedly, another possibility was opening up. A national competition would be held for the chief executive's position. Several people in the organization asked Lois to apply. However, Lois liked her current job. And, she did not expect that she would be given the more senior job, anyway. A couple of days before the competition closed, Lois still had not submitted an application.

Anecdote 31. At a time when Jean's career was well established, a senior administrative position within her organization became unexpectedly vacant. Once again, an administrator had decided to give up administration. By then, Jean had held her existing administrative appointment for five years. Concurrently, she had been doing part-time graduate work in educational administration. She was ready to put her theoretical knowledge to use in a more challenging position.

But, it did not occur to her to apply for this particular vacancy because it was in a different program division. Then, people from the division began approaching her to suggest that she apply. Initially, she did not take their suggestions seriously. However, she did want

new challenges. She went to talk with the incumbent, who also encouraged her to apply. She did.

Widening Horizons

Anecdote 32. Lois recalls a set of chance factors that led to a particularly significant appointment in her ninth year of teaching. The previous spring, she had quit teaching due to a pregnancy. She intended to remain at home and care for her family of small children. That fall, her husband returned to university to complete a degree. A teacher himself, John intended to teach half-time in order to support the family financially. However, John found that particular combination of teaching and studying very stressful. He was a conscientious teacher with only one year of experience. His part-time assignment was to a grade that was new to him. Lois encouraged him to resign his teaching position and devote himself to his studies, even if they had to borrow money to get by. After all, as Lois says, they "were used to never having much money."

It did not occur to Lois to seek a teaching job again, although they needed the income. She did not see any point in applying: "Who'd hire a woman who'd quit at Easter [several] times?" In late September, John went down to the school board office to resign from his part-time position The Superintendent asked John what Lois was doing. The Superintendent said that, due to overcrowding in a new school, he needed Lois back. John indicated that Lois just might be available.

On October 1st, Lois began teaching once more. She was posted to a new school that was already overcrowded. She was assigned to the principal as a relief teacher. She spent the first hour of each day working with the principal. For the remainder of the day, she went from class to class, teaching various subjects to provide the regular teachers with spare periods. Hers was a unique teaching assignment.

Anecdote 33. After working four years as an instructor within one institution, a new role was created and became available to Elaine. It was not a promotion, in the sense of being a move up the official hierarchy. However, it was an administrative position with interesting new challenges. When the head of Elaine's division suggested that a special summer session be introduced at their institution, Elaine immediately recognized the potential of such a project. Given student needs and other institutional circumstances, such a program seemed timely and appropriate to Elaine. She became the coordinator and manager of the project automatically--none of her colleagues was even interested in the role.

Anecdote 34. One year when Margo was a sessional lecturer, her teaching assignment was altered dramatically just before the term started. Instead of taking her scheduled courses, she was transferred to an experimental, on-campus practicum project. That program was developed hurriedly as an alternative to the field practicum, because the teaching staff in the local school system went on strike. Margo became very interested in the instructional model that was used, and in the subject itself.

Anecdote 35. Jean recalls a one-year period during which her responsibilities rather than her formal role changed, thus broadening her experience. She was holding quite a senior administrative appointment at the time. Her superordinate resigned in mid-year and was not replaced for several months. During the interval, his tasks were divided up and distributed among the people at Jean's level. Consequently, Jean "took a major role" in long-range planning activities, and other institution-wide policy committees. She also served on the search committee for the hiring of her own superordinate. Because of her work that year, Jean gained additional leadership experience and increased her knowledge of wider organizational issues.

Not a Good Fit

Anecdote 36. In the middle of her third year at a post-secondary institution, Elaine found herself President of the faculty association. She had already served as a faculty

representative on various committees. Then she ran for vice-president and won. She hoped that her term in the vice-presidency would serve as a training period so that she could then move with some confidence into the presidency. Instead, the presidency was thrust on her at Christmas, when the incumbent president became ill. He simply announced at an Association meeting that he was resigning, and that Elaine would be the new president. He had not even forewarned her. As she says, ". . . I was just a little taken aback, I had to . . . pick up the reins. . . . I didn't appreciate the way he did it." Under these circumstances, especially, she found the job "very stressful."

Anecdote 37. Newly hired by a school system, Margo found herself unexpectedly assigned to an inappropriate posting. There was a surplus of new teachers hired that year. Consequently, Margo was teaching a variety of subjects and grade levels that were unfamiliar to her, in a large school. She was given only a minimal opportunity to teach classes in her own subject specialty. She was "scared" of some of her older, male students and frustrated by her own unsuccessful attempts to interest them in her favorite subject. As for the rest of her courses, she struggled to prepare herself to teach the subjects. She was "at the school before the janitor got there and after the janitor went home . . .."

In spite of these efforts she drove to school each day with her "stomach in a knot." The principal was neither interested nor supportive, although she had made her uncertainties about the appointment clear at the outset. The vice-principal was both supportive and available. He observed in Margo's classroom and gave her encouragement, but he recognized her discomfort. And, Margo did not want to rely on him constantly. She was unhappy with her situation and with her own performance.

Anecdote 38. A rather unsatisfactory posting in a school system motivated Lois to reflect on her future. She had returned to work after a leave of absence. She was given a full-time teaching assignment. However, she ended up teaching in a combination of two schools that were across the city from one another. Initially, she was posted full-time to one school, as a

specialist, but the school's enrolment declined. Meanwhile, the principal of a school where she had previously been a teacher, asked her to return on a half-time basis, in her role as a specialist. Lois agreed. Since Lois' driver's licence had lapsed while she was out of the country the previous year, she took the bus across town from one school to the other. She felt that she "never saw" her children, because she had to leave home before 8:00 a.m. and she did not arrive back home until 6:00 p.m. At the same time, she was concerned about the adjustments her children were having to make on their return to elementary and junior high school in Canada. Overall, Lois was finding the situation an unhappy contrast to the more leisurely, family-oriented life she had been leading overseas. She would not willingly prolong these circumstances. Indeed, she would actively seek improvements.

Conclusion

"It's [an] odd collection of happenstances to call a career." So said the director of a large Canadian library, when asked to reflect on his/her career (Tague & Harris, 1988, p. 240). "Talk about chance!" said the participants in my study as they told their stories. Call it chance, luck, coincidence, timing, or a "nonreplicable serendipitous event" (Boardman et al., 1987, p. 75)--it exists, as an element in careers and in life. Willis and Dodgson, for example, surveyed a group of Canadian educational administrators about their careers. The respondents ranked "luck or opportunity" fifth of 23 items to which they attributed their success. Yet they, like others, mention the factor casually and shift to other topics. Coffin and Ekstrom (1979, p. 59) report similar findings, and make no further comment. Shakeshaft (1987, p. 67) reminds us that it has generally taken "some overt act--however small," usually on the part of a colleague, to encourage women to move into administration. Hall (1986b, p. 125) suggests that we need research on "trigger events and influences that stimulate various types of changes." Gerson (1985) does document many "unexpected events" (p. 20), instances of "luck or chance" often related to "a shifting structural context of opportunities and constraints" (p. 90), and "triggering events" (p. 116), with "unintended consequences" (p. 192). She demonstrates how certain

chances are structured. And she illustrates some ways that some women negotiate their lives, affected by chances but still making choices. After Gerson, perhaps we should talk more about chance, together with choice.

Chapter 4

ON CHOICE

Introduction

What constitutes a choice? A "choice" is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the act of choosing," or the "power, right, or faculty of choosing" according to some preference. Definitions of the verb "to choose" emphasize the notions of selection, preference, and free will or agency. The roots of these terms "choice" and "to choose" refer also to discerning, perceiving, or seeing. Choosing, then, is grounded in/implies an awareness of alternatives and the power or right to exercise options among those alternatives.

What constitutes the making of a choice? Any particular choice is not made in isolation from the rest of life. Indeed, it is often difficult to pinpoint the time and place at which a choice occurs. Choices develop, as much as they are made. Often, a choice must be affirmed over and over, in different ways. Herr and Cramer (1984, pp. 138-139) describe choice as a "series of mini-decisions" made over time "in relation to antecedent experiences and future alternatives." And yet, we do struggle to arrive at decisions, to select among the alternatives as they appear to us in a given context. And we do act or not act, which I take to be the evidence of a choice made. Then we live with the consequences of our struggles and our choices (Casserly, 1988, p. 6).

In the preceding chapter, the focus of the anecdotes was the chance elements that have influenced the careers of the participants in the study. However, the attention paid to any one concept creates an artificial separation between it and other equally important concepts. The chances, choices, and opportunities of life are virtually inseparable. Moreover, the emphasis on chance tends to portray the women in this study as rather passive recipients of good and bad luck. Viewed as a finished picture, that would be a distorted portrait.

Gerson (1985) studied the life histories of a group of American women who "came of age during the late 1960's and 1970's" (p. 40), in order to discover the logic of their "work and family choices" (p. 42). As a result of her analysis, she contends that

> Women's adult choices are neither the predetermined result of early childhood socialization nor mere reflections of static, purely coercive social structures although each of these factors plays a role. Women's decisions . . . develop out of a negotiated process whereby they confront and respond to constraints and opportunities, often unanticipated, encountered over the course of their lives. The process is dynamic, not stable and fixed. It depends on how women define and perceive situations as well as on the objective circumstances that structure these perceptions. (p. 213)

In this chapter, I look at the choices Lois, Jean, Margo, and Elaine have made in relation to the chance events that I just described. This is a shift to the issue of personal agency, recognizing that individuals influence their own circumstances, just as they are influenced by other people and circumstances. I present examples of situations in which other people acted as the agents in transforming chance into choice and opportunity for these women. And, I consider the ways in which these four women themselves transformed chance into choice and opportunity, adapting to life but constructing their own lives and careers, as well.

The structure of this chapter, On Choice, duplicates the structure of the preceding chapter, On Chance. The anecdotes are organized in four major categories, each of which forms a section of this chapter. The sections are called "Early Events and Later Developments," "Meeting and Marrying," "And Then They Moved," and "Environments of Choice and Opportunity." In each section, we shall re-visit the anecdotes that were presented in the parallel section of the chapter On Chance.[1] And, a few supplementary examples of significant choices that are not so directly linked to the anecdotes on chance will also be presented.[2] All the anecdotes in this chapter elaborate the choices--the configurations of influential factors and the

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[1]Those anecdotes are Numbers 1 to 38.

[2]These new anecdotes will be identified by a continuation of the numbering that was begun in the preceding chapter. The new anecdotes are Numbers 39 to 44. Numbers 39 and 40 are introduced in the section "Early Events and Later Developments." Number 41 appears in the section "Meeting and Marrying." Numbers 42, 43, and 44 appear in the section "To Move or Not to Move."

"mini-decisions"--that preceded and followed the chance events documented in the previous chapter. As these anecdotes illustrate, we do make choices. And the stories of our choices admit complexity and defy prediction.

Early Events and Later Developments

This section concentrates on events that occurred before marriage and before the age of twenty, but had long-term consequences for the woman concerned. Anecdotes 1 and 2, which were introduced as anecdotes On Chance, are elaborated here from the perspective of preceding and subsequent choices. Then, we look at anecdotes in which choice rather than chance is the central element. Anecdotes 39 and 40 describe the processes by which two of the women "chose" to become teachers. And an elaboration of Anecdote 6 from the chapter On Chance describes Jean's decision not to become a teacher.

Teaching was generally seen by the women in this study as one of a limited number of "acceptable" choices for an occupation (Prolman, 1982). It was often presented that way by influential members of the family and, indeed, the mothers of all four women were teachers themselves (Prolman, 1982). The other choices considered were almost always traditionally female occupations (Larsen, 1984, p. 91), even as recently as the 1960s. The short training period for teachers was an advantage financially in at least one case, but it was not a deciding factor. More significant for two of the young women was the opportunity to live away from the family home (Larsen, 1984, pp. 90-91). Even financial self-sufficiency as a goal was presented in terms of stereotypical sex roles--the safety net in the absence of a male provider. And, all of these women entered teaching with the expectation of remaining in the classroom (Prolman, 1982), if they were working at all. Nonetheless, the families of these women did actively encourage and support their pursuit of post-secondary education in a field where women could expect to get jobs (Gaskell, 1983).

Anecdote 1. For Lois and John, there were long-term consequences of Lois' parents decision to move to a farm, during Lois' childhood. If Lois' husband John had not discovered his own love of farming through many years of visiting with Lois' parents on their farm, there might never have been any question of buying that property when Lois' mother no longer wished to maintain it. As it was, choosing to buy the farm meant that "life became more complex" for an already busy family. Lois and John had to borrow money for the purchase, thus going into debt again. And, every weekend during the spring and fall, Lois and John and two of their children made the three-hour drive to the farm. The weekends at the farm did provide a change of scene and of pace. John and the children worked the farm as a team. Meanwhile, with John's encouragement, Lois brought her own work along, tasks related to her administrative activities and her studies. She provided support services, such as preparing meals and doing errands, for her family. In the fall she helped with the swathing. Apart from that, she did her own work in a beautiful country setting. This division of labour meant that they could "be together as a family" while pursuing different interests.

Years later, the choices they had made with respect to the farm would still have positive consequences for Lois and John. Lois would continue to dedicate much of her interest and energy to administrative activities and graduate studies. John would continue to balance his paid-work commitments as a teacher with his "hobby" as a farmer. Indeed, the farm would become a "safety net" (Lois' description) for John. Although he has never exercised this option, he could at any time retire from teaching and devote himself to farming, while Lois went on with her administrative career. Lois speaks of that possibility for John as one that she would certainly support if it became John's preference. Thus, the chance element that influenced Lois' parents to move to a farm combined with the subsequent opportunities and choices for Lois and John has evolved into a set of complementary, rather than divisive, priorities for this couple.

Anecdote 2. Long before a co-worker suggested that Elaine go on from Teachers' College to university, Elaine had made a number of career-related choices. During her high

school years, Elaine considered various career, or job, options. Her parents felt that, as a woman, Elaine should have "something to fall back on" in case anything should happen to her (hypothetical) husband. They did not view any job that Elaine might do as a continuous career, but rather as something to do before marriage and after the children were grown. The range of options that occurred to Elaine's parents was quite narrow. Elaine could train to be a teacher, a nurse, or a secretary. Working for a department store or for the telephone company were the other two apparent alternatives. Each of these possibilities was raised because a relative was employed in that way. No one outside the family suggested or encouraged Elaine to consider other possible futures. Elaine recalls having an interview with the female vice-principal of her high school: "It was to discuss career options and I remember I didn't say a word. . . . I went in and sat in a corner in this chair. She asked me questions and I answered them, yes or no. When I finally got out of there, I was so relieved." Elaine began sifting through the acceptable alternatives on her own.

Through a process of elimination, Elaine eventually settled on a career choice. In earlier years, she had thought of becoming a scientist. As her marks in the sciences dropped, she gave up her scientific ambitions. Because she liked to write, she wondered about becoming a journalist. She sent away for information about a journalism program, but the courses looked boring. So, she dismissed the idea of journalism school. She tried taking a secretarial course and quit after a month. She took a job as a ward aide at a local hospital: the experiment was "a disaster." She concluded that nursing would not be for her. That left one option--teaching.

For many years, Elaine had persistently fought the idea of becoming a teacher. She did so partly because everyone else in her family was teaching. That is, her mother, her sister, her brother-in-law, her father, and a number of other relatives were engaged in various forms of teaching. They all thought that it would be quite appropriate for Elaine to become a teacher as well.

The way to become a teacher was to enrol in a one or two year training program at a Teachers' College. It never occurred to Elaine that she might enrol at a university and take a

degree, although she did know that the two-year teacher training program constituted the first two years of the B.Ed. program at an affiliated university. The Teachers' College had a residence. Elaine says, "That's what I wanted more than anything--to go and live in residence and be away from home." Elaine applied, was accepted, and headed off to the College.

Although Elaine was particularly interested in English, she enrolled in the program for elementary teachers. Her experience until then had been with younger children, whether it was teaching them Sunday School or being a friend to her nieces and nephews. Elaine liked young children. She says also that teaching high school "seemed a harder thing to do." Elaine did not seriously consider the possibility of becoming a high school English teacher.

The summer between two sessions at Teachers' College, Elaine acquired some experience as an educational administrator. Responding to an advertisement, Elaine applied to be the principal of a children's day school that had a staff of two teachers and an enrolment of 50 children. With her background as a camp counsellor, Sunday school teacher, and school-teacher-in-training, she was a welcome acquisition. She received some training and a small salary, then she was left in charge of her little school. She led the daily assemblies, handled the discipline problems and complaints, and did some teaching. In spite of the responsibility involved, Elaine passed an untroubled summer. For her, the job "seemed easy to do."

At just-barely 19, Elaine completed her teacher training. She did not know what to do next. It was at this point that Elaine's choice of a summer job and a conversation with a co-worker had quite an impact on her future. For the co-worker was a university student, and she suggested that Elaine go on to university. Elaine did.

She found university life and its academic expectations much more sophisticated than anything she had encountered at Teachers' College. She had been very successful academically at the College. At university, she was a rather shy student, attending classes and doing her work, but not speaking out to make herself or her views known. She was dedicated to her studies, but intimidated by some of her more confident fellow students and more arrogant professors. Nonetheless, she adjusted and carried on.

During her years as a post-secondary student, Elaine lived apart from her parents whenever she could afford to do so. Generally, if she lived at home during the school year, she found work and travel opportunities that allowed her to live away from home during the summer. If she lived on her own during the school year, she often moved home for the summer. She did prefer the freedom of being removed from what she felt to be her parents' rather stifling concern and supervision. She comments that "I really expanded the most when I was away from home. . . . My home was kind of repressive and they had definite ideas about safety for girls . . . ."

After three years at university, Elaine graduated with a bachelor's degree. The degree she obtained proved to be a useful basic work credential. Meanwhile, her studies also fostered a long-term avocational interest in literature. Indeed, the acquisition of the B.A. permitted Elaine to exercise the option of entering a graduate program in the same discipline a few years later, when she was seeking a change from classroom teaching.

Anecdote 39. Margo's next move after high school, and her choice of a career, were never in doubt. Not only was Margo's mother a teacher, whom Margo had seen in action for years, but also several of Margo's aunts and uncles taught. Ultimately, Margo's younger sister became a teacher, too. As Margo puts it,

> There was never a choice. . . . Teaching was what you did. . . . I never knew there were other careers . . . [such as] nursing . . . until I was well into teaching. So, I was headed for university. . . . I was already in training to do it before I considered that there might have been something else.

Margo's one other, shadowy ambition was to become a musician. However, she was not encouraged to consider making a career in the arts. Certainly, her mother rejected entirely Margo's tentative suggestion that she take a Fine Arts program. Margo did accept the fact that most musicians could not make a living, so her own interest in music as a vocation remained muted. Muted but not destroyed; over the years she found ways to combine music with education. Meanwhile, the only thing to do was to complete her university education at a nearby university.

Margo, too, moved from a small centre to a larger one in order to continue her education. Living in residence was a positive change for her; the restrictions of dormitory life were much less severe than the rules by which she had lived at home. And the core friendships that she formed early on in residence were the first long-term friends she made. Life in residence was the foundation for Margo's sociable, carefree days as an undergraduate.

Margo's carefree approach extended to her academic work. She was enrolled in a traditional arts program, taking the subjects she had studied in high school. She "didn't realize until . . . the second year that there were other courses like psychology and sociology. . . ." In any case, many dimensions of university life interested Margo more than her course work. She participated in various extra-curricular activities and acquired a boyfriend. Although she had a very average academic career, her undergraduate years were a busy, happy time for Margo. She was simply not a serious student during those years.

Margo's final year differed in one significant respect from the preceding years. Margo's family moved to the city in which Margo was attending university. So, Margo lived with her family. The transition from residence life to family life was not a particularly welcome one for Margo. Nonetheless, it was probably "just as well, because I had to work hard to get finished. . . . it was a work year for me." Margo settled in and completed her degree. After all, the next year she would be sharing an apartment with a friend, while she went on to do her teachers' training.

Anecdote 40. At the age of 16, Lois had already chosen her future profession as well as her future husband. Lois' parents insisted that she not marry until she was 18. And, they emphasized the value of a good education. Besides, Lois knew that her parents wanted her to acquire the means to be economically self sufficient, should the need arise. Lois' mother wanted to be sure that, "If your husband leaves you, you can support your family." Lois agreed that was an important precaution. She notes that she was growing up in "the era when girls didn't have . . . many choices" and, besides, she had "always wanted to be a teacher." Her

mother was one. Therefore, in accordance with her family's values and her own aspirations, Lois decided to attend Teachers' College for one year.

In order to attend, she had to move from the country to the nearest centre with a teacher training institute. She had been to that centre only once before in her life. Lois was confident of her ability to cope academically at the College, but she felt like "a bit of a country bumpkin" in other ways.

She did adjust to college life in the city. She managed it on a very small budget, because she felt that she was being a drain on her family's limited financial resources. She was an interested student and an active participant in college affairs. Her course work was basically a one-year consolidation of "methods" classes. At the end of the year, she felt that she was well prepared with "all the things [she] should be doing" in her own classroom. As Lois saw it, the year had been strictly a transitional period prior to returning home to John, getting married, and settling down.

Lois recalls that, about this time in her life, her plans and goals were quite clear. She was going to "go to Teachers' College . . . marry John . . . teach for a while . . . raise three perfect kids . . . [and] live happily ever after." The choices seemed obvious.

Arrangements were made for Lois to "teach for a while." She did not apply for a teaching job. Rather, the chairman of the unit board in Lois' home community made an agreement with Lois' mother. Lois and her mother were assigned to teach in the same school, where they would be the only teachers. The two of them would live together in the teacherage during the week and return home on the weekends. Lois was thankful to have her life arranged in this way.

Lois and her mother took up their teaching posts in the fall. Lois' working relations with her mother were supportive but not interfering. Lois taught about 25 students spread over four grades. Most of the students lived on farms and travelled by school bus, staying for lunch. Lois experienced some of the typical first-year teacher's problems with discipline. And, she spent hours preparing "units" for various subjects. She loved her teaching and took it very seriously.

Anecdote 6. In contrast to the other three women in this study, Jean chose not to take teacher training as a young woman. She "couldn't face being a teacher," although her mother had been one before she had children. Jean saw teachers as disciplinarians and "a little stuffy." Especially, though, she saw the kind of scrutiny that teachers underwent in a small community such as hers. She says of the local teachers, "they couldn't do anything in town without people making value judgments on their behavior . . . and nobody seemed to like teachers very much." Jean rejected teaching as an option. Ten years later, she became a teacher (see Anecdote 9).

Meeting and Marrying

In the same section On Chance, I noted the circumstances in which these women met their future spouses and, in two cases, the additional chance factors that propelled the women into marriage. In three other cases, however, the transition from a dating relationship to marriage involved a specific series of choices made by the woman concerned (and no doubt by the man concerned, as well, but I do not have his version of the events). The continuation of Anecdote 3 tells the story of Lois' choices leading up to her marriage and describes her life as a newly wed. The expanded version of Anecdote 5 tells of Elaine's choices related to meeting and marrying Jeff. And, Margo's initiatives and ultimate decision to marry Joe are introduced in a new anecdote, number 41.

Anecdote 3. Because she intended to marry John, her high school boyfriend, Lois chose not to date anyone else while she was away at Teachers' College. John himself, as well as Lois' older brother, encouraged Lois to go out with a variety of young men. Lois tried it, briefly, but dating other young men "didn't make much sense" to her, so she stopped. Instead, she went home to see John on the weekends, as often as she could afford the trip.

Lois married John a couple of months after she became 18 years old. Since Lois' and John's families were quite different in their values and lifestyles, and since Lois and John

expected to live in the same area as both sets of parents, Lois' determination to marry John was a statement of independence, especially when made by a 17 year-old girl. Lois did acquiesce, against her own preference just to "go and get married," to a formal wedding and reception. Her mother and aunts made all of the plans and preparations. Once they were married, Lois moved with John into the couple's newly built house in John's home town. From there, Lois rather nervously drove back and forth each day to her country school.

Lois and John led an active life together and individually. In addition to their respective paid-work positions, they were busy finishing their house and socializing with the other young couples in the area. Lois also taught Sunday School and CGIT, and took correspondence courses. Prior to her marriage, Lois' parents had exacted a promise from Lois that she would complete the requirements for her teaching certificate. This involved taking several courses beyond her one year at Teachers' College. Although doing the correspondence lessons was not a priority, Lois did keep her promise. She was establishing what would become a long-term pattern of combining teaching with part-time studies.

Within a year of getting married, Lois was pregnant. She had returned to the same school for her second year of teaching. The pregnancy was welcome but not planned. Lois felt concerned about the timing of it in relation to her teaching commitments. She "should've become six months pregnant on July 1st" instead of being at that stage in the spring. Since it was the school board practice that a teacher resign her position in the fourth month of her pregnancy, Lois had to quit teaching before the end of the school term. After that, she kept busy for several months with various domestic activities and with her studies. Then, she and John unexpectedly moved to the city (see Anecdote 8).

Anecdote 5. Elaine's series of decisions culminating in her marriage to Jeff represented quite a radical break from her family. Elaine made a number of choices that, interacting with chance elements, estranged her temporarily from her parents and excluded her temporarily from her profession. After finishing university, Elaine taught elementary school in her home town for

several years. She led a pleasant and busy life, professionally and socially. In a while, though, she felt the constraints both of being a school teacher and of living at home. She was becoming "plain bored teaching grade [mid-elementary], that's all there was to it."

She moved to another city to attend graduate school, and there she met Jeff. Elaine's family preferred some of her previous boyfriends to Jeff. They did have Elaine's best interests at heart and, after all, Jeff was (at that time) unemployed, as well as being an atheist. Elaine's parents met Jeff only once during the early stages of Elaine's and Jeff's relationship. When Jeff moved in with her, Elaine did not even tell her parents that she and this young man of (in their eyes) unknown origins and uncertain prospects were living together.

Some months later, Elaine offered to accompany Jeff to another city, where he would be attending school (see Anecdote 10). Jeff was non-committal about the future but he did not decline the offer of Elaine's company. Elaine decided that she would give the experiment in the new city six weeks. If it did not work out, then she would return to the city where she had been living, and find a permanent job there. Skeptical as her parents were about Jeff, they were even more concerned that Elaine would go off with him, but unmarried. They urged Elaine and Jeff to marry before leaving. Elaine and Jeff did not even discuss that option; they persisted with their own plans. Because of her decision to go with Jeff, Elaine was once again in disgrace with her family. In spite of that and difficulties finding suitable work in her new location, Elaine remained with Jeff. Almost a year after their move, they married at the local Registry Office. Both Elaine and Jeff had continued to keep their distance from their respective families. So, it was only after the wedding ceremony that Elaine sent a telegram to her parents, announcing the marriage. Elaine was very happy; she was convinced that she and Jeff were right to marry when they did.

Anecdote 41. Margo took the initiative to begin a dating relationship with Joe, who would later become her husband. For a year, Joe was her office-mate at graduate school. He was her main sounding board, as she recounted to him daily the ups and downs of her life as a newly singled parent. During that year, Margo realized that she would like to re-marry.

However, she found that the men she liked were often married themselves or came complete with children of their own. If not, they weren't pleased to find that Margo had children. Although Margo dated various men that year, Joe was not one of them. She simply did not regard him as a "candidate" for a romantic relationship, nor did he seem interested in being a candidate. The next fall, however, she began inviting Joe to attend various events with her, and he agreed.

By then, Margo had made a decision to remain in the city where she had just done her graduate work. She had decided that "it would be rather suffocating to return to [her hometown, where her parents and former mother-in-law still lived] in terms of getting my personal life in order. . . ." She decided, at 29 years of age, that it was time to grow up and live her own life.

Within a few months, Margo's and Joe's pattern became well established. They spent the weekends together, with Margo's children, and each went his/her own way during the week. Joe was a great support to Margo, in both emotional and practical ways, often entertaining her children while she worked on course assignments. These comfortable arrangements lasted for some time. Eventually, though, Margo and Joe discussed marriage. Margo says that they approached the question very sensibly, discussing its pros and cons. Their affection and comfort with one another, and Joe's positive relations with Margo's children, were established. They thought that it would be a good idea to formalize their connection while the children were young, although Margo would stand to lose financially by re-marrying. Moreover, Margo was not comfortable about living common law with Joe. She was concerned about her family's reactions and about the comments other children might make to hers. So, marriage it was.

And Then They Moved

Whatever the catalyst for a geographical move, every such move triggers a shift in the available structures of opportunity and, therefore, of choice. The following anecdotes illustrate this phenomenon. In a series of three sections, they document each woman's choices preceding a move and the immediate impact of the move on her career.

The first section provides examples of the moves these women made in their late teens and through their twenties. The moves were motivated by a spouse's/partner's pursuit of a career goal, because of an implicit understanding that the men's careers had priority, at the time. Even so, some of these moves were made more reluctantly than others. The anecdotes--8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13--are all elaborations of stories told in the previous chapter.

They describe the process of becoming established as teachers, which was not a straightforward matter for any of these women. Even in cases where the decision to be a teacher was made easily and early--often, it was not--the early teaching years were disrupted by child-bearing (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 66), and by moves to new centres. Some women chalked up considerable classroom experience during this period and demonstrated the well-documented female orientation towards student-centred and curriculum issues (Prolman, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 173). Some also experienced severe dislocations in their careers because of moves (Edson, 1988, p. 59). The anecdotes describe the teaching related choices, combined with chances, that each woman encountered, sometimes as a "newcomer" and sometimes as an "insider" (Hall, 1986b, p. 127), through her twenties.

The second section deals with the moves that provided socially acceptable outs. Anecdotes 14, 15, and 16 all appeared in the chapter On Chance. In this chapter, certain choices the women made preceding the moves had relevance after the moves. The choices and consequences are elaborated here.

Finally, there are examples of moves that were oriented quite specifically to a woman's career development. In Anecdotes 17 (from On Chance) and 44 (introduced in this chapter), the women do not have partners to consider. In that situation, but with different domestic responsibilities, one woman opts for "adventure," while the other decides to stay with her existing support system (Edson, 1988, pp. 55-56). In Anecdotes 24 and 25, which are presented elsewhere in this chapter, we see the evidence of moves that reflected a woman's priorities more than her husband's. And, in Anecdotes 42 and 43, which are introduced in this section, we see two other factors affecting decisions about moves. One is concern for the children (Tague &

Harris, 1988, p. 238). The other is an increasing recognition of the woman's career (Edson, 1988, p. 60).

Becoming (Re-)Established as Teachers

Anecdote 8. Lois' early return to teaching was precipitated by her husband's decision to attend university, but even so it involved certain choices on Lois' part. In recounting the story of that period, Lois assumed both her willingness to support John in his decision and the location to which they would move. The location was the city that housed the nearest university. Lois' support was moral and financial. Although she and John had an infant, it was understood that John could not go to university unless Lois worked. The only choices related to timing. Lois made two choices in that category. The first choice had to do with her application to be hired as a teacher. The second had to do with her starting date. The one choice followed on the other, and both have already been related in the earlier version of Anecdote 8. What follows is the continuation of that anecdote.

Because of Lois' decision to start teaching in January, other choices had to be made quickly. Lois and John and their infant moved from their house in the country to a basement suite in the city. John found work to span the interval until he could begin university courses. Lois arranged for their new landlady to baby-sit their infant. And, Lois faced a very different and unfamiliar professional milieu.

Her assignment--to an elementary school with an enrolment of about 500 students and a staff of veteran teachers--was Lois' first experience of teaching with a number of other professionals. It was quite a contrast with her previous experience in a small country school where her mother had been Lois' sole colleague. Certainly, her mother had been a supportive, but not interfering, colleague. She fostered Lois' professional growth and her awareness of her professional responsibilities. Nonetheless, on her arrival at a much larger school in an urban system with its attendant resources, Lois was impressed with the quality of education that was being offered by the other teachers. She learned many curriculum planning and lesson

presentation skills from her new colleagues. And, she recalls two significant decisions that she made early in her new teaching assignment.

Lois was replacing a woman who was highly regarded by the other members of the school staff. She was told repeatedly that her predecessor was a marvellous teacher. Lois reacted by resolving to work very hard in order to prove herself. She did work energetically, both in her own classroom and on the school's extra-curricular activities.

Early on, she also had "an experience in human relations" that was the catalyst for another resolution. The teacher across the hall thought that Lois should shout at her students now and then, as a discipline technique. Lois was "very averse to yelling" and did not. Her colleague across the hall stopped speaking to her. Lois was devastated and puzzled. She did not have any idea what to do: she thought of herself as being good at relating to people and yet, in this instance, she had failed. She vowed that from then on she would always work through any disagreement she had with another person, rather than allowing that situation to recur.

For the next five years, Lois was a full-time classroom teacher. She also continued to study on a part-time basis. During much of that period, she was the primary wage-earner for her family while John was a full-time student. And, she experienced a brief interruption in her teaching when she once again became unexpectedly pregnant. Once again, she had to quit teaching at Easter.

Lois recalls that second pregnancy as "traumatic." The trauma was not physical. She was worried about the family's finances and about her own future employability. She knew that she would have to resign her job in mid-year. She felt certain that no school system would ever hire her again "with a record of quitting twice in the middle of the year." And she and John were already in tight financial circumstances, even with her salary.

But before Lois left at Easter, her worries were eased. The school board's Superintendent came to Lois' school and called her out of class. He asked her when John would finish his studies. Then he told Lois to send him a certificate of health from the hospital

when her baby was born. In return, he would mail her a teaching contract for the next year. His was an unusual gesture and it made a strong impression on Lois.

That summer, Lois' baby was overdue. So, Lois carried "pails and pails of [rotten] potatoes" from the basement of their rented house, hoping to hurry up the onset of her delivery labour. The tactic worked. Just over a month after her baby was born, Lois went back to teaching full time. That fall, she was getting up frequently at night with her new infant; she remembers "having to fight sleep" as she listened to her students read aloud after lunch. But she carried on. Lois continued to teach at the same school for the next few years, until she had to quit again at Easter because of another pregnancy. That time, when she quit, she did not even intend to go back to teaching. By then, she was 25 years of age.

Anecdote 9. The story of Jean's entry into teaching, when she was in her mid-twenties, involves a sequence of "mini-decisions" and choices that hardly appeared to be choices. The events are a combination of choices and chances, in both Jean's life and her husband's. This elaboration of Anecdote 9 begins with some significant aspects of the years preceding Jim's and Jean's career changes into teaching and continues through their first year as teachers.

Just married, and still teenagers, Jean and Jim decided to leave their home town and establish themselves elsewhere. Jim and some of his friends applied for jobs in the two nearest urban centres. Jim received an immediate job offer of an entry position with a firm. He accepted, then received another offer from a firm in the second city where he had made applications. He and Jean chose to stay with the plans they had already made based on the first offer, and they moved accordingly. For the next eight years, Jim pursued his career with one company in one city. Meanwhile, as a result of an unplanned pregnancy, Jean gave birth to their first child and remained at home for some time. Then, in response to a combination of boredom and financial necessity, she began looking for a job.

Finding a job proved to be difficult because her only credentials were her Grade 12 and a night course in typing. She had no full-time paid work experience. Consequently, she worked

here and there as a sales clerk, a babysitter, and in office clerical positions for 18 months. Finally, she got a job as a secretary in the head office of a chain of retail stores. She stayed with that organization for six years "off and on between having kids." By the time she left, she was the mother of several children and the office manager, having acquired a range of secretarial and accounting experience along the way.

Jean identifies two significant features of that early period in her paid-work career. She had a positive working relationship with her first female boss, the office manager, who hired her and aided her progress in the organization. This woman, about 15 years older than Jean, was successful, respected, and powerful. Jean also recalls being resentful that the men in the warehouse were paid much more than she herself was, even as the office manager. Nevertheless, Jean was happy in the organization and she probably would have remained there if Jim had not decided to go to university.

However, Jim did decide to attend university. So, he and Jean and their children moved to a different city and Jean found a new job doing office work. It was a junior position but one that paid well enough to support the family. And, she assisted Jim in his studies by editing and typing his term papers. A few months later, Jim encouraged Jean to consider enrolling for teacher training as well. She pursued the idea. Because of her substantial experience in business, and the advocacy of the university department Chairman, Jean was admitted to the one-year teacher training program and given a bursary like her husband's.

Life as a teaching couple appealed to Jean and Jim because they would both have their summers free to spend with their children. It was a lifestyle decision that they have never regretted. At the time they made it, though, many of their friends thought that they were crazy to go back to school when they already had several young children.

The months when Jim and Jean were both students did prove to be a hectic and difficult time. The student couple and their young children lived in a low-income housing development among other married students with families. Those neighbors became Jim's and Jean's social circle and support system for the year. Jean found her early weeks of university a frightening

experience. She felt keenly her own lack of knowledge in some subjects, compared to the other people in her classes. And, there were inter-departmental conflicts over the course requirements for people like Jean, who had relevant paid work experience. Indeed, by the time the fall mid-term examinations were given, Jean was thinking of dropping out. Then she began student teaching, which she enjoyed. She decided to stay in the program.

Jean's days were long, busy, and tightly scheduled. She and Jim faced the typical child-care problems associated with having several very young children. In addition, at Christmas time, Jim became very ill. Because they could not afford hospital care in those pre-medicare days, Jean nursed Jim at home for six weeks. She was assisted by a next-door neighbor, who stayed with Jim while Jean attended both her own and Jim's classes. Somehow, Jean survived and completed her year.

Then, she and Jim prepared to move again, this time to take up their teaching assignments. Jean had made a major career switch, from the business world to public education. She was now 26. And she notes that, at the time, classroom teaching was "all I ever planned to do; then I'd be home with my kids in the summer time."

Jean identifies her first year of teaching as "a very good year." She and Jim were assigned to teach in a residential school in a northern community. As a new teacher, Jean faced many challenges. They included handling difficult male students who were nearly as old as Jean was, and adapting the curriculum to the needs and backgrounds of her northern, rural students who were mainly natives. The school principal was quite authoritarian and a tough disciplinarian, but he was also supportive of his teachers. His style had an influence on Jean's own style when she became an administrator. The other teachers, many of them newcomers too, supported one another. They all lived in teacherages near the school, which made it easy for the teachers to party as well as work together. From that base, Jean slipped easily into local teachers' association activities and participation in a provincial specialists' council, the start of an important source of professional connections. The whole situation provided Jean with a good start in her newly chosen profession.

Anecdote 10. Elaine had already accumulated a variety of experiences as a teacher before she moved across the country with her partner, Jeff. She postponed teaching for as long as she could, completing a B.A. in addition to her teacher training. Then, having decided that she could not put it off any longer, she applied for a job with the local school board. Her mother taught there, and Elaine had received some bursaries from that board while she was a student. Not only was Elaine hired, but she was given a "plum" assignment.

To her surprise, Elaine was assigned to teach an upper elementary grade at an upper middle-class school. The school had two classes of each elementary grade. The teaching staff consisted of mixture of young and veteran teachers. On the whole, Elaine found the conversation of her school colleagues uninteresting, but a few individuals were quite congenial. The principal was supportive in a laissez-faire way and the parents "mainly stayed away" from the school. Elaine had some typically first-year problems with discipline, and a few minor adventures. She also remembers being dissatisfied with the quality of the curriculum materials. Her focus as a teacher was curriculum and instruction. As her classroom management improved, she began trying innovations. Among them was a special reading curriculum project and a language training program, both made available to her by her principal.

As well, Elaine led an active life outside school. She enrolled in various non-credit evening courses, attended numerous cultural events, dated several men, and went skiing. Though she enjoyed a wide range of friends and activities, Elaine soon felt "too categorized" and constrained by other peoples' images of her.

After some reflection on her circumstances (see Anecdote 17), she decided to resign from her teaching position and go to graduate school. There was an interval of four years from the time that Elaine quit her job as a full-time school teacher until she became a full-time instructor at the post-secondary level. During that period, she made two moves (to different cities) and continued to find some opportunities to teach, although not in the most predictable circumstances.

While she was a Master's student, Elaine enjoyed her two summers of work as a part-time instructor of basic English. The story of her serendipitous entry into adult education has already been told in Anecdote 18. There were challenges to her work, of course. As a newcomer on a temporary contract, she was an outsider. Moreover, she taught on the evening shift, which meant that her working hours did not coincide with those of her friends. However, those were minor problems compared to dealing with the student population. Some of her students were Eskimo girls brought down from the north, others were new immigrants completely illiterate in English. Many of her students were men, some of them "pretty tough customers." They included unskilled labourers, a drug dealer, an ice breaker, and a dope addict. Drawing on unconventional instructional approaches, just as she had in her elementary school classes, she soon had her first group of students--all men--writing poetry.

In her second year as a graduate student, Elaine also had a very positive experience as a teaching assistant. She was one of three graduate assistants assigned to a professor who was teaching a large introductory course. Elaine's duties included attending the lectures, marking papers, and leading seminars. With her previous teaching experience, she slid easily into this new role as an instructor. She knew that she was doing a good job, and she enjoyed it.

After re-locating with Jeff, though, she could not find a job as a school teacher. So, the following year, Elaine found herself studying and then teaching in a secretarial school. She attended secretarial school because she needed an alternative that entailed minimal training so that she could "bring in money relatively soon." Elaine chose to enrol in a secretarial school that was located on a convenient bus route, because she and Jeff did not have a car. She just looked up the private business schools listed in the yellow pages. When she saw a school that was located right downtown at the end of the route taken by her neighborhood bus, she looked no further. She did not consider non-commercial training programs or do any comparative shopping among the commercial ones. She enrolled, starting the program almost immediately.

Although she found the business school environment depressing, she completed her training and became an instructor there. A vacancy occurred on the teaching staff just as Elaine

was finishing the program. Because Elaine had the appropriate credentials, particularly teaching experience, she was offered the job. She accepted. Although her only office experience had been in her summer jobs, Elaine was now training office workers. Not only did she lack "real-world" office experience, she did not like the working conditions at the school. She did not even have her own office or work area, something she's always had in the past. She found the whole situation unsuitable: "I think I felt a little too important and I think they felt I felt I was a little too important . . . for this kind of set-up." Elaine persevered for several months.

During her tenure, she did adapt the school's courses to her own instructional style. She successfully introduced field trips and guest speakers in one course. Less successful were her efforts in the book-keeping course. She "had this wonderful system that worked wonderfully well for me but somehow I couldn't seem to teach it to others very well." Her book-keeping students kept failing the tests. She was informed that she would no longer teach book-keeping. Her job would become part time, almost immediately.

Elaine called a local manager who had recently been one of her guest speakers. He had mentioned that he was looking for a new secretary-receptionist. Elaine applied for the job and was hired. For the first time in her life, Elaine would actually be a secretary. Elaine remembers being among the hordes of women who were hurrying to work at 7:45 a.m. on dark, cold, winter mornings "to open up the office before the men came." She stayed one year, worked hard and found what challenges she could in her situation, but hated it the whole time.

Meanwhile, she applied for another teaching job. It was at a post-secondary institution. However, the interview was a strange, uncomfortable affair. Elaine was not offered the job.

Then, new opportunities opened up (see Anecdote 11). She had another interview at the same institution and felt quite optimistic about being offered a job this time. Meanwhile, she was interviewed and hired at a local college. Then, she was also offered a job with the public school system. She stayed with the offer she had first received and accepted, going to the college. As she comments, "It was just remarkable how it all happened at once after waiting and being miserable for so long." Elaine had just turned 28 years of age.

Anecdote 11. Suddenly, Elaine was entering a new era, personally and professionally. For several reasons, she found the transition easy. The College was young and everyone was new to the organization. Elaine's previous teaching experiences were excellent preparation for her role as a remedial instructor. Having her office in a historic building was a treat, since Elaine loved old buildings. The College provided a one-week orientation early in August. Elaine immediately became acquainted with other new staff members and with the philosophy and structure of the College. Then, when she taught at the different campuses (a good excuse for buying a car), she already had contacts in each location. At the time she started, her own division--generally thought of as the academic group--dominated College politics. Elaine's colleagues in the division were active on the academic council, the senior body for academic governance in the College. These same people were leaders in the faculty association. So, Elaine found herself among the "movers and shakers" at an early stage in the life of the College. Moreover, Elaine's own intellectual interests and her recent period of isolation made her hungry for collegiality: she was delighted with her new milieu.

In her first year on staff, Elaine concentrated on her teaching and on informal socializing with her colleagues. She taught a standard course load, and she remembers being particularly close to a number of her academically needy students. She drove to various campuses to instruct. That was no great hardship since she enjoyed visiting with various colleagues on the different campuses, dropping in for coffee here and there. As she says, "people seemed to have time for those sorts of things." The College offered many staff development activities then. The activities fostered both her growth as an instructor and her sense of collegiality. And Elaine enjoyed regular and wide-ranging discussions, often at the bar, with her "latter-day hippy" colleagues. As she puts it, "We were all very gung-ho, so it was . . . a dynamic place to be in those days . . . that was exciting and I loved it."

Elaine moved easily into her second year at the College. She continued along in a teaching pattern that was similar to her assignment the previous year. She herself became a

student again, picking up a couple of university courses on curriculum, because she felt that she needed more theoretical background. She also participated for the first time in a college-wide committee. The committee was responsible for certain aspects of personnel administration, such as job categories and salary classification. This activity was Elaine's "first brush with administration," literally and figuratively. Not only was she learning about the administrative workings of the College, but she was meeting its senior administrators. She flourished.

It was a period filled with opportunities. Elaine accepted some of the opportunities that were presented to her, and created others. All the while, she remained an instructor. She read a great deal in order to become more expert in her field. As a result, she became very involved in developing courses and course materials. And, when the College opened a new building, Elaine set up a new program centre there. It was a more sophisticated version of the center she had been managing. She recalls that, in those days, "there seemed to be no budget problems . . . the college was expanding."

There was money available so that Elaine could go to conferences as well. She sought out curriculum conferences and attended them regularly for several years. She enjoyed attending these conferences, because she craved both the travel and the knowledge/social contacts that the conferences afforded. After she had attended the first couple of conferences, she mustered the courage to give a paper herself. A woman who attended the session later invited Elaine to act as a consultant on a special project in Arizona. Elaine was becoming an established figure in her new professional circles.

Back at the College, Elaine was also "branching out" from the classroom. She continued to teach much the same courses, which she thoroughly enjoyed. Predictably, though, the longer she taught those courses, the less preparation time she needed. Since she was happy staying with the upgrading classes, she was able to take on more and more committee work in her spare time. Her colleagues in the academic division drew her into the activities of the faculty association. Elaine felt some pressure to get involved, because of the College's emphasis on participatory decision making. So, she did committee work and a stint

as one of six faculty representatives on the Academic Council. That was "mostly a learning experience . . . I wasn't very vocal." Then, she was elected to the executive of the faculty association. Her unexpected rapid rise to the presidency is described in Anecdote 36.

Elaine's professional life was quite separate from her life with Jeff. As a couple, they were enjoying a comfortably affluent lifestyle. They were "yuppies before it was in style to be yuppies." They bought a second foreign car, paid off their mortgage, collected art, and travelled. Throughout this period, they continued to enjoy together the things that they had always enjoyed, but on a grander scale.

Professionally, Elaine's interests and activities were evolving. She chaired the program committee for a provincial conference. She sat for another term as a faculty representative on the Academic Council. This time, though, she took on more visible leadership roles. As a result, she gained experience chairing meetings and she revised the Council's constitution. She worked on policy development and revision, and on long-range planning. During that time, she also took a total of five educational administration courses at the Master's level. And she initiated a summer session program at the College (see Anecdote 33). It was a busy and satisfying period.

Anecdote 12. Before Margo married and moved to another city with her husband, Jack, Margo taught for a year in the city where she had attended university. During her final year at university, Margo applied for teaching jobs to begin the next fall. Several of her classmates decided to go out to western Canada to teach. Margo recalls that "the people in [one city] were importing anybody . . .." Although Margo had not been out west, it sounded to her like a good place to be. And, it was far away from her home town, which would give her the freedom to start her social life over. However, she did not act on these inclinations to make a radical change. Instead, she applied to the two nearest school boards.

As a country-bred teacher, even though a graduate of a university located in the city, Margo did not expect to be hired by the urban school system. However, her own mother and

other relatives were reputable teachers in that system. Still, Margo was surprised when she was offered a job. Without pursuing any alternatives, she signed a contract.

Margo was assigned to teach in an elementary school in a slum area of town. As she puts it, the children "all had impetigo, they'd never seen flush toilets . . . hadn't seen books, read books . . . ." Margo, of course, had never seen living conditions or lifestyles like theirs. In spite of the culture shock, though, she enjoyed working with these children. The attitude of the school's administrators, however, was thoroughly negative toward both the students and the staff. Margo was as intimidated as her students, so she kept very much to her own room. Nonetheless, she finished the year knowing that she liked working with children and that she wanted to continue teaching.

That year, Margo also confirmed her interest in music. She enrolled in music lessons and became very absorbed in music as a hobby. This was her first significant initiative related to music, a follow-up to one course during her teacher training.

The following year, when Margo married and moved to another city, she settled easily into a new teaching assignment at a middle-class school. She enthusiastically drew on her own talents and skills to enrich her classroom activities, incorporating music wherever she could. And, she shared an active social life with her colleagues. Professionally, she had found a comfortable niche.

As well, Margo actively pursued her interest in music. She picked up various music courses and lessons. She joined and helped to expand a local musicians' club, even performing occasionally for a modest fee. At the end of her second year of teaching she also embarked on a four-year summer school program in music education. The program was organized by the provincial teachers' association and attended by teachers from all over the province. The program provided an opportunity for music teachers to raise their qualifications and to do their own thing, musically. Those who completed the program then qualified for a specialist's licence in that province.

Margo has happy recollections of her summers in the program. She and her classmates enjoyed the camaraderie that develops among people who pursue a common interest together over a period of time. They were also in friendly competition with one another. Margo was always one of the top two or three students. For her, each summer session was "totally engrossing." She looked forward to returning the next year.

Margo began the program with only the vaguest aspirations about job prospects. At the time, she did not expect that a consultant's position would come available in her school system. The summer music program was primarily a way for her to indulge her own interest in music and music education. Beyond that, she hoped vaguely that she might find her additional credentials helpful in getting some kind of consultant's position, some day. To her surprise, she was offered the opportunity to become a consultant after only two years in the system. The story of her appointment and of her satisfying year in the role is told in Anecdote 26.

Anecdote 13. Both Margo and her husband, Jack, assumed that Jack's career had priority over Margo's. So, after a year as a consultant, Margo reluctantly resigned the job in order to go elsewhere with Jack. By then, she had become pregnant.

The decision that Margo should become pregnant was made just as many other decisions in Margo's life were being made--by Jack. He announced over dinner one night that it was time they had a baby. Margo had assumed that eventually they would have children. Indeed, she wanted to do so. However, at the time of Jack's announcement, she was having fun in her job as a consultant. Although she thought that it would be nice to have a child, at that time it also seemed like an unwelcome complication. Those reflections flashed through her mind and were gone. She had agreed with Jack that it was time to have a child.

A few weeks later, she was pregnant. Her baby was due during the summer. She did insist on completing her summer music course (the final year of her program) before having her baby. She did so in spite of being heavy and toxic. Her baby was a week late, arriving three days after she finished her course.

Socially Acceptable Outs

Anecdote 14. The year that Margo moved West with Jack, she did begin to pick up the threads of her own professional interests. Through Jack she learned of an opportunity to work part time with teachers. Margo enjoyed the contact with schools and students, and the glimpse of what university teaching would be like. Most of all, Margo says, it felt good to get out after her year's confinement as "just a housewife."

Margo also enrolled in some university courses. She timidly approached the Chair of an appropriate department and enquired about courses in music education. As a result of her enquiries, she began work on a graduate diploma. Taking more music education courses appealed to Margo for several reasons. She notes that "I didn't have any big goal in mind because I knew that I could never do a Master's program, or I felt that . . .." Nonetheless, there were other motives and possibilities. First, doing courses gave Margo a break from her domestic routine. Second, these particular courses related to her continuing interest in music. Third, she could get credit towards another diploma. Jack seemed to expect that she would start teaching again when they returned home. So, the graduate diploma would give her even better credentials to get a good job in her specialty. And it would improve her standing on the salary scale. Margo realized that they would need the financial boost provided by her salary.

Margo worked very hard at her courses. She did so because she was interested in them. But she also worked hard in order to see how well she could do. These courses were much more difficult, more theoretical, than the music education ones in her summer program. And, in her undergraduate university days, she had never been concerned about really testing her own academic abilities. Now, she did not believe that she had any such ability, compared to Jack. To her surprise, she found that she could do well, succeeding in course after course.

Margo organized her studies around her domestic obligations and constraints. She took the bus to the campus and registered only for courses that were offered one right after another. That way, she could minimize her babysitting arrangements and the attendant costs.

She studied in the evenings. In spite of the constraints of her domestic situation, she was finding ways to deepen and extend her experience in music and in education.

Anecdote 15. When Jim announced his transfer to another city, Jean was struggling to live with the consequences of a choice she had made the preceding year. After a number of years in a school system, Jean had recently become an instructor in a post-secondary institution. That move had followed her completion of a university degree.

During the period when Jean was in the school system, she completed a B.Ed. by attending night classes and summer sessions. She did it partly because Jim's job took him out of town many evenings and she wanted to occupy herself while he was gone. Besides, Jim was almost finished his Master's degree, and Jean was feeling a bit left behind. To provide even more incentive, there was pressure in the province to make the B.Ed. the minimum academic credential for teachers. So Jean worked steadily at her remaining courses.

It was a few months after she completed her B.Ed. that she sought a new job, at the local College. Over the years, she had come to know and enjoy members of the College's staff who were teaching in her curriculum area. They all belonged to the same curriculum specialists' council of the provincial teachers' organization. The idea of working with these people, who seemed "more interested [than Jean's school colleagues] in moving ahead and talking with education" appealed to Jean. Moreover, she had once taken a university course from the man who was the incumbent program head at the College. Although their early encounters had been somewhat confrontational, Jean approached the man for an interview. She was hired as an instructor. She resigned her position with the school system and "crossed over."

Jean was not comfortable in her new environment. She was uneasy with the lack of clear policy and guidelines regarding personnel and curriculum matters. Only by transposing her high school practices to the college could Jean provide herself with workable guidelines. In spite of the apparent leeway, Jean encountered resistance to her teaching methods. She wanted to introduce a more lab-oriented, hands-on approach to learning. Some of her

colleagues tried to block her instructional innovations, even in her own classroom. She was told that her changes would have to be approved by the College's Academic Council. And, in this post-secondary environment, particularly in Academic Council sessions, Jean felt like "a second-class citizen" because she had only one degree. As well, factions existed at several levels within her own division. Eventually, Jean and a colleague who was also a newcomer simply isolated themselves (together), withdrawing from the various political pressures.

Apart from that one colleague, Jean's reference group at the College was the activist core of the Faculty Association. She was drawn rapidly into the politics of that organization, partly because of the small size of the College, and perhaps also because she brought with her from the school system the vestiges of her "union mentality." For example, she successfully appealed her initial salary scale placement to the Board level, with the backing of the Faculty Association. In any case, she allowed herself to be elected an officer of the staff association almost immediately. She soon found herself "pushed into situations [she] had no understanding of." She was sitting on high-profile provincial committees and being "set up" by better informed people who had ulterior motives. Ironically, it was in this situation that Jean had finally decided to move away from a back-room, supporting role and to "be the leader." She would not make that choice again for some time.

While Jean was exploring the world of post-secondary education, she was also "looking at [public, K-12] education from a management perspective." A number of people had encouraged her to run for election as a school trustee. She ran and won. Being a trustee was a "learning experience" and the most positive aspect of that year for Jean.

However, even her work as a trustee was a source of conflict at the College. Both her department head and the College president had approved her candidacy. But when she was elected and had day-time committee meetings to attend, her College superordinates made it difficult for her to meet those obligations. Jean regards this as characteristic of the only year in which she had encountered serious interpersonal difficulties as part of her work life.

In the spring of that year, Jim announced his transfer to another city. A few days later, Jean went as a local representative to a weekend executive meeting of the provincial faculty association. The head of the program parallel to hers at a college in the city to which she would be moving was also a member of the executive.

Jean asked him about teaching opportunities in his program. He encouraged her to apply for an opening that would be available in the fall. Jean did apply immediately, and she also applied to the local school systems for a teaching position. Two weeks after her conversation with the program head, she attended a provincial conference in the city that would be her new home. Because the program head had hastened his institution's usually sluggish selection process, Jean was interviewed and hired by the College that day. She was hired partly because of her practical, "real-world" work experience, which the incumbent faculty lacked. Jean was about to join the organization that would provide her with a nurturing professional environment for many years.

Anecdote 16. In a contrasting example, her ready agreement to accompany her husband to a new city left Elaine without a secure professional home. Certainly, Elaine was open to a change. She felt that her options were very limited if she remained with her current employer. Indeed, she had already exploited one "respectable out": she had gone off to do doctoral work. But, 18 months and a completed doctorate later, the prospects for challenge and advancement within her home organization seemed no better. After working off the time she owed in return for her education leave, she realized that she did not want to remain on staff much longer under the existing circumstances. She was feeling "boxed in" again.

Both Elaine's and Jeff's professional lives, and the couple's life together, were in transition. Changes at the senior level in Jeff's clinic meant that Jeff and many of his colleagues were unhappy with their new environment. And, since Elaine and Jeff had just become parents, their existing living quarters were no longer adequate. Jeff's sudden decision to leave his

position and seek a new professional situation catapulted both Elaine and him into a review of their options.

A number of factors contributed to Elaine's and Jeff's initial choice to move to a different city. As new parents, they were going to have to buy larger living quarters wherever they were. And, having left his clinic, Jeff basically wanted to leave town altogether. The couple's new city of choice was the one in which Jeff had lived during his youth. Jeff had been missing that city's proximity to his preferred recreational areas. Because the destination had many educational institutions, Elaine was optimistic about the job prospects for herself. She was just as inclined to make the move as Jeff was.

However, Elaine and Jeff experienced a difficult transitional period. Jeff went ahead to start work. Elaine remained behind with their infant, trying to sell the house. Unfortunately, selling was not as easy as they had anticipated, nor were the prices very attractive. While they were apart, Elaine and Jeff kept in touch by telephone. But they were not used to such an arrangement and found it inadequate. Besides that, Elaine's mobility was reduced because of her infant. And, she was now without a job. The whole situation was a new one. Just managing singlehandedly the transfer of their belongings and the infant to their new home was a major endeavor. After several months, she did complete the move--just before her car died.

Not long after that, Elaine's "whole family descended for Christmas." Jeff was very busy with his new practice, so Elaine had to make it her priority to organize the house in time for the family Christmas event. She also had to make a trip in connection with a study she had recently done. It was not until after Christmas that she had time to consider her own professional future in a new city.

Expecting to find a job with no difficulty, and now anxious to be working again, Elaine began making inquiries. To her surprise, there were not many opportunities. Indeed, permanent, full-time positions were not available. The situation was rather like the one she had encountered 10 years earlier when she first arrived in the city that she had just left. Elaine

investigated several possibilities at the post-secondary level, following up whatever leads she was given. Her initiatives bore fruit, but of unexpected varieties.

On very short notice, Elaine moved into some new professional roles, which were outside her familiar college environment. Elaine agreed to take on the instruction of a university evening course, standing in for the regular instructor. She also helped out with a provincial research project. Then, she received a call from someone in a local school system. This administrator had been given her name by one of the many people Elaine had contacted earlier in her job search. He was looking for someone to coordinate a research project in Elaine's curriculum specialty. Although Elaine had no formal preparation for doing the type of research that was required, she agreed to take on the project. She would soon become practiced at balancing several part-time jobs (often while learning on the job) instead of holding a single, full-time appointment in her profession.

To Move or Not to Move

Anecdote 17. Following through on decisions that she made while she was confined to bed for several days because of food poisoning, Elaine disengaged by stages from her existing circumstances. First, she rented "a little house . . . out on a lakeshore." A boyfriend of hers was vacating the place, so Elaine moved there from her parents' home. She treasured both the setting and the solitude; she remembers watching the first moon walk from this "wonderful romantic location." Her family was as horrified by Elaine's move as she was pleased by it. They objected to her moving out and they objected to her alternative domicile, just as they had been objecting to her preferences in boyfriends. But this cottage afforded Elaine the necessary physical and psychological room in which to consider her future.

Elaine felt that she must get away from her teaching job and her home-town area. She knew that she could not gracefully leave home in any permanent sense as long as her parents were nearby. It was not really possible for her to live in an apartment in the same city as her

parents: "It was much easier to move to another city." And, her home province was becoming an uncomfortable milieu for its English inhabitants.

Elaine tied her bid for independence to a career move. The most respectable alternative to her present situation appeared to be "going to graduate school in another city." She now had her permanent teaching certificate, so she could return to teaching if she wanted. In the meantime, she would pursue her academic interests.

She applied for admission to a Master's program at a particular university. She chose that university because it was located in a city that was a comfortable distance from her home town, and because it was a pleasant, mid-sized centre. She was already somewhat familiar with both the city and the university. She attended an admission interview for the program to which she had applied. During the interview, she was surprised to learn of certain admission requirements that she did not meet. She was referred to another department. There, she was accepted.

Before she began her graduate studies, Elaine addressed one other issue in her life. She was "in those years . . . very interested in boys . . .." She had been corresponding for some time with a former class-mate who had moved overseas. She was interested in Andrew. She wanted to clarify the status of her relations with this man. She decided to go to see him, combining the visit with some touring on her own. She proceeded with her plan. The situation soon became clear enough: the long-distance romance was over. Elaine returned to Canada ready to move on to a new city and a new endeavor.

Anecdote 42. As they were completing their first year of teaching in a small northern town, Jean and Jim knew that they would not want to remain in that location much longer. While they were enjoying the camaraderie and the professional challenges of the situation, the career prospects and the life style were not what they wanted for themselves and their children in the longer term. There was even some uncertainty about the future of the school itself. And,

because of a change in the school administration, Jim knew that a particular assignment he wanted would not be available.

Meanwhile, a similar position was advertised by a larger school in a larger centre. Jim applied for the job, but he and Jean agreed that they would not move unless there was also a suitable opening for Jean. When he was interviewed for the position he wanted, Jim enquired about the opportunities for Jean. The school not only offered them both contracts in their specializations, but also offered to buy out their remaining commitment to their current employer. They decided to make the move. For the first time in their life together, such a decision acknowledged the importance of Jean's career, as well as Jim's.

Anecdote 43. A couple of years later, Jean and Jim were once again debating possible moves. Jim was offered a sabbatical leave, and they were living with their children in a city that they had lived in and enjoyed many years before. Now, they found that they did not like the size of the city or the "hustle and bustle" of city life: remaining there was not an attractive prospect. They had not planned to go back to the centre they had just left. However, they did have that option, since Jim was on sabbatical and Jean had simply taken a leave.

Jean and Jim wrestled with one other possibility. They were invited to work with a special remedial program in another province. The director of the program had once been their principal. Another couple who were friends of theirs had already agreed to join the project. Jim and Jean were pleased to be sought out. They would have liked to work again with their former colleagues. They were deeply interested in the social needs/issues associated with the remedial program. On the other hand, they would be going to a very depressed community. It was extremely unappealing at the time of their visit in the early spring. And, it was far away from their family and friends. Jim wanted to go there; Jean did not.

This difference marked the first time that Jean "wasn't necessarily going to follow" Jim. Later, she reconsidered and offered to go with him, but Jim felt that she should not go only to

please him. They debated the question for three weeks. They decided to go back to the centre where they both had continuing appointments.

Anecdote 44. As she worked to complete the course work for her Master's degree, Margo wondered what she would do after she completed the residency year in her program. Having suddenly become a single parent, she was now solely responsible for her two small children. It was rather frightening. Her initial assumption was that she would return to her home town and teach. Her trip there at Christmas convinced her otherwise.

She began to think about teaching in the province where she had been studying. She applied for jobs with a couple of the urban school systems in the province. She was offered a consultant's job in a city other than the one in which she was living. The position looked interesting and the money was good.

Margo hesitated to accept because she was not sure that she wanted to leave behind her recently established network of friends. Besides, she would have to organize the move and make a new set of living arrangements, including child care. While she was considering the offer, she had a conversation with the Chairman of the university department in which she had just studied. He told her that there would be sessional work available in the Department the next year.

He encouraged her to stay on as an instructor and, at the same time, complete her thesis. She replied that she had an offer, and she named the salary that was part of the offer. Margo says that she was not consciously bargaining--quite simply, the money was an issue for her. The Chairman matched the offer by putting together a package of sessional assignments for Margo. She stayed.

Environments of Choice and Opportunity

Extending the discussion of "chance and opportunity" that appears in Chapter 3 (pp. 95-105), a chance becomes an opportunity only when it is recognized as such. Enter a suitable

individual who recognizes and acts on a chance that is an opportunity (Boardman et al., 1987, p. 67). That recognition involves seeing a match between one's own skills/inclinations and some role/activity. Such a match entails the elements of timeliness and purpose, as well as a capacity to act. Frequently, the conversion of a chance into an opportunity also means taking risks. Sometimes, even the recognition of an opportunity depends on a chance or a series of chances. All the geographical moves that Lois, Jean, Margo, and Elaine made presented them with new and very different structures of choice and opportunity (Kanter, 1977). The women were not passive in the face of the new structures. Choices are undoubtedly influenced by others (Tague & Harris, 1988, pp. 239-240) and constrained in various ways--including the cumulative effect of our own preceding choices (Casserly, 1988, p. 6). Nonetheless, anecdote after anecdote shows a woman actively negotiating her life and her career in whatever milieu she finds herself.

Take, for example, the occurrence of chance remarks. Some confluence of choices as well as chances occurs to set the stage for a timely exchange. That is, the woman has arrived--not entirely by chance--in the particular situation where the particular remark might be made. And, the remark itself is triggered in part by someone else's knowledge of the woman's previous experiences or interests, which are also the result of preceding choices in combination with chances. Then, too, a woman's own receptiveness to a remark is partly a matter of choice. So is her readiness to act on the remark, based on her perception of the relevant considerations. The expanded versions of Anecdotes 18-24 elaborate the contexts in which certain significant chance remarks occurred, and describe each woman's subsequent choice-making.

The separation of "Chance Remarks," "Unexpected Openings," and "Widening Horizons" into three sections is somewhat artificial. It is intended merely to reflect differences in emphasis. The chance remarks alerted the woman to opportunities or reinforced the appeal of certain possibilities. But the remarks were, of course, dependent on the timely appearance of appropriate new options. The elaborations of Anecdotes 26-35 illustrate that aspect of structures of opportunity.

Finally, there is the process of narrowing the options. That, too, is part of making choices and it is illustrated by the anecdotes in the last section of the chapter. These anecdotes are examples of exploratory behavior (Hall, 1986b, p. 133) that had unsatisfactory short-term results. Although the specifics of some of the appointments were beyond the control--and the predictive powers--of the woman involved, she was willing to give the position a try. And having tried, she was ready to acknowledge that some situations are not a good fit.

Chance Remarks

Anecdote 18. Elaine made a series of choices that brought her into the situation where a co-worker suggested she apply to teach English upgrading. Her disengagement from one set of circumstances and her subsequent entry into graduate studies have already been described in Anecdote 17. Once she became a graduate student, Elaine showed considerable perseverance in pursuing her chosen course of action.

Initially, she did encounter some difficulties. After just a few weeks, she was given notice to vacate her living quarters for no apparent reason. Elaine's mother came to town and helped her find a new place. Elaine also persisted in her academic program in spite of her indifferent advisor and her own tendency to be a retiring student. She says, "I was still intimidated by these people who seemed to be so intelligent and had such wonderful vocabularies. . . . so I tended to be relatively quiet in seminars . . . ." And, when she did not have a summer job waiting for her, she took the temporary work that was immediately available--invigilating undergraduate examinations. Then, because she followed up on an employment suggestion made by a co-worker, she discovered a whole new world within education.

Anecdote 19. Likewise, we might look at some of Margo's choices preceding a significant chance remark and at the factors she considered when making a decision to become a graduate student. At 29 years of age, Margo suddenly found herself a single mother. Not only was she bereft of her primary companion for many years past, but also she "didn't know how to

get through a day without him telling me what to do . . .." Living some distance from her own home town with its community of friends and relatives, she was now solely responsible for her small children. Margo describes this time as a "very important period," a crash course in growing up and learning to make her own decisions.

She did not feel well prepared to cope with her new circumstances. She had never managed her family's finances; she had never even paid the bills or done the banking. So, she immediately set about acquainting herself with the household files and records, which were in good order, and carried on. She nursed her young children through a serial bout of chicken pox. She accepted the support and assistance of various acquaintances, and of her parents, even though the constant presence of these people occasionally became oppressive. Nonetheless, she began to build her own network of friends. She notes, too, that some of the key figures during that difficult time have continued to be significant in her life since then. She completed the assignments for the music education courses in which she was enrolled, and received a diploma. And, although she was uncertain about what to do next in order to support herself and her children, she rejected summarily a social worker's suggestion that she go on welfare.

Her initial assumption, almost an automatic reaction, was that she would return to her home town and look for a teaching job. Her parents made the same assumption about what she would do. At her request, some of her friends back home were looking into the possibilities on her behalf. Instead, she entered an M.Ed. program as a full-time graduate student in the city where she was already living.

It was in this context that an influential acquaintance suggested she remain in town and do a Master's degree. She had already applied for entrance into that program once and been rejected. However, her acquaintance noted that she had successfully completed a number of courses--enough for a Diploma--since then. As well, Margo worried that she could not afford to be a student and to support herself and her children, but friends pointed out that her fears were not justified. She would have two or three small sources of income, such as a graduate

assistantship. Besides that, packing up her household, including her very small children, in order to move back home right away was not a job that appealed to Margo. By going into the Master's program, she could avoid making any more decisions for a year or so.

Margo was by no means convinced that she was smart enough to do a Master's degree. In spite of her successes to that time, she had no confidence in her own intelligence. She insisted on taking a couple of ability tests. She did fine, but "still thought I'd flunked out on both of them." However, she decided that she would try the Master's program. She promised herself that if she did poorly in the fall, she would be "going home to teach . . ." at Christmas time. Meanwhile, she would stay put and try being a real graduate student.

Anecdote 20. When Jean chanced upon a topic for her doctoral research, she had already considered and rejected at least one subject that interested her. She rejected the first topic for two reasons, both related to the time constraints of being on a one-year sabbatical leave. First, there was a considerable literature on the subject; Jean would have had to sift through it at length in order to develop a research proposal. Second, the logical professor to advise her on such a topic was known to be "picky." His approach was likely to delay the completion of any project. Although Jim had completed a doctoral residency year some time before Jean began her doctoral studies, he did not take his candidacy exam, or do his data collection before he returned to work. Jean was attempting to anticipate and avoid potential stumbling-blocks to the completion of her own program.

It was in the late fall of her sabbatical year that Jean found a more suitable research focus, while attending a conference with her husband. From then on, she used her term papers and assignments to develop her proposal. She passed her candidacy exam and collected her data in the spring. By the time she returned to work full time the next fall, she had written two chapters of her dissertation and submitted them to her committee. Some committee members "didn't like" the chapters, so Jean set her doctoral work aside. Other choices and chances would occur before Jean returned to her thesis and completed it.

Anecdote 21. In one case, Lois' own chance remark to a group triggered a chance response that influenced her to move into school administration. She had been a consultant for some time. Initially, she was offered a job as a secondary consultant, but in each of her subsequent years as a consultant, her responsibilities differed in scope. Sometimes, when visiting teachers, she says that she had to "sell myself, then my product." Her work included giving workshops. The topics diversified over the years as she saw and responded to teachers' needs. And, she participated for the first time in a provincial curriculum project. As well, she pulled together a group of teachers, who worked Fridays and many weekends on a system-wide curriculum project. Lois was able to apply much of what she had learned on the provincial curriculum committee to the organization of the local handbook project. It was a period that afforded her opportunities to do many different things.

Lois also established or cemented certain important professional relations during that period. Her superordinates in the school system "stretched" her by giving her new opportunities and supported her by believing in her capabilities. It was during this time that she was included in central office meetings with senior administrators. As well, she had a set of supportive women colleagues. One consultant became a personal and professional friend. Another woman, a principal about ten years her senior, was widely respected and very popular. She was a major influence on Lois, serving as Lois' role model once she became a school administrator.

After a while, Lois began feeling that her years as a consultant were "a marvellous growing period but that was enough." So, once the suggestion had been made, it occurred to Lois that being a principal might be interesting and, moreover, that perhaps it was a job she could do. It was time for a new challenge.

Lois weighed the possibility of applying for a principalship. There were not many women principals in her system, perhaps three women of about 40 principals in the elementary schools. And a move from consultant to principal, by-passing a vice-principalship, would be unusual in that system. On the other hand, Lois now had "some very strong feelings about what I wanted to see done in schools and how I felt teachers should teach." She was ready to follow

through on her convictions in one school, rather than "wandering around as a consultant." Lois had seen and admired what a capable and committed principal could accomplish in a school. Lois concluded that she was going to apply for a principalship.

In preparation for that, she took certain actions. She enrolled in her first course in educational administration. Later, she decided to work towards a post-graduate Diploma in Educational Administration, although she already had a Master's degree in curriculum. Meanwhile, she made other preparations relating to her application. Prior to being interviewed she approached several colleagues whom she respected. She asked each of them to discuss with her the kinds of issues and questions that a selection committee might raise. This process of gathering other opinions in order to clarify her own views became a pattern in Lois' future applications and in her administrative style generally.

At 36 years of age, Lois was interviewed and offered a principalship. She had accumulated more than 15 years of paid-work experience as a teacher and a consultant. She had a Master's degree in curriculum, and recent course work in educational administration. She was a wife and the mother of children ranging in age from 11 to 16 years. She accepted the principalship.

In a move that surprised Lois, she was appointed to a school with a new program for children with special needs. It was not the obvious appointment for a novice administrator with Lois' particular range of expertise. Non-plussed and a little disappointed, Lois agreed to the posting because she realized from her years as a consultant she was only one part of a large system. Also from her years as a consultant, she was well aware of the problems and strengths of the school she would be administering. She proceeded to learn everything she could about programs in her new focal area, while continuing to take courses in educational administration. She believed that she must provide a positive role model in her dealings with her students and her staff.

Upon her arrival at the school, Lois instituted a planning process with her staff. Participatory planning was very much in vogue at the time, but it was also a "natural way of

operation" for Lois. She drew on her experiences in group planning as a consultant. She and her staff developed a model for their program, since none existed. Over the next few years, they successfully implemented their model. And Lois continued to use group planning processes wherever she went.

From her first year as a principal, Lois chose to teach for one hour each day. She chose to teach in order to remain in touch with the world of the teacher, to be familiar with those realities and to remain realistic in her expectations of her staff. She chose to teach one of the upper grades because "if you can win over the [senior students], if they're your friends, you've got the rest of the school population eating out of your hand." To accomplish that, Lois arranged to "get in there with them . . . quit being a principal for a while." She chose to teach the subject in which she had particular interest and expertise. Since she was working concurrently on a writing team for a new series of textbooks in that subject, she was then able to use her classroom to field-test various units that she was developing for the textbooks. Lois' one-hour-per-day in the classroom integrated several of her roles and achieved a number of purposes. She continued the practice throughout her years as a principal.

During this time, Lois was also teaching and taking university night classes. As a student, she was now working towards a post-graduate diploma in educational administration. As an instructor, she always taught one particular course in her curriculum specialty. She was offered the course on the recommendation of her M.Ed. supervisor. Lois found it advantageous to teach this course because she met so many prospective and practicing teachers. Between the teachers she met and the ones she knew from her consulting years, she was able to select staff members whom she judged to have good potential.

Lois took an unconventional approach to instructional supervision. She was committed to developmental supervision, but only on a strictly confidential, no-records basis. Her routine included a pre-class conference with the teacher, classroom observations, and a follow-up conference. At the end of the follow-up conference, Lois tore up her notes in front of the

teacher. Her emphasis was on "something good" happening for the teacher and for that teacher's students.

Meanwhile, she resisted the increasing demands from her central office for detailed documentation and standardization. She resisted many of the demands by submitting only a minimum of information. At other times, she was a vocal opponent of the trends towards more forms and more paperwork. In spite of that opposition, she "got a lot of support from downtown" in her years as a principal. She was free to run her own schools in her own way.

Lois was also an activist within and on behalf of the principals' association within her school system. Officially, this group of peers served as a communication channel and lobby group for the principals. Unofficially, these men and women offered one another "emotional support and acceptance" as well as a non-competitive arena for the discussion of professional concerns. Through her work with the association, she also had opportunities to observe and learn from the "political manoeuvrings" at the central office of a growing school system. She learned how to exert pressure and still maintain good relations, to voice concerns in a positive but effective way. Lois was committed to the provision of legitimate outlets for opinions and she was equally committed to effecting change. The association provided a safe, nurturing "space" within which the principals could hone their skills and deepen their understanding of administration.

Anecdote 22. In the case of her move from a post-secondary teaching position to a school system, Margo had already become dissatisfied with her circumstances. She was a sessional instructor at the time. The major source of her dissatisfaction was her Department's treatment of its sessional instructors--particularly the women sessionals, who were paid considerably less than their male counterparts. With a doctorate, Margo was earning several thousand dollars less than she had earned as a sessional in another department, several years earlier, with an M.Ed. Moreover, Margo's salary was less than half what she could be earning as a school teacher. When Margo asked, at Department meetings, "What do you plan to do for

sessionals . . . particularly women sessionals?" Margo says that the question made everyone present uncomfortable. People were obviously surprised and irritated that the issue was raised at all. She liked her work as an instructor, but otherwise the situation was very discouraging. Margo felt powerless to change her circumstances. She became more and more angry.

Not only did Margo feel angry, but she felt trapped. When she rather "gingerly" brought up the question of her salary level, the Chairman indicated that she was already being paid above the institution's minimum requirement for her position. Margo and the Chairman did, however, reach an oral agreement that her salary would be raised somewhat. Much later, when she received a written contract, it was for a lower salary than they had agreed. Margo knew that she was trapped. Not only did the Chairman have discretionary power over her salary level, but he had other options. There were many people looking for sessional appointments. Besides, it was too late for her to apply and start the school year anywhere else. She was incensed, but she said nothing.

It was then that a friend of Margo's husband telephoned with information about some new positions that were being created in the central administration of a nearby school system. That friend had recently made a move himself from school administration to the central office, which was the reason he was aware of these new positions. On her friend's advice, Margo called the appropriate person to find out more. She was "very pushy" and insisted that he meet with her, even if it was after his regular work day. The meeting turned out to be an interview, at which Margo was offered a job.

She did not debate her next move for long. Much as she loved her teaching, Margo found the money attached to the new job very attractive. It was more than double her pay as a sessional, and there was a new salary settlement in the offing. Since Margo's prospects, financially and career-wise in the Department were not promising, Margo exercised her option to move on. In spite of her bitter feelings about the Department, Margo tried to leave on amicable terms "because you never know when you may want to come back . . .." Even so, it was satisfying to make a statement by choosing to go elsewhere.

Anecdote 23. When deciding to make the reverse transition from a school system to a post-secondary organization, Lois found the post-secondary appointment attractive for several reasons. First, she felt that she had given what she had to give in her present school system assignment. It was time to move on. Second, she was wondering about university teaching as a career alternative to public school administration. She had taught for a while in a teachers' college overseas. More recently, she had been teaching an evening course at a nearby university. She enjoyed that activity, but she knew that she would have to get a doctorate if she wanted to follow a university career path. She was already thinking about doing a doctorate, anyway. Indeed, she might have gone away to do her doctorate before then. However, her children, now in university themselves, were still living at home. They were a close family and it was a happy time for them. Lois knew they would not all be together as a family for much longer, so she was loathe to precipitate the change herself. Meanwhile, here was a welcome opportunity to test the university career alternative, locally. So, Lois embarked on a "trial year" as a university professor.

She carried a standard teaching load and supervised student teachers. She worked mainly with the after-degree students, who were branded as difficult by the other faculty members. Lois, though, thoroughly enjoyed these students. They were seeking practical, field-based instruction and that is exactly what Lois offered. She even arranged for access to a regular school class so that she could do demonstration teaching for her students. This classroom also provided a lab in which Lois' students could do micro-teaching projects. Lois was very enthusiastic about the students and the teaching experience.

She was less enthusiastic about her general working environment. She did team-teaching with, and learned from, some of her colleagues. In general, though, the department was a sharp contrast to the schools in which Lois had been working, where people liked each other and worked well together. In this academic setting, there was "no laughter in the halls." And the pecking order meant that it would be an endurance test to achieve any status or

recognition in this other world, no matter what her accomplishments were elsewhere. This was, Lois thought, neither the environment nor the career path for her.

Anecdote 24. At an earlier stage, Lois and John undertook a more exotic experiment when they decided to go overseas. John was offered a teaching job in a third-world country. Lois was not offered a job, and she was not very enthusiastic about their prospective destination. Nonetheless, the contract was a good one, combining John's Canadian salary with a cost-of-living allowance. Lois and John agreed that they could live on one salary. Lois was willing to try staying at home with the children, "being mother," for a change. Her main concern was the political instability in the area. That concern turned out to be justified. Not long before they were to leave Canada, there was a coup d'etat in the very country to which they were headed. But, by then, John h[illegible] already signed a two-year contract. Lois, John, and their children left that summer. Shortly after their arrival at the overseas destination, a teaching vacancy occurred unexpectedly. Since Lois was qualified for the job, she found herself teaching, as well as John.

Anecdote 25. At an older age and later career stage, Lois debated a career-related move to another city and decided in favour of it. Deciding to apply for the job had been something of a struggle. When she was offered the job, Lois faced a much more major decision.

There were several reasons for Lois to stay where she was. Her existing situation as a school administrator seemed ideal, and there was always the potential for a move into her desired central office position right there in her own system. Her life with John was centred in that same city and John certainly had no reason to want to leave. This whole exercise in seeking a change appeared to be unnecessary.

On the other hand, Lois did want that particular position. She had been a school administrator for nearly 10 years. And, she thought to herself, "I'm 49 now. I'm getting to the age where nobody's going to offer me a job." Someone had. Moreover, their youngest son had

now left home and their eldest son was married and living in the city where Lois had been offered a job. John was flexible; he could teach elsewhere and continue farming. Lois' few months away doing doctoral work some time ago had not only supplied her with an important credential, but it had shown her that the family could survive without her. After 30 years together, she and John could even be apart from time to time and still survive! Lois no longer felt place-bound. She had lunch with her own superintendent, at his request, but he still had no concrete offer to make. Lois accepted the job in the other city.

In August, Lois moved into an apartment in that city. She knew that she was welcome to return to her old school system if her experiment did not work out. At her urging, John remained in their home city, continuing to teach there. That way, if she chose not to remain in her new situation for more than one year, John would not have re-located unnecessarily. For many months, John shared a house with friends during the week and spent the weekends with Lois.

Lois was not happy living alone. After years of "intense family involvement," it was a real shock. She adjusted, but not altogether. She took a craft class one evening a week, and otherwise welcomed long hours of work. She even drove back to her former home town once a week in order to spend time with John. Lois missed the close friends and family whom she had left behind. Mid-way through the year, she and John agreed to purchase a house in the city where Lois was now living. At the end of the school year, John moved to join Lois there permanently.

From the beginning, Lois had loved her new job. Her entry to the new system was assisted by a principal whom she knew from provincial committee work. The only other woman at her level in the central office was also very welcoming to Lois. And, in an early speech to the Principals' Association in her new system, Lois took care to acknowledge specifically the strengths and achievements of her newly adopted organization. Although she had little control over her budgets--in contrast to her previous experience as a principal--her work was otherwise complex and varied enough to meet her expectations.

Lois set priorities immediately. She spent more than half her time in the schools working with both teachers and principals. Her own years as a consultant and a principal were good preparation for this role: she was well received in the field. Jointly with her peers in central office, she planned and led in-service workshops throughout the year. And, she instituted advisory committees as a way of involving more teachers in planning. The idea was one that she brought with her from her former home organization. Overall, Lois' work seemed to be a natural extension of her priorities and actions as a principal.

Unexpected Openings

Anecdote 26. At the time Margo was approached about becoming a music consultant, she had established her interest and a growing expertise in that specialty. As noted in Anecdote 12, she engaged in music-related activities both in the school setting and for private recreation. Moreover, she had completed two years of her summer program in music education and was enjoying it immensely. In a small urban school system such as her employing organization was, Margo's background in music education was quite noticeable. Nonetheless, she had no immediate aspirations to make use of her special knowledge anywhere but in her own classroom.

When she accepted the position of consultant, Margo did have certain reservations about the circumstances. She wondered how her predecessor would treat any newcomer to the position. Margo also wondered if she could cope with the mess that her predecessor would be leaving behind. Nonetheless, she bought her first car--a necessity now--and began the job.

It was a wonderful year for Margo--hectic, challenging, and rewarding. Her job was to do demonstration teaching as well as to supervise instruction and manage the relevant budget and supplies for her section of the school system. But her first task was to gain acceptance and get into the classrooms. She worked hard at making herself welcome. She visited each of her 53 classrooms several times over the year, introducing a different activity on each visit. She gained wider and wider acceptance as the year went on. She was pleased about the response.

It confirmed her belief that she could work with almost anyone. Even the pace of the job suited her. As she describes her year, ". . . it was a mad life. You had your car and you were driving from one place to the next from morning to the afternoon, with [equipment and supplies] hanging out of your car . . .." Fortunately, Margo's predecessor seemed to be equally happy with her new appointment. Margo's move from teacher to consultant was positive for everyone.

Anecdote 27. When Elaine was seconded to undertake a nine-month independent research project for another division, she was delighted. She had just completed her doctorate in educational administration. And her expertise in her own curriculum specialty was well established. Not only did she have considerable background as an instructor and a project coordinator, but she had developed courses and program facilities, attended conferences and read papers on her subject. She had even been invited to other institutions as an external consultant and evaluator. In so many ways, Elaine was an appropriate choice for the secondment. Moreover, by accepting the secondment, Elaine could avoid working for her former peer. And, she could work at home while her child was still an infant. Elaine had found another respectable, if temporary, out.

The project was a provincial feasibility study. Elaine gathered the data, organized it, and presented it in a series of three reports to a steering committee. The committee was composed of institutional representatives from across the province: there was a 90% turnover in the committee membership during the life of the project. Those members who had supported the concept initially were gone by the time Elaine completed the study. As a result, the impetus for change had dissipated. Although Elaine's feasibility study indicated that the concept under consideration was sound, Elaine came to recognize that the change required for implementation was not politically feasible. However, the experience that Elaine acquired by doing the project was a valuable foundation on which she unexpectedly found herself building her career a few years later.

Anecdote 28. Her first appointment as a program head was a welcome "ego boost" for Jean. At 30 years old, she had taught for three years in three different schools, in three different cities or towns. Each year, she was active in her teachers' union local, and her provincial specialists' council. In her fourth year, prior to her administrative appointment, she was already active in her school's governance. Her principal, a "go-getter" in a highly visible new school, had progressive ideas about school leadership; he was keen on community involvement and participatory planning. Jean became a member of various policy work groups that he established. Often, she ended up chairing them. In that role, she carried the group recommendations up to the next level of decision makers and defended the ideas.

Within a few months, she was appointed a program head. The incumbent program head wanted to phase out of her administrative responsibilities in the new enlarged department. She thought highly of Jean. And so, the principal offered Jean the position. There was no formal selection process. Jean simply accepted the job.

As program head, Jean concerned herself with handling the administrative details that supported her teachers' classroom activities and sorting out any conflicts the teachers had with their students. Initially, she involved other people in her decision making because she herself had liked being consulted, and "because of my own insecurities." She persisted with a participatory approach because it worked.

In her second year as a program head, she spearheaded an internal evaluation of her own program. The evaluation was one dimension of an overall school evaluation--a new initiative by the provincial education officials. Jean acquired confidence because of her role in the evaluation project and also she received positive feedback from the external evaluators about her program.

In her capacity as program head, Jean was also part of the principal's senior management group. Because the administrative team was very student oriented, Jean's own commitment to students was reinforced. But, as part of the administrative team, she gradually

adopted the perspective of the administrator, rather than the teacher. She found that she "liked knowing more about what was happening in the school."

Anecdote 29. By the time Jean was offered her second appointment as a program head, she had accumulated a variety of administrative experiences and a university degree. Not only had she been a program head in a school, but she had served as a school board trustee. Then, she had been on the executive of a faculty association. Jean's roles in the faculty association and on the school board drew her into an involvement with those organizations' provincial counterparts, as well.

Given this background, when Jean transferred from one college to another (see Anecdote 15), she readily became involved with her new college's affairs. Her assigned courses were in familiar territory and her colleagues congenial. So, Jean continued her work with various provincial organizations and participated in the local faculty association.

Meanwhile, the program head who had hired her decided that he wanted to return to the classroom. At that time, the selection procedures were quite informal. Jean suspects that her program head simply went to his superordinate, resigned, and recommended Jean as his successor. Sensing no opposition to her appointment, the senior administrator asked Jean to step into the role about the middle of her first year there. Jean agreed and "the next thing that happened is my name got published in the calendar."

As program head, Jean had clear goals; the circumstances allowed her the freedom and the confidence to take initiatives. Jean's predecessor acted as her confidant and side-kick. Her superordinate, on the other hand, took a laissez-faire approach. According to Jean, that "forced me to develop independence . . . [and] move through the [organization's] circuit" with her predecessor as a supportive companion. Also, the organization was growing and plans were being made for the construction of new facilities. Jean had arrived just in time to contribute her ideas, which tied the facilities planning to a major change in curriculum and in the instructional

approach. She was working for change, moving towards a hands-on teaching style and higher standards of academic performance in her department.

As well, Jean became a partner in a project to write a textbook. There was increasing resistance in various Canadian provinces to the use of American curriculum materials. A major publisher approached a local university professor and invited him to develop an appropriate Canadian textbook. The professor knew Jean's predecessor through a provincial professional organization and invited him to join in the project. Jean's predecessor then invited Jean to be part of the project team because she could add a dimension of practical experience in a relevant area. Jean agreed. All three authors looked on the project as an ego boost, a challenge, and a new experience.

Anecdote 30. Surprised though she was by her superordinate's announcement that he was about to retire, Lois did apply for his job. She believes that she would not have done so if she had not received considerable encouragement from colleagues. She liked her existing job. To jump from her existing level to the vacant position without any transitional experience would be unprecedented. Moreover, she had only been with the school system for a year. However, she was a woman in a visible position, and she had already achieved popularity in the field. No one promised her the job, though. Indeed, the incumbent stated publicly that he would not give any one person special encouragement to apply. Even so, Lois thought that he would somehow let her know if he thought she had a chance of being appointed. He gave no such sign. Then, a colleague told Lois that the chairman of the board had asked him whether Lois had submitted her application. Lois responded by putting together an application. There was not time to make elaborate preparations. Besides, it was too late to worry. She felt that, by now, she was known to people in the organization. She submitted her application the day before the deadline.

Lois was placed on the short list. She went out and bought a new suit "to celebrate the fact that I was going to have an interview." She also organized her thoughts, anticipating the questions she might be asked. She was nervous during the interview and felt, afterwards, that

she had not presented well. A few days later, she was offered the job. Because of certain gaps in her experience, the incumbent would remain on staff for a year. He and Lois would work together.

Lois is not sure why she was selected. She believes that she "came down the middle." Nothing about her personal life offended. She had the right academic credentials and also a wide range of experience in education. She had not achieved that range as part of a career plan. Rather, she had taken on tasks because they looked interesting; either it simply occurred to her that she wanted to "try that" or someone encouraged her to do so. The result was that she had "learned the business." And, Lois speculates that the hiring committee liked the idea of appointing a woman.

Anecdote 31. Having decided to apply for an unexpected vacancy for which she was an unlikely candidate, Jean prepared carefully for her interview. Although an unlikely candidate, she was short-listed along with some other strong internal contenders. She knew that it was unprecedented for someone from outside a division to be brought in as its senior administrator. Moreover, there were no women holding similar appointments. Jean thought out the questions that she might be asked. Then, she and Jim did a practice interview. Jean was appointed to the position on a one-year acting basis.

Jean learned a great deal during that one year appointment. She behaved cautiously, working to win the trust of her staff members and to become acquainted with an entirely new set of programs. Her one radical action was to visit the classes in her division. She did it as a way of learning about the programs. The newcomers on staff welcomed her visits but some long-time faculty members from other divisions objected on principle to an administrator's presence in the classrooms. The issue was hotly debated, but in the end, Jean's actions were defended by her superordinate. Jean cites the general support that she received from her predecessor, whom she called her "personal counsellor" because of his willingness to listen and to work through issues with her. As well, she mentions that her superordinate required her to write goals

for herself and for the division. That had not been done in the past, but she found it a valuable exercise. With this combination of direction and support, as well as the opportunity to work with a generally positive staff, Jean made the transition to senior administration.

A few months later, her position was advertised nationally. Jean was short-listed and interviewed. Then she was offered a permanent appointment. She accepted.

Widening Horizons

Anecdote 32. Lois says that her one-year assignment as a relief teacher was an important turning point in her career. The school principal gave her confidence by telling her that she could do anything. He also asked her to do administrative tasks that principals usually did, although Lois did not realize it at the time. For example, she registered and oriented new students; hosted school tours; monitored the teachers' record-keeping; and did the displays for the main bulletin board. Lois remembers that another of her tasks was to open the windows in the staff room and empty the ashtrays every morning after the teachers had gone to class. Because of her activities as a substitute teacher throughout the school, Lois also learned that she could handle a wide range of subjects and grade levels effectively. Then in her mid-twenties, Lois received a healthy injection of both experience and self confidence in that school year.

During that year, when John was at university, Lois took responsibility for teaching and also for much of the child care. During the day, Lois took her young children to a neighbor for babysitting. The rest of the time, Lois looked after them herself. John was studying very hard and just was not home much. Lois recalls that it was socially acceptable for her to teach when she had such small children, only because she was putting John through school.

By the end of the school term, though, Lois was anxious to be spending more time at home with her children. John had then completed his degree and was assigned to a teaching job for the next year. Lois approached the Superintendent and asked if she might be given a half-time teaching job. Her request was an unusual one for those days. Nevertheless, the

Superintendent responded by offering her a half-time appointment as a specialist in one school. Lois protested that she was not qualified for that particular appointment. He assured her that she could do the job. And so she did.

Anecdote 33. When the idea was suggested to her, Elaine had several reasons for agreeing to coordinate a new summer school project. She was well established as an instructor and also very involved in her organization's governance through committee activities. She had recently been responsible for developing new instructional facilities for her program. Over the years, she was becoming more and more concerned about the academic standards at her institution. So, offering some basic remedial courses during the summer might prepare students better for their required course work in the fall. Besides, Elaine felt strongly that the College and its faculty were under-utilized; the place was only operating about 8 months out of every 12. Even the universities did better than that, with their spring and summer sessions. Without expecting or receiving any extra money for the work involved, Elaine became the project administrator and its evaluator.

The first year, Elaine had complete responsibility for the program. She "seemed to collect a wonderful staff" of dedicated and competent teachers. Her selections were somewhat intuitive; she did not give primacy to formal qualifications. She set up teaching goals and a personnel evaluation system that included peer evaluation. The staff also evaluated her performance as the project administrator. Her style was "very much to be evident and around as a leader." As a result, she feels that she got excellent work from her staff.

Unfortunately, there was no permanent funding for the project, in spite of the proven demand. So, the next year, Elaine was told that the summer school would be a joint endeavor with another institution. She sat on a joint committee to work out the new arrangements. She and her counterpart at the other institution exchanged teaching positions to familiarize themselves with their partner institutions. Elaine found the other environment too authoritarian

and rigid for her taste. There was, however, no choice but to make the best of the new partnership.

The partnership had a considerable impact on the project and on Elaine's role. There was now a large bureaucracy involved. Elaine had to make the hiring decisions as part of a joint committee. A number of instructors from the partner institution were hired for the summer school. Some of them brought with them a very different orientation toward teaching and toward the students. Elaine emphasized that the summer program and its students were different, but a faction developed. Elaine fired the staff member who led the faction. In spite of these difficulties, she still felt positive about the program and successful as its leader.

However, she was reluctant to administer the project for a third time. She was pregnant and she had not taken a summer off recently. Nonetheless, her superordinate insisted that she act as the coordinator once more. After a confrontation between them Elaine agreed to carry on. A week later, she had a miscarriage. Just after that, she applied to attend a conference in an exotic location. She believes that her superordinate allowed her to go because he felt guilty about imposing the responsibility for the summer project on her. Elaine was away for professional reasons on several occasions during that summer. The jaunts were a welcome change for her, but they caused resentment among some of her project staff. They felt that she was away too much. Meanwhile, Elaine was unhappy that she had so little control over the teaching appointments. Not only were the numbers of staff increasing, but more of them were committed to the other institution's philosophy. However, the camaraderie of the first group was not entirely lost. On the whole, the project staff were genuinely fond of one another. Even so, Elaine completed the third year's project without the feelings of satisfaction that she had about the previous two. And, although she was still an instructor, her project administration experience meant that she was viewing the world more and more from an administrator's perspective.

Anecdote 34. A last-minute assignment she was given in response to a crisis introduced Margo to a subject that became her continuing interest. She had recently decided against moving to another city to take a job in her curriculum specialty. Instead, she chose to continue on in the department where she had been a graduate student. She would complete her thesis and teach on a sessional appointment. She expected to teach courses in the subject of her own thesis. But, she was drawn into a special project on teaching processes. The approach included micro-teaching with video-taping and feedback, and also peer teaching. Margo liked the model, which was based on the observation and analysis of teaching processes, and she enjoyed her own role in implementing such a program. She felt that being a university instructor "was all it was cracked up to be . . .." And, she found in the subject of teaching processes a new focus for her own research and writing in the future.

Anecdote 35. When Jean's responsibilities were temporarily widened, she had already established herself as a "proactive" senior administrator. Early in her tenure, she had been faced with making some "pretty firm decisions" in the areas of personnel and facilities. She inherited some program heads who were not suited to the role, and she eased them out. As well, she "had to do a lot of political kinds of activity with the city council and people in the community" in order to sort out the issue of public access to one of the College's program facilities. After that, she began working on the development and implementation of several new programs, and on the expansion or revitalization of the existing ones. By providing ideas, encouragement, and resources she was able to work through other people and "get a lot of things done."

Many of Jean's innovations related to curriculum and instruction. The faculty in her division had no background in teaching. Jean's strengths, on the other hand, were in the area of teaching processes. She encouraged her faculty to become more facilitative and to give their students more responsibility for their own learning. Her staff's expertise and her own were complementary. Indeed, Jean regards her emphasis on good instruction as "one mark I left behind" in that division.

Along with overseeing the expansion and "upgrading" of the division itself, Jean had various committee responsibilities within the larger College community. Some of her committee assignments were automatic--part of the job. Others were specific appointments made by her superordinate. Jean thinks that she was sometimes singled out for such appointments because "they knew I'd do the job. . . . I was a workhorse . . . [who would] get the job done."

So, when her superordinate resigned, it is not surprising that Jean was asked to pick up some of his heavyweight committee work. The planning committees to which she was assigned were attempting to develop a 10-year plan for the organization. It was the first time that such an effort had been made. The College had been through a period of rapid expansion and, as Jean puts it, "we were moving to the realization that we had to become more formalized . . .." Jean worked on a range of issues that would normally have been outside the scope of her formal position.

She also considered whether or not to apply for the position that had been left vacant by her superordinate. She decided against it for several reasons. She did not feel "ready" for such a move, yet. Moreover, she did not have a doctorate, which people at that level usually did. In any case, her organization had never hired an internal applicant for a position at that level. Therefore, she was content to be a participant-observer in the search and selection process, taking everything in for future reference.

Not a Good Fit

Anecdote 36. Although she did her best to cope with the sudden accession to President of the faculty association, Elaine did not enjoy her new role. Shortly after her arrival at the College, Elaine had been drawn into the activities of the faculty association. The other instructors in her division were themselves very involved in it. For that reason, and because of a general institutional emphasis on participatory decision making, Elaine felt some pressure to volunteer. Prior to her election as vice-president, she did sit on her share of committees and on

the Academic Council, but that was "mostly a learning experience . . . I wasn't very vocal." So, her shift from the vice-presidency to the presidency seemed, at the very least, premature.

She felt, and was, ill prepared for the job. Of necessity, she was somewhat involved with the controversial salary negotiations that were under way, but she did not know much about the intricacies of the dispute. Staff morale was declining, too. So, she instituted some social events, which were not particularly successful. In general, she found "There were an incredible number of demands made on my time, people with problems and people who were mad about something and I'd walk on to the campus . . . and I'd be inundated, people would just mob me." Those demands included many evening meetings. Elaine felt that she was away from home too much in the evening. She was relieved that an excellent vice-president was now waiting in line for the job of president. She did not consider continuing in the role herself.

Anecdote 37. Margo had weighed carefully the pros and cons of taking a teaching job with a school system. What she could not predict was the surplus of newly hired teachers, like her, and the unsuitable posting that she was ultimately offered. The preceding year, she had been doing sessional work. She had weighed the pros and cons of that situation, too.

She liked the teaching in a post-secondary setting, but sessional appointments were always dependent on the availability of funds. Margo felt particularly vulnerable because she had only a Master's degree. Moreover, even if she received a sessional appointment, it would not pay very well. So, she considered returning to public school teaching, which was her husband's occupation. Jobs in the public systems were attractive in terms of money, security, and career potential. And, Margo had enjoyed being an elementary school teacher in the past. She applied to a local public system and signed a general teaching contract there six months before the school year began.

By late August, though, Margo had still not been given a specific teaching assignment. As one of the many surplus teachers hired that year, Margo would be placed on a list for substitute teaching and sent wherever she was needed from day to day. She was in a panic

about such a prospect because of her pre-school-aged children. Each one had to be delivered to appropriate child care facilities, every day. When Margo was offered a teaching position in a junior high school, she accepted it. She had never taught junior high and she did not want to teach at that level. But, as she puts it, "At this point I was thinking, as long as it's a fixed address, I'll try anything."

Margo's venture into junior high school teaching was not a success, and she took the first available opportunity to say so. Just before Christmas, her school's administrators met with Margo to discuss her progress. She stated frankly that she did not like her situation and would not return to the same position the following year. Moreover, she did not see why they would want her. She was so distressed, to the point of being in tears, that they asked her what she would like to do instead. She said, ". . . back to [an early] grade, thank you." Her superordinates agreed that she would be transferred whenever they could find a suitable assignment. Margo was not prepared to break her contract by quitting outright in the middle of a school year. She was willing to "stick it out" until June if nothing suitable came up. Fortunately, at the end of December, a suitable elementary classroom came open. Margo was told, apologetically, that it was a class of "very slow" students in a school that was quite distant from her home. Margo accepted the transfer enthusiastically, deciding "that it's for music . . . [it's] leading nowhere in a hurry."

Although Margo was much happier in her new assignment, she had already begun to consider other options for the following year. The most obvious option was to transfer to an elementary classroom in a school nearer to her home. However, the Chairman of the university department in which she had taught before urged her to consider another obvious alternative--returning to sessional work in her curriculum specialty. He said that there would be work available for Margo. Teaching music education to undergraduates appealed to Margo more than teaching a general program to elementary school students. And, if she worked on campus, she could more easily take courses herself. Money was not a big consideration. Joe not only encouraged her to do what she wanted, but he earned a good salary himself. As Margo puts it,

"I think I must have realized there was something else . . .." So, in the spring of her year as a junior high school teacher, she signed a contract to become a full-time sessional instructor the following year. Her salary seemed to be shrinking every year, but at least she would be doing work that she wanted to do.

"It was a great year." Margo taught a full load of undergraduate courses and also took courses herself. Her teaching assignments were in familiar territory, where she emphasized a practical approach. Her students were enthusiastic about it, and told her so. Some of her colleagues were more critical, finding the approach too practice oriented. At that stage, Margo felt free to ignore such criticisms.

Anecdote 38. According to Lois, a positive consequence of her stressful year working as a specialist at two different schools was that "it got me back to university." Lois objected, not to the schools where she was teaching, but to her lack of control over her own professional situation. She did a quick, "unscientific" survey of her school system. She observed that people with Master's degrees got better jobs in larger schools. In fact, she notes, there were only about three people in the system who fit that description, but they became her models. She saw them as being "able to control what happened to them" because they were well respected and, also, well educated. Lois decided that she had "better get there."

So, the following school year, Lois took a half-time leave to attend university. She also renewed her driver's licence and bought a car. She attended university classes in the mornings and taught school in the afternoons. She was assigned to yet another school as a specialist. The principal of that school was a former class-mate of hers, from Teachers' College days. He took a great interest in Lois' activities, both instructional and academic. Since Lois was doing graduate work in the curriculum area in which she was teaching, she was able to integrate her own learning and teaching. In contrast to the preceding one, Lois had a "marvellous year."

Conclusion

Choices are not made in a vacuum. Nor are they made in a world that runs exclusively on strict rationalism and logic. Choices are made in specific contexts by specific individuals who take into account factors that are of specific relevance to them at the time. And choices are based on one particular definition of a universe of options.

Astin (1984a) proposes a model of "career choice and work behavior" that includes as a component the structure of opportunity. The other aspects of the model refer to individual characteristics (motivation, expectations) and sex-role socialization. The structure-of-opportunity component comprehends a range of societal norms and practices that impinge on the organization and distribution of paid work. The components of the model are "inter-related and interactive" (p. 151), so that the model does accommodate individual and societal change. Choice (including decisions about formal education) and work behavior are treated as a "continuous, lifelong process" (p. 151). And individuals remain "agents in their own and societal change" (Kahn, 1984, p. 145).

When presenting her model, Astin (1984) raises a number of questions and calls for more research. One question seems especially relevant to this study. She wonders to what extent moving, changing jobs, or engaging in a new relationship changes one's structure of opportunity. She suggests the need for life history research as one approach to answering such questions.

Astin's model is an interesting social-psychological translation of Gerson's sociological observations (1985, p. 213) which are quoted at the beginning of this chapter. I discovered Astin's model only recently, while Gerson's work provided the conceptual orientation for this study. Perhaps chapters such as this one, On Choice, should be shelved somewhere between the bookends of Gerson's and Astin's work.

Chapter 5

ON CAREERS

Introduction

The preceding two chapters are a presentation of anecdotes on chance and on choice as they relate to the careers of four women. They describe substantial portions of those careers. However, the series of anecdotes that has been presented tends to understate or even ignore some significant, continuing themes. The themes--introduced in this chapter--are the counterpoint to the chances and choices of the four careers.

What is a career? The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides an overview of the two principal uses of the noun. First, a "career" may refer to "a person's course or progress through life (or a distinct portion of life) . . .." Similarly, in the recent psychological literature, the definition of "career" is very comprehensive. It includes "not only occupations but prevocational and postvocational concerns as well as how persons integrate their work life with their other life roles" (Herr & Cramer, 1984, p. 14). Defined in that way, career development becomes almost indistinguishable from adult development (Gutek & Larwood, 1987, p. 9). Likewise, in the sociological literature, reference is usually made to Hughes (1937-38) general definition of a career as the sequence of roles and positions that make up a life.

However, the dictionary indicates that, in modern usage, a "career" may also be "a course of professional life or employment, which affords opportunity for progress or advancement in the world." In her life-history study of some American women, Gerson (1985) found that the participants in her study used the term "career" in relation to paid work. She makes this statement:

> The term "career" implied not mere labor force participation, but rather long-term, full-time attachment to paid work with the expectation, or at least the hope, of advancement

> over time. In other words, respondents defined "career" as both the psychological and behavioral state of being committed to work over the long run. (p. 126)

This definition reflects common usage in that it refers quite specifically to paid employment, which is one form of work.

Astin (1984a, p. 119) notes, though, that there are other forms of work. She identifies "volunteer work" in the community, and "family work," raising children and/or running a household. Farmer (1984, p. 141)--among others--recommends that paid employment and family work be studied together. She notes that an individual will likely give priority to each of those roles at different times. Her own research also suggests that a concurrent dual commitment to paid employment and family work is possible for some women. Reich and Lafountaine, (1982, p. 81) present similar findings in Canada. And Biklen demonstrates the point in her research on the careers of women teachers.

Biklen (1986) argues that our usual notion of a career is unduly restrictive in relation to the lives of many women. She proposes an understanding of career commitment that does not dismiss or delegate parenting and other domestic responsibilities, for example. She says "Parenting is not the opposite of career commitment. When women choose to bear and nurture children, they are not necessarily signifying a lack of career commitment" (p. 508). Moreover, she provides a new perspective on such "career interruptions." The women in her study maintained consistent "internal conceptions of themselves as teachers" even when they were not employed professionals. Then they negotiated their way back into the classroom, often in the face of limited employment opportunities and limited support from their husbands. As Biklen points out, a continuous presence in the paid work force is not an adequate measure of career commitment.

Neither, she says, is an absence of ambition to rise in the organizational hierarchy. In some cases, the complex realities of combining family responsibilities with administration may be overwhelming or unappealing. Many women, for example, would resent the advice of one Canadian female educational administrator who recommended tailoring one's personal life to

one's career plans (in Porat, 1985, p. 301). In other cases, reported by Biklen (1986), women simply preferred the challenges and rewards of the classroom. Those were demonstrably excellent teachers whose lack of conventional ambition could not be construed as a lack of commitment to a chosen career. Indeed, the lack of commitment is to standard competitive and hierarchical models of professionalism (Biklen, 1987).

Other scholars are also questioning the established assumptions about careers and career development. Hall (1987a, p. 23) acknowledges the traditional view that career progression was "linear" and "predictable." But now, he says, new values such as the concern about achieving more balance between paid work and family life have been introduced. And so have new organizational realities. With retrenchment, many organizations are flatter, structurally, so there are fewer conventional promotions available (pp. 8-9). Gutek and Larwood (1987) assert that, in any case, women's career development is different and more complex because of role expectations about both paid work and family life. Casserly (1988) suggests that the theoretical assumptions about linear progressions never were substantiated by research. And, in a critical review of current theory, Schein (1987, p. 303) urges an emphasis on descriptive research in order to document what is actually going on and to develop wider conceptualizations of "success" in careers.

The anecdotes[1] that follow are descriptive of several important dimensions in the careers of Lois, Jean, Elaine, and Margo. The section "Competing Urgencies" contains stories about the dual commitment to paid and family work. The next section "The Importance of Getting Educated" traces patterns of part-time and full-time university studies. Then, in "Late Bloomers" appear anecdotes related to these women's career development from their mid-thirties to the time of the interviews. Finally, "Nurturing Environments" provides examples of women living out some portion of their careers in particularly amenable settings.

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[1]Some of the anecdotes in this chapter are further elaborations of stories that were related in Chapters 3 and 4. They are Anecdotes 19, 9, 21, 17, 44, 38. Other anecdotes are introduced in this chapter. They are numbers 45 to 70.

"Competing Urgencies"

That phrase is quoted by Lillian B. Rubin (1983, p. 160) in a book chapter entitled "Love, Work, and Identity." The book is a discussion of Rubin's extensive social psychological study of the changing relations between women and men in contemporary American society. Specifically, in this book, Rubin talks about couples who are partners in long-term, committed relationships. And, in the chapter just mentioned, she is referring to the daily lives of women who combine the roles of wife, mother, and paid professional worker.

Rubin explains that the friend who spoke the phrase was trying to capture the "inner sense of a woman who is worker, mother, wife." Rubin describes "competing urgencies" as "an evocative phrase whose meaning is immediately clear to all who live in families where the roles of women and men are no longer so firmly fixed." Although some data have indicated that career women, especially administrators, are less likely to marry and have children (Fullan et al., 1987, p. 30), many contemporary women are combining the roles (Galiese, 1985, p. 53). It is still the case, though, that women generally take the primary responsibility for "family work" (Larwood & Gutek, 1987, p. 158; Reich & LaFontaine, 1982, p. 71). As a result, many women regard the successful juggling of these "simultaneous" rather than "sequential" demands (Larwood & Gutek, 1987, p. 158) as a considerable accomplishment (Woo, 1985, p. 286).

Such women speak of several essential elements in their lives. Some say that the key is organization, making efficient use of the available time. Others talk about the importance of making satisfactory child care arrangements, of obtaining good babysitters and housekeepers. As this study illustrates, the problems related to child care persist, whether a woman was a very young mother in the 1950s, or an older mother in the 1980s. Then, there are the stories related to the care of aged and ailing parents. Those arrangements often involved--in my study--hosting visits or commuting long distances to maintain frequent contact. Undergirding the rest, many women speak of the indispensable support (varying in degree and kind) of their husbands (Porat, 1985; Tague & Harris, 1988; Woo, 1986). Certainly, the stories told by Lois, Jean, Margo,

and Elaine offer example after example of the elements just identified, in lives fraught with competing urgencies.

And time is a scarce resource. As Woo (1985, p. 288) points out, the price for many women educational administrators is the one that has typically been paid by men in similar positions--restricted leisure time, with consequent limits on social, cultural, and recreational involvements. A striking feature of the narratives in this study was the sheer busy-ness of each woman's daily life, sometimes over very long periods. Nonetheless, Lois, Elaine, Margo, and Jean all emphasized the importance of family life and close relations with spouses. Several of them brought work home in the evenings so that they could be with their families. Some booked vacation time for that purpose. One couple made a habit of having coffee alone together at 6:30 each morning and of taking joint responsibility for all family work. The older women spoke of a gradual shift in domestic responsibilities as their husbands acted in support of wives with demanding professional schedules (Edson, 1988, pp. 99-100). And always, there is a sense of exceptional energy. Time may be scarce, but energy is abundant.

Anecdote 45. Although Elaine did not believe him at the time, her physician warned her that having a child would change her lifestyle considerably. Doing a research project at home cushioned the impact of her child's arrival, as did a visit from her mother. Even so, Elaine started taking the baby out to a babysitter when he was six weeks old, because she had to go to a project meeting. Fortunately, the wife of a colleague was available as an occasional sitter. The arrangement worked out well, temporarily.

However, in order to meet her increasing professional obligations, Elaine had to make other babysitting arrangements. Jeff stayed home with their baby when Elaine taught her night class. For occasional babysitting during the day, Elaine drew on sitters who were available through a local senior citizens' centre. She used a woman who lived nearby. However, Elaine was not too impressed with the woman and her rates were high. As Elaine's babysitting needs became more extensive and more urgent, she followed up on a promising newspaper

advertisement. A young mother babysat a few children in her own home. Joan had a Home Economics degree and a child of her own. Even though Joan had already reached her quota of children, Elaine persuaded Joan to take her baby as well. Elaine's son was very happy at Joan's. The arrangement worked beautifully for several months. Then, Joan was rushed to the hospital for an emergency operation. Elaine "suddenly had to find something to do with [the baby], because I was in the middle of a project and I was working every day."

A new day care centre had just opened in a distant suburb. However, the centre still had spaces available. They were willing to accommodate the infant immediately in order to help Elaine out. Elaine drove to the centre and looked it over. She judged the centre to be adequate, with some particularly appealing features. Elaine knew that, in a day care setting, her son would encounter some problem situations sooner than he would in a more sheltered environment. She thought that was not necessarily a bad thing. She felt, too, that it would be good for him to spend more time with other children, and of many different races, so that he would learn to get along with them. She placed him in the centre right away, when he was one-and-one-half years old. He remained there for several years.

At first, Elaine drove her son to the day care and picked him up, every day. However, that entailed a great deal of driving for her. Eventually, she and Jeff agreed to share the driving. Jeff took the child to the centre on his way to work in the mornings. Elaine then picked him up from the centre in the late afternoons.

Anecdote 46. Making babysitting arrangements was a continuing responsibility in Lois' life. She recalls that it was very difficult to find capable babysitters who would come to her home for the amount of money she could afford to pay. And yet, Lois believed that a more stable environment was created by having the children in their own home. Besides, it was some time before she and John owned a car. Nevertheless, both the quality of the sitters she was able to hire and their high rate of turnover worried Lois.

She recalls feeling a sense of relief and of freedom when the children were old enough to be taken out to a babysitter. From the time that her youngest was one year old, Lois took her children to the home of a woman living in the neighborhood, whom she knew through the church. This babysitting arrangement lasted for several years. It included lunch-hour and after-school care for the elder children, once they were attending school. Lois was well satisfied with the quality of care her children were receiving under these circumstances. The arrangement was "a great stabilizing factor" in her life as she juggled a career and a family.

Even when her babysitting arrangements were stable and satisfactory, Lois took the day-to-day responsibility for other aspects of child care. She got up each morning and "spread out the bread on the table," supplying butter and sandwich filling to make lunches for each of the family members, as an economy measure. Because she and John had only one car, transportation was a problem. In the winter, for example, John dropped the children off at the babysitter's on the way to work. Later in the day, Lois bundled up the children, put them on a toboggan, and pulled the toboggan home from the babysitter's--a two mile walk. Once all of the kids were in school, Lois recalls that it was a "traumatic thing when the kids were sick" because there was no one available to stay home with them. She recalls feeling grateful when two of her children had chicken pox at the same time.

Although there were various pressures associated with juggling a career and a family, Lois did not really consider quitting work altogether. She and John had been in debt since John started university. So, for economic reasons, Lois felt that she had to work. And, in time, once her older children were in school and the younger had a good babysitter, Lois' anxieties about child care were reduced. Nothing ever went seriously awry, either, and so Lois felt that her efforts to balance career and family responsibilities were successful. John certainly did not object to Lois' working. And, in the last analysis, Lois continued to work because she liked working.

Anecdote 19. When she combined single motherhood, studies, and part-time work, Margo's life was "frantic, totally frantic." She spent the hours from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm on campus. Even then, she was often worrying about her child care arrangements, which varied from disturbingly inadequate to satisfactory. Although it was a great relief to get one child a place in a subsidized day care centre, Margo was still struggling to find appropriate private sitters for the other. She recalls the problems associated with babysitters, then and later. "Some of it was horrendous . . . . The experiences . . . with somebody who looks suitable . . . and you come home too soon and they're screaming and hollering at your kid. Then, they come to the door with a smile on their face . . . ."

Most of her many waking hours off-campus were spent caring for her children and her home, as well as doing the assignments that she hadn't completed while she was on campus. She describes a typical day this way:

> I'd get up early in the morning, find clothes for the kids, throw them on, get dressed myself, take one kid to a private home, take the other kid to a day care and get to . . . class . . . in the traffic . . . with the kids . . . hollering and screaming in the back seat. . . . Going home was worse because they were hungry . . . especially the young one, who was sick anyway. . . . [I'd] grit [my] teeth, go through the traffic, and get home. I never had it together enough to have stuff in the oven warming up. So it was start supper . . . bathe them, and put them to bed. At which point, [I] might have two minutes peace to start reading. . . . every paper I wrote was always interrupted by the kids' problems. . . . It was a constant struggle to find twenty minutes of silence anywhere along the line. . . .

Even during the night, Margo was interrupted when she was sleeping. She had a sickly child who cried a lot, so Margo did what she could to make him comfortable. That meant she was up with him once or twice every night, in addition to her wearing day-time routines. She says, "I was totally wiped out most of the time . . . ."

Fortunately, Margo did not find her academic program too taxing. She received advanced standing for some of the courses she had taken towards the graduate diploma, which helped. She enjoyed the remaining course work. In one course, she avoided confronting a very poor professor, because she could see that her protests, like those of her class-mates, would only net her a low mark. On the whole, the course-work was a "steadying influence" in her life. She was particularly grateful to be in the music education specialty as she observed one of her

office-mates working much harder for his grades in another specialty. Given everything else that she was dealing with those days, Margo does not think she could have handled a heavier program.

Anecdote 9. When they moved to an isolated northern community to teach, Jean and Jim took along a teen-age girl to be their live-in babysitter. She cared for the younger children while the older ones went, quite happily, to the local school. Their sitter was as happy in this small community as her employers were. Even so, raising several children in such a community can be very complicated. One child sustained a concussion when he fell off his bicycle. Jean and Jim rushed him to the nearest hospital, many miles away, and visited him there every evening, regardless of the weather, for six weeks.

Anecdote 47. While Margo was a full-time sessional instructor, her two-year-old child's continuing ill health was a great source of anxiety and problems. Margo remembers, for example, one of her colleagues covering her classes when she needed to be at home nursing her son. The little boy was in and out of a series of day-care arrangements. But, beyond the instability of that, he was simply unwell physically. That winter, he spent ten days in the hospital. Only then did Margo learn that he was suffering from severe allergies.

Anecdote 48. When Jim took a new job, it affected his and Jean's family life in a particular way. On the weekends, Jim and his sons continued to be very involved in competitive hockey and snowmobile racing. But Jim's new job entailed quite a bit of travelling, so he was out of town many week-end nights. As a result, Jean found herself managing their household single handedly during the work-week, while she was teaching full time. The children were all active in sports and community groups, but their town had no public transit system. Of necessity, Jean and Jim acquired a second car. Even so, Jean recalls "having a lot of trouble balancing getting them all [to] the places they had to be."

During that period, there were numerous dimensions to Jean's life. There was her paid work as a teacher and her professional development project doing part-time studies towards her B.Ed. There were her responsibilities as a parent, jointly with Jim and in his absence. There was the active social life that she and Jim shared. In addition, Jean was a volunteer participant in the teachers' association and political activities, mainly in "support" or back-room roles. This multifaceted existence proceeded at a hectic pace: "it certainly filled the evenings."

Not too long after Jim began travelling during the week, Jean hired a part-time housekeeper. She did so at the urging of one of her colleagues, also a "working mother," who recommended her own housekeeper. This woman cleaned the house and handled the laundry. It was a mutually satisfactory arrangement--Jean needed more time and her housekeeper needed more money. She worked for Jean until the whole family moved to another centre a couple of years later. Jean "missed her immensely" when they did move. Meanwhile, Jean's own participation in province-wide committees and conferences began to require some out-of-town travel. The children were getting older but those living at home still required supervision. Jean and Jim had to coordinate their schedules with care. Even so, Jean "made sure everything [from babysitters to meals] was set up ahead of time."

Anecdote 21. Not surprisingly, when Lois became a principal, her days during the school year were long. Her routine was to get up by 6:30 am and go to bed by 11:00 pm after watching the news. She describes herself as a morning person who thrives "on lots of sleep." On weekends that involved a round trip to the farm, though, Lois might not be in bed until after 2:00 am Monday. And she would likely have spent much of her weekend time marking or writing papers. However, she notes that the children were then teenagers. She "wasn't being mother" but rather "friend or confidante" to them. There were no major family crises to force any change in this evolving pattern.

Meanwhile, John was as involved in his hobbies as Lois was absorbed in her professional activities. He remained committed to his teaching, but he was equally committed to

his farming. As well, he was very interested in the stock market; he spent his noon hours at the stock exchange. He was always supportive of Lois' endeavors and Lois reciprocated. She says that they have "an unspoken understanding" about their mutual support in the face of divergent interests.

Anecdote 49. Early on in her work life, Lois developed the habit of taking work home to do in the evenings. That has remained her habit throughout her career--she never returns to her office to work in the evenings, except to attend meetings. When her children were young, working at home in their midst was a way of combining her family and work worlds. And she did literally work at the dining-room table, even once she had her own study. Lois recalls that John would sit doing his marking in the family room while she did her work at the dining table. This practice meant that she and John were frequently companions in the evening.

The Importance of Getting Educated

According to Shakeshaft, "women have not been socialized to pursue education" (1987, p. 109). Socialization was clearly a factor in the type of formal, post-secondary education sought initially by the women in this study (Gaskell, 1983; Gilbert, 1984, p. 129). However, once started these women pursued formal credit/degree education with great persistence and energy. While each woman spent some period(s) as a full-time student, each one more frequently combined academic course work with paid work. Often, she was employed full time and took courses on a part-time basis. Sometimes, it was the reverse. And, occasionally, a woman combined full-time studies with full-time paid work. In that sense, Margo, Lois, Elaine, and Jean assigned considerable importance to getting educated.

Combining academic course work with family work and paid work adds another dimension to the concept of competing urgencies. The women in this study, like others, found ways to do it all. Sometimes, they gave priority to the combination of studying and child-bearing/raising (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 67). Sometimes, when juggling all three kinds of work,

they received considerable assistance from their husbands. Indeed, some husbands took over the primary responsibility for family work to the point of undertaking "single parent" roles while their wives commuted long distances to classes, or moved elsewhere temporarily in order to enrol in a particular program (Edson, 1988, pp. 20-41). Such temporary shifts in roles were sometimes the precursor to more permanent changes in the division of family work (Edson, 1988, pp. 99-100) when the women undertook increasingly time-consuming paid-work roles.

Among the women in this study, the motives for getting educated varied in configuration and priority. Early on, parental expectations and concerns about the value of job training were influential. So was the desire for greater independence from those parents. The initial forays into graduate work--usually curriculum/subject-area courses--served a number of purposes. The women sought greater expertise to support their teaching and satisfy their own subject-area interests (Edson, 1988; Nixon, 1985). They appreciated the stimulation of adult company and the opportunity to assess their own capabilities in relation to those of their peers (Edson, 1988, p. 21). At other times, graduate programs provided a socially acceptable out or transition (Larsen, 1984, p. 291) from a less-than-satisfactory paid-work situation. Or, viewed differently, such programs offered an opportunity for professional (and perhaps personal) renewal (Edson, 1988, p. 22). And, of course, the acquisition of degrees was seen as a necessary accumulation of professional credentials (Coffin & Ekstrom, 1979, pp. 58-59; Edson, 1988; Nixon, 1985) for career purposes. Faith in the efficacy of such credentials for their respective situations varied (Nixon, 1985), but it was a factor. Motives also shifted and changed for individuals. The bases for entering, persisting, and completing a program were not necessarily the same, nor were the motives constant from one degree to the next. Overall, though, academic work was for these women a means of remaining "professionally alive" (Edson, 1988, p. 21).

This section of the chapter has several parts. Anecdotes 50 and 51 tell how Lois and Jean went about completing their BEds, while they were teaching. Anecdotes 17, 44, 38, and 52 relate stories about doing a Master's degree. Then, a number of anecdotes describe experiences related to pursuing a doctorate. First, there is the decision to do it (Anecdotes 53-

56). Then, there are stories about getting on with it (Anecdotes 57-61). Finally Anecdotes 62 and 63 are stories about "re-entry" to the world of paid work.

Completing the B.Ed.

Anecdote 50. In her late twenties, Lois requested a leave of absence without pay, in order to complete her B.Ed. She had been doing university course work on a part-time basis for years: it was her main "extra-curricular" professional activity. She could arrange babysitting in order to attend night classes, and she did so regularly. She looked forward to her classes. They were stimulating and challenging. Moreover, they provided an opportunity for Lois to socialize with adults--colleagues, in particular--after spending all day with young children. Her intention for some time had been to pick up evening and summer classes until she had only five courses remaining. Then, she would take all five in one full winter session at the local university. She followed her plan, bringing in a boarder to supplement the family's income while she was on a partial leave.

As she pursued her part-time studies, Lois chose a curriculum specialization. She was interested in two possibilities, initially. So she considered which specialization held the most promise in terms of a career. She noted that her school system had only one consultant in one of the subject areas, but several in the other subject area. She also recognized that she lacked creative talent in the former subject, although she was an appreciative observer. A year spent as a specialist in her chosen area, before she had completed a degree in it, confirmed her direction. She decided to take methods courses in the subject that seemed to offer more job prospects and she supplemented those courses with related courses in that discipline itself. She did well in all the courses, without too much effort. She graduated with her B.Ed. four years after John had received his. Lois was on her way to becoming a specialist.

Anecdote 51. In her mid-thirties, Jean completed the requirements for her B.Ed. by attending a summer school session in the United States. Although her father died quite unexpectedly that spring, Jean and Jim decided to go ahead with their plans to take the entire

family away for the summer so that Jean could attend the necessary courses. By doing so, Jean would complete the requirements for her B.Ed.; she could not pick up her remaining requirements during the summer any closer to home. Jim took an educational leave from his job and justified it by enrolling in one course. He provided child care and did the housework, freeing Jean up to carry a heavy course load. As a result, Jean did complete all the requirements for her degree. About the time she graduated that fall, she learned that her mother had cancer. She turned her attention to that issue. It marked a change of emphasis in Jean's life, but no lessening of its hectic pace.

Doing a Master's Degree

Anecdote 17. When she was 24 years of age, Elaine moved away from her home city and entered a non-thesis M.A. program. The department offered two types of M.A. programs. One was the traditional route, one year of courses plus thesis. The second route involved doing two years of course work combined with some independent study, culminating in an oral presentation and defense. "Scared of writing a thesis"--although she wrote well--Elaine chose the latter route.

Her choice brought mixed results. She enjoyed, and did well in, her course work. She was, as she puts it, "good at writing papers." But her advisor, arbitrarily assigned, was little help in guiding Elaine's independent study. He and Elaine had little in common except a mutual interest in Elaine's boyfriends, since the advisor was gay. He gave Elaine a reading list, then met with her only briefly and infrequently. These meetings did not provide Elaine with any focus for her reading, which she was doing conscientiously. Nor did the meetings prepare Elaine at all for her final oral examination.

She did not anticipate and had not been told that she would be expected to give an hour and a half talk on her specialty. She was prepared to answer questions but not to "spout forth" on her topic. It was a distressing experience for Elaine. The examining committee awarded her the lowest pass mark available. Elaine was upset because she had not really

demonstrated her knowledge and she was angry that her advisor had not helped her to make more appropriate preparations. Nonetheless, she completed the requirements for her degree and "chalked [the whole thing] up to experience."

Anecdote 44. Along with an appointment as a full-time sessional instructor, Margo wrote her Master's thesis. That "was a miserable experience from the beginning right to the end . . .," largely because of her relations with her advisor. From the start of her program the previous year, she was under pressure to find an appropriate advisor for the study she had in mind. After being stalled and rejected a couple of times, Margo became more and more panicky about getting started on her research. She approached a third person, who agreed to be her advisor but on a research project of her choice. In desperation, she acquiesced.

She found herself doing field observations in several locations. Echoing her days as a consultant some years before, Margo stored her kit bag of supplies in her car. The data collection activities were only one dimension of Margo's complex life, but she did complete that phase before she became a sessional lecturer.

Gathering the data was one thing; writing a thesis that satisfied her advisor was quite another problem. She recalls that she re-wrote some chapters many times before her supervisor was satisfied. Her relations with him were especially sensitive because, as a sessional lecturer, she was his colleague as well as his student. She "had to be nice" in both roles, and she was.

To add to Margo's difficulties, her committee members did not agree among themselves. As a result, even her oral defence was protracted and difficult. Not only did her advisor take an adversarial position towards Margo, but he and a colleague bickered and debated at length. The oral examination lasted three-and-one-half hours. Margo was so upset by the proceedings that she got ready to leave and teach a class while her committee debated. Nonetheless, she passed the exam and carried on as an instructor, her student role completed.

She convocated with her hard-earned M.Ed. at the age of 31 years and attributed her achievement to good luck.

Anecdote 38. After a frustrating year spent dashing between two schools, Lois took a half-time leave to attend university and complete an M.Ed. Throughout the fall and winter, she took classes in the morning and taught in the afternoon. During the spring, she gathered her data. Her choice of topic arose from her opposition to the use of the conventional testing approach of the time. She was able to demonstrate the superiority of alternative diagnostic approaches. Lois learned from doing the study, and she applied what she learned to her teaching.

She also learned something about the politics of getting a Master's degree. She had to do some statistical analysis of her data. Her advisor insisted that she do the statistical work by hand. Early in the summer, John and her mother (both high school math teachers) sat down with her and began the task. Lois soon realized that she would not be able to achieve her goal of completing her thesis in the summer if they persisted with long-hand calculations. She "got angry" and took her problem to another member of the committee, "whom I'd chosen because he was a personal friend." He responded by putting her data through the computer himself, without telling her advisor. As a result, Lois did complete her thesis in the summer. She convocated with her M.Ed. that fall, when she was in her mid-thirties.

Anecdote 52. Working in a college environment, Jean became very aware that academic qualifications were important. Moreover, Jim had long since completed his Master's degree. So, while Jean was redesigning curriculum in her role as a program head, and co-authoring a textbook, she was also a student herself. In fact, she was taking graduate courses in adult education at the time. She believes that they influenced her thinking in favour of competency-based education and confirmed her commitment to "hands-on" learning. Each fall and winter term she enrolled in one graduate course, whatever was being offered in her home town by the nearest university. Each spring, during her non-teaching term, she commuted to

that university in the mornings to attend classes and returned to work at the college in the afternoons. Each summer, during holiday time, she also took courses.

She began her M.Ed. in one department because the residency requirements were "flexible." However, the focus of that program was not her own curriculum specialty, so she sought out administration courses as her options. She was enjoying her work as program head and developing aspirations about becoming a Dean. What she really wanted was a credential that would support her administrative orientation. Besides, Jim was studying administration now. Indeed, they often commuted together.

Through the Educational Administration classes that she had taken, Jean met some people who were enrolled in an M.Ed. (Administration) program that was designed for people who were working full time. This approach appealed to her, so she talked with the Chairman of the department. He was "super helpful." Jean became a student in the program for one fall-winter session.

By the early spring, though, Jean was again reviewing her options. She "wasn't sure I could face the thought of driving for another winter . . . the next year . . . by myself." That winter would be devoted to planning and carrying out a group research project. Jean "didn't see any real direct application" for herself. Therefore, she transferred to another, non-thesis M.Ed. program. In a last-minute blitz of course work over the spring and summer, she completed the requirements for the degree and convocated that fall with an M.Ed. (Educational Administration). Jean was in her early forties by then.

And Then, a Doctorate

Anecdote 53. Not many years after she completed her Master's degree, and as she continued to participate actively in her College's affairs, Jean thought about the possibility of doing a doctorate. A number of factors had an impact on her thinking. Jean continued to enjoy administration and wanted to remain an administrator. She "did not want to go back to a staff position and curriculum design." Now that the children were growing up and leaving home, she

had more time to think about her own future. Her superordinates had doctorates and they urged Jean to get one. Their urgings were accompanied by comments about Jean's probable continuing advancement in the College hierarchy. Besides, Jim was working on a doctorate in administration and Jean, once again, felt some desire to match him. She was eligible for a sabbatical. Doing a doctorate in Educational Administration at the nearest university with such a program seemed to be a manageable and comfortable way of accomplishing several things. She hoped to obtain that ultimate academic credential, quell some of her own insecurities, and become a more global thinker. For Jean, the question changed from "if" to "when."

That fall, she consulted her superordinates about applying for a sabbatical leave. She intended to spend the leave completing the doctoral program residency requirements. She was advised to apply to take a sabbatical in the following year. Jean wrote her sabbatical proposal over the Christmas holidays. Upon her return, she submitted the proposal and then withdrew it, feeling unready to make the decisions related to such a move.

Over the next few months, the climate within the College became increasingly negative. One day in the spring, Jean was sitting in a committee meeting when she decided that she "couldn't face another year of this." Her superordinate was sitting next to her. She wrote him a note asking if she could resubmit her sabbatical request, although it was past the deadline. He wrote back agreeing, and he went on to support her application, which was accepted. Jean notes that her request to resubmit was spontaneous; it was one of the few times that she had not first discussed such a major decision with Jim.

Anecdote 54. During her years as a principal, Lois' children were growing up and leaving home. A busy professional woman, Lois was surprised to find that she "really had a hard time" adjusting when her daughter married and moved to another province. They were a close family, and watching her family leave home was difficult for Lois.

Indeed, Lois herself needed a change. She had been taking administration courses for some time. At first, she had worked towards a post-graduate diploma but gradually she shifted

her focus to the acquisition of a doctorate. It seemed that the possibility of career advancement was increased with the acquisition of the doctorate. At the same time, as Lois says, "our family was at a stage where I could devote more time to my own interests." She knew that she would not take a doctorate at the local university, which was her alma mater, because it "wouldn't be credible either to myself or to anybody else." Instead, Lois applied to the next nearest university with a good Educational Administration department. She applied at the same time for a sabbatical leave.

She was accepted by the university, but her application for a leave was rejected. Without the paid leave, she would not take a year off, because she felt that she would be "draining the family finances." So, she waited and applied for the sabbatical again the next year. This time she received it, contracting to return to the school system for two years afterwards. In her mid-forties, Lois did not have a specific job opening in mind, for which the doctorate was a prerequisite. However, she was interested in obtaining a central office position in curriculum and instruction, some day. Meanwhile, she was seeking a change of pace and renewal along with the degree.

Anecdote 55. From the time that she began to consider returning to sessional work, Margo had every intention of taking courses as well as teaching them. The surprising development was that she ended up doing the courses in Educational Administration. She had explored her program options. Her only career aspiration was to be a consultant, but she did want to be more of a generalist. She was interested in broadening her expertise in curriculum. She expected to pursue her studies in the department where she had taken her Master's. She even approached the man whom she wanted as an advisor, and he agreed to work with her.

However, when she approached the woman chairing the department, this woman was not receptive to Margo's enquiries. She was particularly negative about Margo's arrangements regarding an advisor. She had another match in mind, and Margo's acceptance into the

program appeared to be conditional on her agreement to switch advisors. Margo left the interview feeling very doubtful about the pushiness and inflexibility she had encountered.

When Margo relayed her experience to the professor who had first encouraged her to do a graduate degree, he suggested that she consider a program in a different department. The alternative that he proposed was Educational Administration. Margo protested that such a thing had never occurred to her and that she had no ambition to be a school principal. In her mid-thirties, she characterized educational administration students as "grey and . . . fifty . . .." Margo's friend persisted, pointing out that a few more women were enrolling in Educational Administration. He persuaded her to try some courses and then decide for herself.

After doing a few courses in the subject, Margo decided that Educational Administration was not so bad after all. Moreover, she did well in the courses. Once again, it had been worth listening to her friend's advice. She applied for admission to the Educational Administration doctoral program and was accepted. She continued to do courses through the spring and summer, opting not to teach at the same time. After a hectic year of teaching as a sessional, and taking courses as well, she was moving on to become a full-time doctoral student in Educational Administration.

Anecdote 56. Three years before she became a full-time doctoral student, Elaine began taking Educational Administration courses on a part-time basis. A number of the colleagues with whom she ate lunch were enrolled as part-time students in the M.Ed. (Administration) program at the local university. Elaine found the conversations about their coursework quite interesting. Besides, the topics were relevant to her own work managing the literacy project in the summers. So, she too started taking the occasional course in Educational Administration.

Later, when she needed a break from the College, it occurred to her that she could apply for admission to the doctoral program in Educational Administration. Moreover, she had several months of accumulated holidays owing to her because she had worked through a series

of summers. She talked the idea over with Jeff, then applied for admission to the doctoral program and was accepted. She did not need to apply for a paid leave from the College; they wanted her to take the time off in order to use up her accumulated holidays. Ready for a change, Elaine became a full-time doctoral student in Educational Administration. Like her previous sortie into full-time graduate work, this one was a "respectable out."

Anecdote 57. Elaine was more assertive in her role as a graduate student, this time around. She felt more self-confident. And, as she puts it, "I try to learn from my mistakes as I go along." As a result, she did a number of things differently. For example, she protested a grade that she felt was too low. The professor changed it. In an unusual move for that department, she changed advisors in mid-stream. She did so because she had learned from her experiences at the Master's level that having good relations with an advisor was essential. She felt that her initial advisor quite evidently favored another of his students. Therefore, Elaine sought out a more sympathetic advisor. She also sat in on someone else's oral defence before she had her own. She explained that she had had a bad experience with her own Master's oral and was very worried about facing another oral exam. One of her fellow students agreed to allow Elaine's presence at his exam and the department granted her permission to sit in as an observer. That experience "allayed a lot of fears" that Elaine was carrying around. She had become more expert at charting her own course.

Anecdote 58. Like Elaine, Margo was determined not to repeat her Master's experience by working with an inappropriate supervisor. She wanted her informal advisor in the department to be her advisor, formally. Indeed, she had entered the program assuming that he would be. Moreover, she suspected that if she worked with this individual she would have a great deal of leeway in the choice of a research topic and a design. Then, she and her classmates were informed that their advisors had been chosen for them--a list would be published soon. On the suggestion of her informal advisor, Margo went straight to the Chairman and told him that the two of them had already agreed to work together. The Chairman accepted her statement.

When the advisor-advisee list came out, Margo was paired with her informal advisor. She was relieved. She characterized her actions as "pushy," but she also knew that "it had to be [him] or I wasn't staying."

Anecdote 59. When Lois began her doctoral program, she moved into an apartment near the university she had chosen to attend. Her husband, John, and their youngest child stayed at home, in another city. A friend and former colleague located and rented an apartment on Lois' behalf, because accommodation was difficult to find. For six months, Lois lived in the apartment, returning to her home for occasional weekends. She had various friends in the city where she was studying. Besides, she enjoyed her colleagues in the doctoral program; her relations with her fellow students were a valuable aspect of the program.

However, by mid-year, Lois had only two courses left to do, because she had received advanced standing for a number of courses. She gave up her apartment and took a room in residence. She would commute from her home each week for a couple of days to attend classes. She did that, working more happily at her own dining room table.

Lois took a practical approach to the choice of a dissertation topic and a research methodology. She "wanted to look at things that an administrator controls . . .." She also wanted her study to link up with other local research, in preference to doing a "one-shot thesis that . . . nobody was going to read and would never matter." Organizational structure was an "in topic" at the time. An acquaintance had recently done a study of school structure for his doctoral work. His theoretical framework interested Lois and she could talk over with him her own research interests. Various "qualitative" research techniques interested Lois. Once again, though, practical considerations won out. Such techniques were new and the acceptability of the research products was not guaranteed. Moreover, time was an issue for Lois. Conventional methods were faster and safer. Lois proceeded to develop a questionnaire/structured interview study that was linked to her acquaintance's study.

There were a number of positive spin-offs from Lois' study. First, Lois "read a lot about . . . schools" and organization theory and structure. It was the most useful knowledge that Lois acquired during her doctoral program and it has been of enduring value to her. When asked, later on, to design the formal structure for an organization, she "felt a sense of surety" about what she wanted to achieve and the structural means to achieving it.

The most immediate spin-off, though, was that Lois interviewed many of her fellow principals, since she conducted her study in her home school system. She had been away from the system for six months. So, the off-the-record portions of her interview sessions constituted a reorientation to what was happening in the system.

Lois was interested in completing her doctorate, not in producing a masterpiece. She had already decided against an academic career. So, she chose a topic that interested her and promised to have some practical value. She chose an advisor who worked hard and kept up on the literature in her area. And, she chose a qualified but readily available local person as her external examiner. He knew the previous research in the area and had a continuing interest in the topic. It would have been a more complicated process to bring in a high-profile examiner from farther afield. Lois felt that such an initiative was not necessary, given her career goals. She collected her data in the spring following the completion of her course work and spent the summer analyzing them. She continued to work part-time on her thesis over the next winter while she was a school principal once again. Then, she convocated the next fall, when she was in her mid-forties.

Anecdote 60. Margo entered a full-time doctoral program "with fear and trepidation." As an instructor in Curriculum, she had been feeling able and competent. Now, she was moving into a different league, where she was the novice again. And, in her doctoral group of nearly 20 people, there was only one other woman. Many of the students were already educational administrators, some in senior positions. Although Margo had been successful in the master's level Ed. Admin. courses that she had been taking, her class-mates in those courses had

seemed to be ordinary people like her. Suddenly, in the doctoral program, Margo found herself associated with men who had considerable power and social status in the world of education, and who had vocal opinions to match. The professors even treated some of these people quite deferentially.

Margo, on the other hand, was mainly concerned just with getting through the course. She was amazed and pleased to note that she was performing within the middle ranks of her class. She did the assigned readings devotedly, but her more self-assured colleagues were quicker to articulate their views in class. Those views were often similar to Margo's, so her survival strategy in this environment was ". . . to lie low and . . . do it on my papers . . . ."

Margo's choice of a research topic combined rather neatly her own interests and her work as a graduate assistant. She did not enter the doctoral program with a specific research project in mind. She thought that "whatever it was, it was probably going to be observational and it was probably going to be in a school classroom." As she considered the possibilities, she became interested in the analysis of the teaching act. Her interest in the topic had been sparked by some of her earlier work as a sessional and reinforced by her current work as a graduate assistant in a large research project. It was even possible for her to tie her own study into that larger program of research, so she did.

She organized a rather complex study and collected her data while she was finishing her course work. Margo recalls that "people [in the program] used to say 'how do you ever manage with the kids?'." The question amused Margo, after the difficulties she had faced as a Master's student. During the first year of the doctoral program, especially, Joe kept their household running even though he could not understand Margo's need to keep proving herself in new endeavors. By then, her children were established in school and with a good private sitter. Margo's personal life had settled down rather nicely.

With Joe's continuing support, Margo decided to remain a graduate student for a second year. Money was not an urgent problem: Joe was working and Margo had income from a scholarship and an assistantship. Besides, the statistics indicated that very few doctoral

students who went back to work before completing a dissertation ever finished their degrees. Even Joe was a case in point--he took two or three years to complete his Master's thesis once he had returned to full-time teaching. Margo thought it would be wise to give priority to the completion of her thesis.

Having made the decision, Margo embarked on one of the more relaxed and reflective years in her life. She "began to slow the pace down . . . and read here and read there . . .." She had a great deal of material to sift through, analyze and integrate. She went to her office on campus every day. But, by the following spring, she was still analyzing and reading. She had not written a word of her thesis. At that stage, her advisor suddenly imposed a time-line. As Margo puts it, ". . . there was a flurry to write [several hundred] pages . . .." She made the deadline and successfully defended the dissertation. She was in her mid-thirties at the time.

Anecdote 61. Elaine found her doctoral studies environment a congenial one. Her class-mates were more supportive than competitive. And, Elaine did very well in her courses by applying the theory she encountered there to the experience she had acquired in post-secondary organizations. By the late spring of her first year as a graduate student, Elaine was ready to take her candidacy examination. She had completed her course work, switched advisors, and developed a research proposal, although she had not entered the program with a research question in mind. However, she knew that she wanted to do research on the college system, "because at that point that was my whole world." One faculty member introduced her to a research methodology that intrigued her, and she developed a study using that approach. After her candidacy exam, she and Jeff took a vacation. Upon their return, Elaine began her study despite feeling "really rotten" as she progressed through the early stages of a pregnancy.

She worked quietly at home--where she could rest--drafting, receiving, and processing questionnaires. She remembers "lying on a sofa . . . with all those little pieces of paper all over the living room floor . . . trying to make sense of [the responses] . . .." Throughout the next fall, Elaine worked on her thesis. That activity combined well with being pregnant, she found. She

was quite single-minded, so the quiet life-style suited her purposes of that time. Her class-mates rallied round to celebrate the successful defense of her doctorate and the birth of her child, both in mid-winter. According to Elaine, the whole thing "worked out very well." It was quite a contrast to her frustrating experiences at the Master's level. This time, Elaine completed her degree with the feeling that she had demonstrated her abilities and they had been recognized. She was in her mid-thirties by then.

Anecdote 62. Once her sabbatical had been approved, Jean became a commuter student. Over the spring and summer, she combined her work as a Dean with daily attendance at graduate courses. In the fall, when she was on leave, she continued to commute daily while she took the full load of required courses in the doctoral program. From January on, she arranged her courses so that she would not have to drive every day.

At first, she commuted on a trial basis. Then, judging that the costs of commuting were about equal to the cost of maintaining two residences, she chose to continue commuting in preference to living alone. When the roads were really bad, she could stay with relatives. Besides, Jim had commuted while taking his course work; Jean was quite prepared to match him in that respect. As well, Jean liked to study in her own home. Ultimately, her commuting time became a valuable resource--it was her own time to think and plan.

Meanwhile, since December of her sabbatical year, Jean had once again been combining her work and her studies, though unofficially. In the fall she had stayed away from her workplace altogether. But her superordinate had made it a condition of her sabbatical that he could recall her to assist with administrative tasks, if he considered it necessary. The person acting in her place was not very active. So, Jean was called in to do a series of major tasks such as the budgets, staff evaluations, and program planning. During her latter part of her "leave," Jean "was putting in at least half the week [at the College]."

At home, the year was a relatively stable time except for one important event. With some of their children still living at home, Jim supported Jean's commuter-student role by taking

over more domestic responsibilities. For example, he had supper ready when Jean arrived home. The married children were coming for weekend visits and bringing their offspring. Meanwhile, though, the cancer that Jean's mother had been fighting for many years was progressing. Jean's mother did not let her family know how ill she was. Then, in the summer, she died.

The death of her mother was one dimension of a difficult period for Jean, personally and professionally. Jean was dealing with frustrations regarding her thesis, grief due to her mother's death, and discomfort about her re-entry to her job. As she remarks, when reflecting on this time, "it's hard to really tell for sure what kinds of things affect other things."

In general, Jean found "re-entry" a difficult process. She describes it this way:

> It's really tough to come back into the same job that you left . . . things are the same but they're not the same . . . you've missed out on a year [when] people have been doing things and you're still back where you were a year before.

She was so affected by her circumstances that she feels she did not even do her job well, for a while. It was the first time in her career that she was just "doing what I had to do." Until about Christmas, Jean was not able to renew her commitment to the College and decide "to get on with it." Nor did she feel able to "get on" with her dissertation and complete it.

Anecdote 63. Lois' principalship assignment the first year after she returned from her sabbatical was a disappointing one. In addition to her years of experience as a consultant and a principal in the school system, she now had a substantial theoretical background in administration. And, she was returning to work revitalized and full of energy. Ironically, she was placed in the school she had wanted and expected to be given when she first became a principal, many years before. It was a small school, about 250 students, with "an easy staff to manage." Only one curriculum component required some development. Lois "felt that I could run [that school] with my eyes shut." If there were administrative challenges, Lois did not see them. At the first opportunity, Lois requested a transfer.

Late Bloomers

It was Elaine who made the comment, "I see myself as a late bloomer." She was speaking of her own career development and, specifically, of her accomplishments since her mid-thirties. One definition of the verb "to bloom" is "to flourish" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). According to the *Webster's International Dictionary*, a "bloomer" is a "person that reaches full competence, skill, or maturity." The phrase "late bloomer," then, might refer to a mature person who has achieved professional competence and is evidently flourishing, but a later age than is generally expected. To what extent is that an accurate description of Elaine's career or the careers of the other three women in this study?

A collective profile for the four women, at the age of 35 years old, looks like this. Two women had children who were young teenagers. One had children in elementary school. One was just starting to have children. None of the women had held a permanent, full-time administrative appointment in education or completed a doctorate. One was a post-secondary instructor with a bachelor's degree, several years of paid-work experience in business, and several more years of experience as a public school teacher. Another woman had a bachelor's and a master's degree, with nearly 15 years' experience as a classroom teacher, some in post-secondary institutions and some in public schools. At 35, two women were full-time doctoral students. Each of the four also had a combination of public school and post-secondary teaching experience, and had done program development and project administration. None of the four had been following or attempting to follow a specific career plan.

As teachers, the women were in "mid-career" (Hall, 1987b, p. 125). According to Hall, midcareer is the period during which a person is well-established in an occupation and feels truly competent in a particular role (p. 127). Any individual may experience more than one midcareer, depending on the number of occupations or diverse roles he or she adopts. That the women in this study were in midcareer as teachers when they were in their mid-thirties is not an indication of late blooming. It is their record of achievements and activities after the age of 35

that distinguishes the women as late bloomers. Indeed, the two older women have even experienced a second midcareer--this one in their roles as administrators--about a decade after the initial midcareer in teaching.

At the time of their first administrative appointment, women teachers are generally older than their male counterparts and they have accumulated more years of classroom experience (Fullan et al., 1987, p. 228; Marshall, 1985, p. 143). Writers account for this phenomenon by referring to some combination of discriminatory practices, slower-to-develop aspirations, and the competing urgencies that result from multiple role commitments. Concern about barriers and obstacles to women's advancement is legitimate. However, there is also a positive side to delayed entry to administration. The positive side relates to the notions of midcareer and of late blooming.

Hall (1987b) characterizes midcareer as a time of frustration or uneasiness. The "fast-trackers," who reach midcareer in their thirties, are often frustrated by an apparently shrinking range of opportunities for advancement up the hierarchy. The phenomenon is exacerbated in organizations that are no longer expanding. People who reach midcareer in their forties tend to feel uneasy about their future prospects, aware that any change will have to happen soon. Such reactions are reminiscent of a period that Larsen (1984, p. 225) called "Unfinished Business" in her study of nurse doctorates. As she puts it, "There seemed to be unfinished aspects of their lives that had to be put in place and other aspects that had yet to be set aside." Hall suggests that the appropriate response to midcareer is to take charge of one's own career and explore new possibilities. While it is difficult to shift roles from veteran to novice, some people do exhibit the necessary independence and adaptability. They have the potential to be late bloomers.

The careers of Margo, Elaine, Jean, and Lois illustrate this point. From their mid-thirties, these women often showed increasing aspirations and purposefulness. They became more confident of their abilities and they began to plan ahead, in some cases with a sense of the desirable next career step. They sought new challenges, acquired doctorates, weighed possibilities and opportunities, adjusted according to their options. In spite of the continuing

role of chance, they seemed to be acting more decisively on their environments, as well as responding to their circumstances.

Anecdote 64. Upon her return from sabbatical leave, Lois took on a number of new committee responsibilities. Some were local, including a personnel committee on paraprofessional ratings, which Lois found particularly enlightening. She sat on that committee as a representative of the Principals' Association. On another front, she was invited to act as the Field Representative for the evaluation and revision of an education degree program. A third entirely new and challenging project was with the provincial teachers' association. An executive member invited Lois to join a group that was developing a new policy on supervision and evaluation. It was a province-wide committee of about six people. The committee members met six or seven times a year over a two-year period to complete their task. Lois found the subject area relevant and therefore she enjoyed the reading that was associated with the committee's work. The project spanned the two years that she remained in the system as a principal.

Following a disappointing initial posting the year she came back from sabbatical leave, Lois' next assignment was more interesting. The school housed both French immersion and English programs. It was located in an affluent area, a "high-powered community," and a vocal one. The community, particularly the militant Parents' Council, was used to "running the principal." Indeed, they had a history of by-passing the administration altogether and going straight to the school board. The staff was a strong group, but they had not worked well with the previous principal. Lois inherited a volatile situation.

She adapted her style to meet the challenges presented by the situation. She engaged in public confrontation at parent-teacher meetings. For this, she drew on her considerable experience teaching junior high students! She instituted monthly curriculum-information sessions for the parents. The teachers, who prepared and presented the sessions, disliked the extra work involved, but Lois persisted. The parents responded by attending. She adjusted to

the expectations of the local parents: they assumed she would be available if they wanted to drop in and chat, so she was. Instead of teaching a class herself, Lois roved throughout the school, relieving various teachers. Most of the staff had welcomed Lois from the beginning, since her reputation had preceded her. But Lois felt that it was a real accomplishment to win over the community. And she did. When she left after one year there as principal, the Parent-Teacher Association threw a big party in her honor.

A great source of pleasure to Lois that year was her working relationship with her vice-principal. Like Lois, the vice-principal was new to the school. She was about 35, 10 years younger than Lois, bright and competent both as an administrator and as a teacher. She and Lois stimulated and supported one another. It was unusual to have an all-female administrative team in a school, but this partnership was a great success.

That same year, Lois was chairing the Principals' Association. One afternoon each week, she had release time from her school to discharge her presidential duties. Among those duties, Lois was responsible for organizing some retirement functions in honor of her own favorite central office administrator. It was fitting that the task should be hers, because she had learned a great deal from the man over the years. At what was an apparent high point in her own career, Lois was saying good-bye to an old friend.

Anecdote 65. A few years earlier, Lois had been drawn back to her school system by the opportunity to open a new school. She had already served as a school principal for several years and then been seconded to a local university as an instructor. She was being encouraged by her academic colleagues to apply for a permanent appointment at the university.

Before making a final decision about that, she went back to the school system to check out the options there. She was offered the principalship of a new school which was just being built in a desirable subdivision. Lois was delighted with the prospect of opening a beautiful new school. She accepted the offer and became the principal there for three years.

Opening the school was another exciting but challenging opportunity in Lois' career. Staffing it with good teachers was easy. So many people requested transfers to it that the central office administrators thought Lois was advertising! Among her staff selections, Lois took care to bring over two teachers from her previous school who "would be key in setting a philosophy." Lois involved her staff immediately in group planning, drawing on her successful earlier experiences with that practice. She and her staff established an innovative set of rules, before the school opened.

However, the school was not ready for a September opening, so the various grades were housed elsewhere and phased into the school as space became available. Lois and the primary classes moved in during the fall and Lois set up her desk in the front hall. As late as Christmas, the vice-principal was still in another school with the older students. So, in many ways, "that first year was . . . a matter of physically hanging in there and trying to develop programs."

Lois did not have a strong vice-principal working with her. As she describes it, she was viewed by then as an established and competent principal. She had already worked effectively with a variety of vice-principals, at her previous school. The administrator who assigned the vice-principals to schools believed that strong principals did not need correspondingly able assistants. Lois vetoed the first-vice-principal appointment that was proposed, but she was forced to settle for a just-slightly-better alternative. Lois respected her assistant's strengths and tried to work around his weaknesses. The two of them made a point of presenting a united front to their staff, and indeed their relations were amicable enough. But it was not an exciting administrative partnership for Lois.

During that same period, Lois was engaged in her second textbook project, this time with a different publisher. In her first four years as a principal, she had been a co-author of a textbook series in her curriculum specialty. There were many parallels between her two textbook projects. In both cases, Lois was invited to participate because of the contacts and comments she had made while she was a consultant. In both cases, there was not much

money in the endeavor for Lois. They were largely summer-time and weekend projects. But, Lois says, "it was another opportunity to learn a lot, and I met some interesting people." Lois found the time to attend the necessary conferences and meetings, staying with each project until its completion.

Anecdote 66. After holding a series of consultant's appointments during her late thirties, Margo was informed that her position had been declared surplus. Margo had a doctorate and post-secondary experience in Educational Administration, as well as several years' experience as a consultant in a school system. Nonetheless, her superordinate actively discouraged her from applying for an administrative position.

Those circumstances represented the culmination of an assignment that had become increasingly frustrating to Margo. Over the preceding several years, she had worked in a different posting each year, although her title had remained the same. The work itself was often interesting. She did policy-oriented research and also professional development programs, but some of her superordinates made life difficult for Margo and her peers. And, due to cut-backs and re-organization, Margo never knew when her assignment would change radically.

Her last posting as a consultant was a rather ambiguous placement. She was not given a job description or many substantial responsibilities. Her assigned tasks were hardly complex administrative challenges. But, whatever she did, her reports--like everyone's--were watered down, re-written many times, and then usually buried without even reaching any decision-makers. Margo felt isolated from other people, and especially from the field. The work she did seemed to have little connection with the schools or with teaching, and little impact on the decision processes higher up. She was not even very busy.

Moreover, she and her superordinate had very different working styles. He viewed her "abstract divergent" ways--such as working concurrently on several projects and consequently having her desk piled high with paper--as inefficient. Certainly, he did not see Margo as having administrative potential. And Margo did not feel challenged or appreciated.

Margo had found a reason for staying, though. A few years earlier, she and Joe had bought a new house to accommodate their growing family. They agreed that they wanted to pay off their mortgage as quickly as possible. Joe pointed out that if Margo stayed in her consultant's job at the existing salary level for a while, they could have their mortgage paid off. Margo and Joe agreed to make that their family goal. Margo decided to remain in her job, but with a new perspective on it: "I'm not into this for a career, I'm into it for a home payment." Margo pursued various extra-curricular interests, including a major professional project on contract, and continued in her job.

Then, there was no job. When Margo was feeling devastated after being informed that her central-office position was redundant, Joe immediately emphasized the positive consequences of that event. He said it was the best thing that could have happened. As he saw it, Margo would otherwise have stayed on in a job that she did not like, compensating for her dissatisfaction by tying up her evenings and weekends with extra-curricular professional projects. Joe helped Margo to see her homelessness as an opportunity to improve on a rather unsatisfactory situation.

Over her years as a consultant, Margo had learned a lot about the unofficial and often unpleasant politics of a large bureaucracy. She learned to "play games" in order to survive. Now she had a new opportunity to make use of her knowledge.

There were several possibilities that Margo could explore within the school system and elsewhere. Within the system, she could follow her supervisor's recommendation and look for a teaching job. Or, she could investigate administrative openings. At a nearby university, there was a competition for an academic position. And a provincial organization was interested in contracting with Margo to give workshops on a kit of materials that she had recently developed for them. In a period of less than two months, Margo investigated all of these avenues and chose one.

Margo was very interested in returning to the university. She loved teaching undergraduates and enjoyed the intellectual stimulation and the amenities of the university

milieu. As well, she looked forward to the prospect of working on some new program of research. Margo applied for the advertised position and was placed on the short-list. She did a presentation, and then learned that the job had been given to someone else. She was depressed and disappointed that she would not be returning to a university setting.

If that was no longer an option, becoming a free-lance consultant on contract certainly was. Margo found the prospect attractive for several reasons. First of all, she had developed some materials that she wanted to see distributed and used. She believed in the material and particularly in her own positive approach to the issues. Indeed, if she was not there to demonstrate that positive approach, she was afraid that people would use the materials in a negatively critical fashion. Moreover, Margo had always found it an ego boost to do workshops and feel appreciated for her efforts. There were people in certain communities around the province who were already eager to work with her over the next year. And she was being offered very good money.

On the other hand, being a province-wide consultant would require that Margo travel a great deal. A travel-and-teach road show is stressful as well as stimulating, and it means many nights away from home and family. Margo felt that she had asked enough of Joe and the children in recent years. She values their companionship and felt she should be spending more time with them, not less. Joe urged her to take a part-time contract thus allowing her the time to pursue other interests as well. Margo was uncertain.

Meanwhile, back at the school system, Margo had a different basis for feeling uncertain. She had gone to several interviews with principals who were seeking new teachers. She thought that, with her background, she would be a welcome addition to a teaching staff. Instead, she was told that she had been out of the classroom too long and that she was, in effect, over-qualified for a teaching position. The principals assumed that Margo would move out of the classroom as soon as she had the opportunity. Margo was feeling "like a piece of used furniture."

She decided to take another initiative. She had always sworn that she did not want to be an administrator, and she certainly had no central-office aspirations. Now, she began to wonder rather desperately about becoming a vice-principal. The deadline for applications had already passed. Margo went straight to a friend in the personnel department. He told her that she was a good candidate and he would arrange for her to be placed in the pool of applicants.

Margo was not finished yet. She spoke to other friends in the central office about her situation, including a couple of senior administrators with whom she had worked. One of them already knew about her credentials in curriculum. Some time before, when a group of central office people were having a beer after a meeting, Margo had expressed to him her views on the system's program in her curriculum specialty. When he asked, she had followed up by sending him a resume. For a while, there had even been a possibility that he would appoint her as a curriculum consultant on a special team. That team had never materialized. In any case, Margo alerted him to her new interest in a vice-principalship.

She knew that decisions on such appointments were ultimately made around a table by a certain group of senior administrators. Margo's name at least made it on to the table. And, she had some supporters sitting there; she was offered a vice-principalship. The offer came as quite a surprise to Margo--and to her supervisor.

Now, Margo had to decide between two options. She believed that the piece of contract work she had been offered was a now-or-never proposition. However, the contract was only for a year. The travelling and the time away from home were big concerns for Margo. Regarding the school system's offer, Margo was familiar with the problematic role of the principal, caught in the squeeze between a school's needs and the demands of a central office. So, she was not even sure that she would want to become a principal, even if she turned out to be successful as a vice-principal. On the other hand, she would be out in the field again, dealing directly with students, teaching, and the related issues. She would have a chance to put to work her theoretical knowledge in both curriculum and educational administration. Both the administrative and the classroom prospects were terrifying as well as exciting. But, the whole

experience might prove to be very satisfying. If she liked her situation as a school administrator, there might be quite a future for her, in ways that she had not previously considered. On the personal side, she and Joe would have more professional interests to share. Besides that, they would have the same holidays.

If her options had been a straight teaching appointment or consulting, Margo says that she would have taken a consulting contract. As it was, she accepted the vice-principalship. She recognized that, with her training, "it makes perfect sense" to try out school administration. She would be treading familiar and approved territory. After all, her mother had been a school administrator. At 41 years, Margo would be following in her mother's footsteps.

Anecdote 67. For several years, Elaine taught as a part-time sessional at a local university, while she worked on a major research project. The contract was one that had been awarded to someone else, and Elaine had been hired as his assistant. Six months into the contract, the project director moved away. Elaine inherited a secure and important long-term project. She was less content, however, with the other half of her work life. She enjoyed the teaching and the income, but she was not very satisfied with her status as a sessional.

She wanted to become a professor, thinking that "it would be a logical step . . . with all my teaching background and my doctorate . . .." However, the educational administration contingent at the local university was small and shrinking, rather than expanding. There did not appear to be much room for someone with Elaine's rather narrow specialization.

Meanwhile, although she continued taking on any sessional courses that were available, she was not comfortable in the other departments. For one thing, she felt that the longer she remained a sessional, the less she was valued. In addition, she found "the lunch hour conversations were incredibly dull and had no intellectual stimulation whatsoever, which was very disillusioning." Elaine did apply for the permanent positions that came open, but she was not appointed. Her future in the university did not seem promising.

Through this period, while Elaine combined her major research project with sessional lecturing, there was a third dimension in her career. She took on small, short-term consulting contracts whenever she could. One way or another, Elaine maintained her income while acquiring considerable experience as a free-lance consultant.

Then, after about three years in this pattern, there were no more university courses for Elaine to teach. There would be a year's hiatus; the undergraduate program was being reorganized. Elaine continued to have the use of her office, but it became apparent that she had run out of options at the university. She became more and more upset by her circumstances. She knew that she was going to have to vacate her office eventually. Much more traumatic, though, was the prospect of deciding what to do next. Of course, her situation at the university did not affect her independent research contracts, except by depriving her of office space. That summer, while Jeff was away on his annual hiking trip, Elaine made the decision that she would become a free-lance consultant, full time.

Her decision grew out of a combination of circumstances. She was not being encouraged to stay around the university. The employment opportunities with other post-secondary institutions no longer appealed to Elaine. She still had the equivalent of a half-time job in the form of her major research contract, so that gave her a secure foundation for a couple of years. She would, however, need office space in order to work on that project. She now had a solid track record as a free-lancer. And, she felt that she could continue to have an active professional and scholarly life outside the university, publishing articles and giving papers at conferences. Moreover, Jeff, who had always supported her endeavours, was encouraging her to become an independent consultant. He himself had a stable position. This seemed like the time to take more risks.

No matter what else she did, Elaine had to find office space. She made temporary arrangements to work in a school. Meanwhile, her protracted negotiations on some office space fell through. That was unfortunate, but it saved her from having to make a final commitment to

her new role. She still "really didn't want to face it . . . really didn't want to decide." She began a new set of negotiations for office space and went off to a conference.

While she was away, she considered her decision again. Due to environmental factors, Jeff's professional circumstances were deteriorating rapidly. He himself would soon be seeking a new organizational home. Elaine was faced with trying to support Jeff in his own time of crisis. She did not know what to do about her own future. At the conference, she read and she talked to other people who were already independent consultants. Not everything they said was positive. But, it was enough for her. She came to the conclusion that she would carry out her own plans, not change them "because of [Jeff's] situation . . . that would be fatal . . . in terms of my own direction." On her return from the conference, she completed the negotiations she had begun earlier. She signed a lease agreement to sublet office space. After many months of uncertainty, "within one week, everything fell into place." Elaine was just turning 40 years old.

Anecdote 68. When she took a sabbatical, Jean left behind a negative political climate at the College. The situation there continued to deteriorate. Indeed, Jean returned from holidays at the end of her sabbatical to read in the local newspaper that there had been major changes in the senior administration.

On her first day back at work, a Friday, Jean attended a management meeting. The chairman indicated to this group that he wanted to make an acting appointment to one of the senior positions. He wanted to appoint someone from that group--immediately. He outlined the characteristics he was seeking. Jean (and, she thinks, others who were present) felt that the description fitted her. Everyone agreed that the chairman should proceed with an appointment.

On Monday morning, Jean arrived at work to find that someone else had been appointed. She was "really devastated." She spent the fall "working through some really tough feelings" related to the decision and her own reactions to it. She questioned the action and her own future at the College, as well as her "role as a woman." She thought about looking for jobs

elsewhere. At the same time, she wondered if a woman would be allowed to rise beyond a certain level, no matter who she was or where she was.

Meanwhile, she was nominated by her colleagues as a representative to a selection committee that had been struck. The committee's purpose was to select a candidate for a permanent appointment to an administrative position even more senior than the one that interested her. Jean agreed to act on the committee because she felt that the involvement would broaden her experience. She was also interested in finding out "what kinds of things the Board was looking for" when such senior appointments were made. Jean worked with other staff and student representatives, Board members, and a management consultant. Because her own doctoral research had some relevance to the task, Jean also became a resource person to the committee.

Shortly after the work of the committee was completed and an appointment had been made, the job that interested Jean was advertised nationally. Jean now had some options to consider. She made two decisions.

After considerable "soul searching" she decided to apply for the opening. She wrestled with the trade-offs involved. She wondered why she would go looking for more hassles at a time when she "should be starting to enjoy life." On the other hand, she thought that she could do a better job than was presently being done. She would also save herself the frustrations of working for someone whom she found inadequate. But the strongest factor in her deliberations was the substantial support from individuals within the College for her candidacy.

As a corollary to her decision to apply, Jean decided that she must finish her still-incomplete dissertation and get her doctorate. She acted on both decisions. Having submitted her application for the job, she took a one-month leave of absence to write her dissertation "full speed ahead." She completed a draft and then revised it over the summer. About the time she was finally interviewed for the vacant position, she also defended her dissertation.

During the interim period, nothing seemed to be happening with regard to the selection process. Jim and Jean were busy moving into a new home and Jean was working on her thesis.

No interviews were held in June or over the summer. No one on the selection committee communicated with Jean. She waited and she wrote, not even making any holiday plans.

At last, selection interviews were scheduled. Once again, Jean prepared carefully and went out to get the job. Her careful preparations were also a way of reducing her own stress level. These preparations included buying a new business suit and getting her hair done. She felt that the interview went well, but she did not really know much about the competition and she "couldn't get a handle on the internal-external thing." She waited.

Just before a new academic year began, Jean was offered the job she had sought. Within the College, the response to Jean's appointment was overwhelmingly positive. As she describes the occasion, "that whole Friday was . . . a celebration." Jean had achieved a doctorate and a senior administrative appointment exactly 20 years after she entered a one-year teacher-training program. She was 46 years old at the time.

Nurturing Environments

Sometimes, being on the staff of a given organization over a particular period of time was a chance that presented a significant structure of opportunities. The following summaries from Elaine's and Lois' stories present examples of that kind, where the nature of the specific organization and the socio-historical context were important features. Those situations might be called, in Lois' words, "nurturing environments."

Among the definitions offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the verb "to nurture" is this one: "to support and bring up to maturity." Other words associated with the verb include "nourish, rear, foster, train, educate." The verb "to nourish" may be defined as "to supply (a thing) with whatever is necessary to promote its growth or formation or to maintain it in proper condition." And one definition of "to foster" is "to encourage, promote development of."

Exploring the concept of nurturing with respect to some of the organizations in which these women worked, I note some common characteristics. The "nurturing" environments tended to be small, but growing organizations (Gallese, 1985, p. 177). Because of their size and

structure, they afforded the woman high visibility and the potential to earn the respect of more senior members (Gallese, 1985, p. 215; Gaertner, 1981). Significant individuals and groups offered support and/or "space" to the woman (Kram, 1987; Tague & Harris, 1988, p. 239; Willis & Dodgson, 1986). Thus, the organization--or some part of it--was a safe place to develop skills and take risks (Hackett & Betz, 1981, p. 330; Ridler, 1984, p. 10). Partly because of the general socio-historical environment in those provinces at those times, challenges and opportunities were available. So, it was possible for the woman to undertake a range of activities (Greenfield & Beam, 1980, p. 18; Hall, 1987c, p. 333), through which she was able to broaden her perspective on the organization and its environment while proving her own loyalty to her employer (Marshall, 1985, pp. 137-138).

One way or another, these women were not only allowed but often challenged to exercise their own talents and initiative. And, sometimes, they were even rewarded for doing so by means of (conventional) promotions. If not, they were still better equipped to move on to more promising situations.

Anecdote 69. For Lois, one organization served as a "nurturing" environment over a period of about 25 years. That period was an expansionary one. The community itself was growing. The "baby boomers" needed schooling. And, the school system by which Lois was employed amalgamated with another one. The senior administrator of Lois' organization became the senior administrator of the larger system.

This administrator had taken notice of Lois from the early stages of her employment there. For example, on two occasions Lois had to resign in midyear due to unexpected pregnancies. And both times, the administrator personally invited her back to his teaching staff after the birth of her child. That was a significant gesture in a time when pregnant women were expected to give up their jobs and stay at home after their babies were born. The offers relieved Lois of considerable anxiety about her family's finances (since she was then the primary wage-earner) and about her own future employability. Moreover, the second of these invitations

placed Lois in an assignment as a relief teacher in a new school. Lois considers that taxing assignment to have been a significant bench-mark in her career.

A few years later, the same administrator responded to her request for a part-time appointment, although the request was an unusual one for those days. Lois was offered a specialized job for which she did not feel qualified. The administrator assured her that she could do the job. So she did, enhancing her knowledge of the subject through part-time course work. But the employment itself was not the only issue. Lois regards the individual attention, the recognition, and the variety of opportunities accorded her by the senior administrator in those early days of her career as typical of the environment in which she matured and flourished as a professional over the years.

Some years after that, when she was a consultant working out of the central office, the same administrator urged Lois to apply for a provincial curriculum grant. He had heard Lois say that they were not doing a good job of teaching certain courses, so he wanted her to take constructive action. Lois was startled by the suggestion, but she wrote a proposal, received a grant, and coordinated a local curriculum project. Around the same time, she was recruited as an "interested" person to work on a provincial curriculum project. Later, she was invited to join one, then a second national textbook-writing team. All those curriculum-related opportunities occurred during the early 1970s, when Lois was in a highly visible role as a consultant and then a principal in a mid-sized school system. At that time, there was an emphasis in educational circles on the development of Canadian curriculum materials for the burgeoning student population. Lois' involvement with these projects widened her professional network and background, and engaged her in a series of the participatory group-planning processes that were in vogue at the time.

Over the years, Lois' work as a consultant broadened in scope, until she felt ready to move into the role of a principal. When Lois did become a principal, she habitually instituted a group planning process with her staff. She found that style a "natural way of operation." In her nine years as a principal, she faced and thrived on the challenges presented by a variety of

unexpected school postings. Mid-way through this period in her career, she opened a new school in the system. But there was another important dimension to Lois' experience as a principal. The principals in that system had their own association in which Lois was very active. In her last year as a principal, she was also the president of the principal's association.

About then, Lois knew that she was ready for a particular career move, but no appropriate opportunity was presented within her home organization. For several years, she had been seeking out or accepting whatever changes were available, in order to keep herself challenged. She pursued doctoral studies, she transferred from one principalship to another, she welcomed new and different committee work. To observers, Lois' situation--professionally and personally--seemed ideal.

What more could she want? asked her friends. She wanted a central office administrative position in curriculum and instruction. A friend of hers held a comparable position, so Lois knew what the job entailed and still found it attractive. Since there was no concrete evidence that a suitable position would open up soon where she was, Lois began to look outside her home organization for opportunities. Ultimately, she did leave her nurturing environment for a new milieu.

Anecdote 70. Hired as an instructor, Elaine arrived at a post-secondary institution during an expansionary period. The senior administrator emphasized collegiality and, along with it, participatory decision making. The institution was young at the time of Elaine's arrival, so everyone was relatively new to the organization. Elaine immediately became acquainted with the other new staff members at orientation sessions, establishing contacts throughout the organization. At that time, the members of her division dominated the faculty association and the college's Academic Council. So, Elaine found herself among the "movers and shakers" at an early stage in the life of the organization and in her employment there. She was delighted with the intellectual stimulation and collegiality of her new milieu.

It was a period filled with opportunities. Elaine accepted some of the opportunities that were presented to her, and created others. Money was available for on-site staff development activities and for conferences. Elaine sought out both. Although she remained a classroom instructor throughout this period, she was also "branching out" from the classroom. Because she taught--and continued to be challenged by teaching--many of the same courses from year to year, her preparation time declined. She was able to take on more and more curriculum and committee work along with her classroom responsibilities. She developed new courses and course materials in response to the changing needs of the growing institution. She contributed to the planning of new program facilities that were being built and then managed those facilities. She worked on institution-wide committees and on the executive of the faculty association. She took increasingly visible leadership roles in the areas of institution-wide planning and policy making. And, she initiated and coordinated a popular summer school program.

However, a formal administrative appointment did not become available to Elaine. When the position of program head came open, there was a formal competition. Although Elaine applied and was interviewed for the position, the job was awarded to Elaine's (male) colleague. Elaine had more relevant administrative experience than he did. She "felt quite strongly that I was more prepared for the job than he was . . .." She was not pleased to be passed over and she was not at all keen on working for her former peer. Moreover, just prior to the competition, there had been a change in personnel at the next level up the hierarchy, as well. Elaine did not much like that change either. Within the organization, though, there really was not anywhere else for Elaine to live, and there was no other route into the administration.

By then, Elaine had served in most of the volunteer roles that offered her challenging new experiences within the organization. And, her work as a project coordinator meant that she was viewing the world more from an administrator's than an instructor's perspective. But, she was still an instructor. She felt that she was "getting boxed in . . .." All in all, Elaine was ready for a change. Like Lois, Elaine eventually had to leave her "nurturing" environment before it became a stifling one.

Conclusion

Larwood and Gutek (1987, p. 174) name five elements requiring particular attention in the study of women's careers. The elements are: career preparation (expectations and socialization as well as education); the opportunities available in society; the influence of marriage; pregnancy and child care; timing and age. All five elements have emerged as significant dimensions in the anecdotes that have been presented in this and the preceding two chapters. As Larwood and Gutek note, those elements are probably far more relevant to the career development of many men than conventional theory and research acknowledge. Therefore, as they conclude, "a good model of career development for women may be the general model for both sexes."

But there does remain the question of defining a "career," drawing on the more comprehensive notion of career development that Larwood and Gutek propose. Morrison and Holzback (cited in Morrison & Hock, 1987, p. 237) make a promising start, based on the concept of career growth through experiential learning. They define a career as:

> a sequence of work roles that are related to each other in a rational way, so that some of the knowledge and experience acquired in one role is used in the next. This definition is not constrained by such factors as geography, organizational boundaries, or promotional opportunities.

The definition does comprehend the important concept of a cumulative but not necessarily hierarchical progression of paid-work activities occurring, perhaps, in a variety of organizational contexts.

However, the anecdotes presented in this thesis point out certain inadequacies in the Morrison and Holzback definition. I therefore propose the following version:

> A career is a sequence of paid-work roles that are related to each other and to co-existing work (i.e., volunteer, family, formal education) roles by choice and chance, so that some of the knowledge and experience acquired from the various work roles is acknowledged and used from one paid work role to the next.

The proposed definition--albeit primitive--does emphasize individual growth and adaptability in the process of "weaving" a career (Casserly, 1988). However, it does not address the

concomitant issue of the organizational and societal milieux in which roles are defined and careers lived out. That is the next step in this exploration of chance, choice, and careers.

Chapter 6

NOT FINISHED YET

> Freedom ought surely to mean a wide range of options, and as clear a view as possible of what each of them means, not the acceptance of a single one that is powerfully presented as unavoidable. (Midgely & Hughes, 1983, p. 15)

What insights about a "wide range of [organizational] options" might be derived from the stories told by Lois, Jean, Margo, and Elaine? The preceding three chapters--On Chance, On Choice, On Careers--relate anecdotes about these four women's experiences as they have lived out their careers in education. Through different combinations of chance, choice, and opportunity, each of the women has remained in the field of education for 20 years or more. Each one started out as a public school teacher. Each one has also taught in post-secondary institutions. Each one has acquired administrative/policy making experience, whether or not she has held formal, permanent administrative appointments. Along the way, each one has acquired a doctorate in Educational Administration, which is something few women have done until very recently. The stories have been told from the perspectives of the women, about themselves. But, from the stories--from their uniqueness and from their recurring themes--we may draw inferences about significant organizational and societal structures and practices.

Although Lois, Jean, Margo, and Elaine are very different individuals, they share some significant personal characteristics. Demonstrated in their stories, and confirmed by my own impressions from talking with them in person, are the traits of high energy, initiative, adaptability, and willingness to work hard. Other researchers have documented similar characteristics in their studies of "successful" women in the same age range (see, for example, Boardman et al., 1987, pp. 82-83). Women who have become educational administrators attribute their achievements to a combination of hard work, good credentials, motivation, encouragement, ability or competence, luck or opportunity, good health, stamina, and persistence (Coffin &

Ekstrom, 1979, p. 58; Willis & Dodgson, 1986, p. 3). As Boardman et al. note, some of the most critical qualities, such as "openness to opportunity, risk-taking" cannot be taught in the classroom (1987, p. 83), though they could be encouraged.

Lois, Jean, Margo, and Elaine are not radicals. They were raised and have shown themselves willing to live and work within established middle-class organizational structures. They have maintained a strong student/classroom orientation, and worked for curriculum/instruction improvements through modifications to existing practices (Greenfield & Beam, 1980). They have demonstrated resourcefulness in coping with the status quo (Woo, 1985, p. 287), being neither entirely defeated nor entirely coopted by conventional expectations. They have succeeded in living out worthwhile careers within contemporary organizational and societal constraints, some of which place special burdens on women. The accomplishments of these four women, and others like them, are genuine.

But are the existing organizational and societal constraints necessary or desirable? Many people do not believe that they are (Adkison, 1981; Kanter, 1977, p. 266; Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 135). Moreover, many people now argue that certain structures and practices constrain opportunity for women. In education, for example, the majority of formal administrative roles continue to be filled by men (Nixon, 1985). That is overwhelmingly the case in high-level positions (Fullan, 1987; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988). Of course, teaching is a career in itself, Lortie (1975) notwithstanding. We should not assume that all women teachers, nor all men teachers, want to do administrative work (Biklen, 1986), especially given the traditional ways of dividing up instructional and administrative tasks. However, the issue is one of real access to real options. And the existing structures of influence and rewards do accord more recognition to those who take on formal administrative roles. Men's career paths in education continue to lead to administration more often than do women's.

Why is that? The stories in this thesis record instances of overt discrimination against individual, qualified women. Examples include personnel policies about pregnancy, and certain decisions about performance evaluation and promotion. Some of the examples occurred years

ago, but some are recent. They are echoes of the numerous examples that have been documented and discussed at length during recent decades. While such discrimination does continue to exist, the situation is changing gradually. Initiatives such as human rights legislation and employment equity policies are having some impact. There is recourse against overt discrimination. As a result, there have been changes in the structures of opportunity for women, in education and elsewhere (Fullan, 1987, p. 222; Eisenstein, 1983, pp. 139-140).

But the question is not answered quite that readily. There are more complex and subtle issues about careers and about the organization of paid work in our society. The world of organized formal education (all levels and stages of it), populated as it is by large numbers of women, has proved to be a fruitful source of illustrations. Ortiz and Marshall (1988, p. 137) ask, "What would the educational system be like if it were ordered by the values, needs, and priorities of women?" After Gerson (1985, p. xiv), Eisenstein (1982, p. xii), and others, I reject the view that a specific set of values (sometimes equated with virtues) is inherently or exclusively female. Nor do all women have the same needs and priorities. Therefore, I find the question posed by Ortiz and Marshall too insistently general in its assumptions about "women." Nonetheless, even the stories told in this thesis,about women who would generally be judged "successful," offer some lessons on the strengths and limitations of many existing structural arrangements, from the perspectives of the women (and, no doubt, some of the men) who must cope with them. So, my question is this. Considering the experiences of the four women whose stories have just been related, what concerns might educational policy makers have regarding the established structures and practices in their organizations, and beyond?

As Kanter (1977, pp. 286-287) points out, organizational reform does not equal social revolution. Some believe that only temporary and inadequate changes are possible without a fundamental re-structuring of society. Others, like Eisenstein (1983, p. 138) or Lipman-Blumen (1983, p. 76), note that the institutionalization of modest reforms makes further reforms seem less radical and more acceptable. Kanter believes that we could make our existing organizational structures and practices more equitable, and our organizational paid-work

contexts more humane. At the same time, human energy and talents would be released for the benefit of the organization as well as the individual.

Kanter (1977, p.267) suggests that a great deal could be accomplished simply through "the systematic application of much of what is already known." The following observations are based on the experiences described by Lois, Jean, Margo, and Elaine. They are reiterations of what "is already known" and of suggestions that have been made before. Nonetheless, I draw them to the attention of those who structure policy problems and manage organizations in the field of education.

Chance and Choice

. . . chance favours only the mind that is prepared. (Louis Pasteur)

In careers, as in life, choice and chance are interwoven. While chance is a continuing element in the living out of a career, it need not be a controlling factor. The readiness to recognize and capitalize on opportunities when they appear is a potent resource (Edson, 1988, p. 259; Gallese, 1985, p. 27; Greenfield & Beam, 1980, p. 49; Paddock, 1981, p. 195; Porat, 1985, p. 299). We could do more to acknowledge chance as a factor in career development and to document the ways that individuals have coped with and benefitted from chance events.

Too much emphasis on career planning and long-term goals is unrealistic and misleading. Flexibility, insight, and resilience (Hall, 1986a, p. 26) are more important than 10-year plans. It is not simply a case of fitting in or of giving up and getting bitter (Edson, 1988, pp. 260-261). Individuals--and organizations--must be able to adjust to changing, frequently unpredictable, realities. That requires a sense of purpose and priorities, the application of ingenuity and persistence, along with flexibility. But aspirations and purposefulness are best coupled with adaptability.

Within organizations, both chance and choice may be constructively promoted/structured by offering diverse--and equitably distributed--opportunities for individuals to develop and demonstrate their talents and abilities (Gaertner, 1981, p. 214; Greenfield &

Beam, 1980, p. 50). The task force (and, sometimes, the committee) is one of the most frequently cited means to that end (Kanter, 1977, p. 272). To be effective in education, though, task forces should be designed to cut across various levels of the bureaucratic-administrative structure and also to bridge the isolation of individuals in the professional-teaching structure (Wheatley, 1981, p. 259). It is not enough to have instructors talking to one another and administrators doing likewise. Other alternatives include special assignments and "bridging" appointments (Kanter, 1977, p. 271; Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 139), as well as "acting" positions (Wheatley, 1981, p. 269); teachers might even elect their own administrators for specific terms of office (Biklen, 1987, p. 22). Boundary-spanning roles that enable individuals to encounter new groups are particularly helpful (Wheatley, 1981, p. 269). Opportunities to attend inservice training and conferences are also important. So are systematic attempts to identify and reward the individuals and groups within the organization that naturally fulfill mentor functions (Kram, 1986, p. 196). All these initiatives are more possible and more likely to be effective when organizations/work units are relatively small (Kanter, 1977, pp. 285-286; Lipman-Blumen, 1983, p. 77). Decentralization is one remedy, for which there are precedents in education. Economies of scale may be achieved at a substantial opportunity cost to individuals and organizations.

Personal and Professional

> . . . the whole relation between private and public life--between our domestic and our official functions--is becoming distorted. A barrier is building up between them which is impoverishing life for everyone, not just for women. (Midgley & Hughes, 1983, p. 26)

Whether or not we acknowledge it in our organizational structures and practices, the personal and the professional dimensions of life are entwined (Biklen, 1987; Hall, 1986b, p. 134; Valdez & Gutek, 1987, p. 157). The design of professional work, even in the field of education where there are so many women, has not adequately accommodated other dimensions and demands of life, especially family work and leisure. The problem is even greater when one moves from the classroom to the more bureaucratically and hierarchically organized realm of educational administration.

Priorities vary with the individual, and throughout life. Organizational options could better accommodate varying priorities. Thus would the individual be enabled to maintain her/his professional connections while achieving a tolerable balance between paid work and other dimensions of life (Hall, 1986a, p. 10; Reich & LaFontaine, 1982, p. 80). And valuable human resources would not be lost altogether to organizations. Therefore, ways should be sought to divide and share responsibilities/tasks among more people.

There could be more well designed part-time and shared jobs. In education, the segmentation of instructional and consulting tasks (and some school/department-based administration) is already quite common, so the possibilities are immediately obvious. With imagination, it should be possible to re-design some traditionally full-time administrative roles by identifying smaller clusters of functions that could be assigned to an individual. The idea is to reduce the number of hours that would be demanded of each individual and still ensure that all necessary functions are fulfilled competently.[1] The current trend (in government, for example) of contracting out tasks that used to be performed by permanent staff members suggests that many "full-time" jobs are divisible. Choosing to work part time, however, must not be equated with low career commitment (Biklen, 1986; Reich & LaFontaine, 1982, p. 74). As a corollary, the organizational status of part-time work should reflect its value as an option by means of permanent appointments, the availability of pro-rated fringe benefits, and "voting rights."

Other norms might also be adjusted. Existing "teachers' work patterns," with a relatively short formal work day and numerous vacations, might be treated as the appopriate model for all professional careers (Biklen, 1987, p. 21). Given the high number of unemployed and underemployed, it might be time to reduce the standard work week again (Rubin, 1983, p. 186). If existing work loads prevail, more administrative jobs might be rotated (Jovick, 1981; Kanter, 1977, p. 271; Lipman-Blumen, 1983, p. 77), or assigned for limited terms. Again, there are already viable precedents in the field of education. They include rotating team leaders in

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[1]People who coordinate volunteer programs/organizations have to find ways of subdividing roles all the time, since most volunteers are not available as 35-hour-per-week packages.

schools and departmental chairs in universities, and appointing university senior administrators for specific terms. Some administrative appointments might also be made using seniority as a criterion weighed equally with other factors such as education, experience, and performance record (Carlson & Schmuck, 1981, p. 126). Like rotation, seniority is a well-entrenched concept in education (for salary purposes, at least) . Carlson & Schmuck suggest that appointment by seniority would also promote equity.[2] A greater emphasis on rotation and on seniority might have the side benefit of reducing the sense of urgency about taking on administrative appointments the instant they become available. Kanter (1977, p. 162) describes "the costs of too much opportunity," of too-rapid upward mobility, when individuals do not have time to learn their increasingly complex jobs before moving on, nor do they have time for anything or anyone else.

Late blooming is another way to reduce the concurrent pressures of paid and family work to more sequential ones (Levinson, 1978, pp. 337-338). Besides, people who have more life experience may well make better administrators (Kanter, 1977, pp. 269,274). Certainly, there is no reason to assume that educational leadership is best accomplished by the young or those with a narrow range of experience.

Child-bearing and rearing, along with other variations on care-giving, are honourable career "interruptions" and should be treated accordingly. People who stay out of the paid work force for such purposes (usually women: Paddock, 1981, p. 193; Reich & LaFontaine, 1982, p. 75) should be provided with appropriate recognition and support, including ease of re-entry to the paid work force (Larwood & Gutek, 1987, p. 177). As Emma Goldman pointed out in 1916, soldiers have received more official support and recognition for going to war than women have received for reproducing our species (cited in Partnow, 1977, p. 320).

The corollary to greater recognition and rewards for those who interrupt their careers to be care-givers in their own homes, is similar treatment for those who undertake delegated family

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[2]The elimination of mandatory retirement, however, complicates the argument.

work, in its various forms. The existence of such support systems increases the range of options for both women and men. Indeed, more flexible and extensive support systems of good quality are needed.

Finally, many of the skills and experience required while doing family work, volunteer work, and leisure activities are relevant to paid-work situations, and should be recognized as transferable (Carlson & Schmuck, 1981, p. 118). For instance, there are many parallels between doing managerial work and coping with the competing urgencies that were described in Chapter 5 of this thesis. As well, career interruptions to take responsibility for family work may be better preparation for the real work of educational administration than a graduate degree in the subject (Paddock, 1981, p. 194). Certainly, the interpersonal skills and nurturing abilities that may be developed through parenting are valuable in supervision (Lipman-Blumen, 1983, p. 76) and should be emphasized and rewarded in all educational administrators, given the central concerns of education as an endeavor (Fullan, 1987, p. 229; Stockard and Johnson, 1981, p. 251).

Careers and Success

> . . . it is clear that alternative definitions of success are long overdue. (Kanter, 1977, p. 272)

Bringing new connotations to the term "success" involves understanding the notion of a "career" differently. Seeing a career as a series of paid-work opportunities to apply what one has learned in the past (Chapter 5, page 215) is quite different from definitions that emphasize hierarchical progression and conventional measures of career commitment. The proposed orientation emphasizes "job characteristics" over "position title" (Paddock, 1981, p. 196). Success then depends on access to particular forms of opportunity that are not necessarily associated with upward mobility.

Opportunity, viewed this way, is its own reward. Opportunity, as Kanter defines it, "offers new potential for growth and learning rather than only a change in status or span of

authority" (1977, p. 272). This definition emphasizes the potential satisfactions of lateral, as well as vertical, moves and it builds in organizational rewards for such moves. The concept may be constructively applied to careers in education (Biklen, 1987; Wheatley, 1981, p. 260). There are many precedents and potential ways of varying assignments, whether instructional or administrative, while retaining the same or comparable formal role designation.

A number of the initiatives that were discussed earlier in this chapter (to promote choice and chance; to distribute responsibilities more equitably) amount to the provision of opportunities, by Kanter's definition. Their implementation on a wide scale in an organization would also change the governance structure (Kanter, 1977, p. 257,285; Jovick, 1981, p. 166). Power would inevitably be shared more equally; cooperation would be necessary for survival. Given the combined effects of the feminist critique (Biklen, 1987), retrenchment (Adkison, 1981, p. 338; Nixon, 1985, p. 8), and "baby boom" demographics, revised notions about careers and opportunities, accompanied by the appropriate organizational reforms, seem imperative.[3]

These proposals are not just a sop to those disenchanted women who, seeing increased prospects for advancement, have improved their credentials and expressed new aspirations (Reich & LaFontaine, 1982, p. 244; Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 91). The provision of opportunity as Kanter defines it will aid those who seek advancement of the traditional sort. For other women (and men, too), some of whom are struggling unhappily with too many competing urgencies, the provision of opportunity enhances the possibility of enjoying a satisfying career without sacrificing participation in other realms of life.

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[3]See, for example, a recent Globe and Mail article on the "plateauing" of "fast-trackers" (Gibb-Clark, October 29, 1988, p. B1)

Not Finished Yet

> Rather than dismissing the achievements of the revived women's movement as reformist or as forms of co-optation, feminist theory needs to take account of them, to analyze them critically and in detail, and to assess their implications for further change. (Eisenstein, 1983, p. 140)

The women in this study provide some models of "flexible success" (Keohane, 1984, cited in Hall, 1986, p. 345) in education. Like Midgley and Hughes, Keohane (who is the president of Wellesley College) is arguing for a widened array of choices. According to her, flexible success is characterized by interruptions in paid work, part-time paid work, and slower achievement. Those are characteristics of the careers described in this thesis. Energy, resilience, talent, commitment, initiative are important. But, even combined with the good will and concrete assistance of significant others, they are not the whole story.

Describing her own late-blooming career, Elaine commented, "I haven't finished yet." Elaine is not the only woman to feel that way. While individual stories are still being told, though, the complex narrative of organizational structures and practices also continues to unfold. As we--women and men, together--live out our careers in organizations, we create and recreate organizational structures and practices through our own choices and actions. We still have work to do, constructive changes to effect. We are not finished yet.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

May , 1986

Dear :

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. My area of research interest is the relationship between women educators' careers and the administration of education. As the first phase of my study, I am documenting the career-related experiences and career patterns of some women who possess doctorates in Educational Administration. My research approach for this phase consists of modified life-history interviews with a small number of women educators/administrators from the group just mentioned.

As you have no doubt anticipated by now, I am writing to ask if you would agree to participate in my study as an interviewee. You are one of the few women who has pursued a career [specific reference to individual's position]. For that reason, I am especially interested in hearing your story. At no time would your story be reported as a complete biography (anonymous or otherwise) to anyone else: I would be analyzing it for use during the subsequent phases of the study and quoting extracts only, in support of my analysis.

What I am asking, then, is if you would take the time to "tell me your story." Based on my experiences with preliminary and pilot studies, I expect that we might need a series of about five one-and-one-half hour interview sessions over a period of five or so days for this task. If you re willing to undertake this project with me, I am certainly willing to come to [location] and make myself available for a set of interviews at your convenience.

I realize that this letter provides only the sketchiest introduction, both of my study and of me. My advisor, Dr. Al MacKay, is prepared to act as a reference with respect to my status as a student. As well, the woman who has cooperated with me as the interviewee for my pilot study is willing to act as a reference with respect to that experience. I'll provide you with her name and telephone number if you wish to call her. Naturally, I am also prepared to answer any questions you may have. To this end, I'll telephone you on Friday, May 30th. Should you wish to call me, my numbers are (H) (403) 438 5483 and (O) (403) 432 3094.

I look forward to talking with you about the possibility of your participation in my study.

Yours sincerely

Beth Young-Checkland

APPENDIX B

COLLECTIVE PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES

COLLECTIVE PROFILE

The intention of this collective profile is twofold. First, the profile provides information on a number of demographic characteristics that at some time seemed relevant to me for selection purposes. However, I obtained this information during the interviews, long after the selection process was completed. Second, then, this demographic profile illustrates both the chance similarities and the diversity that became evident within this group of four women.

Certain demographic characteristics turned out to be common to all four interviewees. Since I had chosen the women strictly on the basis of their doctorates in Educational Administration, their current paid-work positions, and their western Canadian domiciles, I had not "controlled" for any other common factors, except the fortuitously evolved age cohort. All four women were married and had been married to the same man for at least 10 years. All four had children. All four women had mothers who had been school teachers, but none of the four had a father who was a teacher. All four women had accumulated substantial and varied work experience within the field of education. Each of the women had taught in both the basic education and the post-secondary education sectors. Each had recently moved into a paid-work position that was new to her. Beyond the characteristics just cited, though, the demographics depict a tale of diversity.

The women were born and raised in very different settings, albeit middle-class ones. Two came from rural western Canada. Two came from the eastern seaboard of Canada, where one spent her childhood in small centres only, while the other lived in both large and small centres. Two are eldest children, one with a younger sister and the other with several younger brothers. Two are second children, one with an older sister and one with an older brother. Of their teacher-mothers, one retired permanently from the classroom when her first child was born. Another taught throughout her adult life. The remaining two returned to the classroom while they still had children in school. Two of the mothers were teaching principals in small schools. The fathers' paid-work careers ranged from carpentry and maintenance responsibilities to industrial engineering, farming, and operating small businesses. The interviewees' on-going relations with their respective parents have varied considerably, but none of the women has severed these family connections.

The interviewees' formal education experiences varied widely. Although the early school years were spent mainly in small schools in small centres, some women attended the same school for years but others changed schools several times as their families moved from place to place. In the later school years, some women did some grades by correspondence but all four attended high schools for at least two years. Three of the high schools were rural and one was suburban. Three of the four women described themselves as "good" students, cooperative and academically successful right through high school. The fourth had a similar record until high school, when she experienced some academic and personal difficulties. Three of the women began their post-secondary education around the age of 17, immediately after they graduated from high school. The fourth entered university when she was in her mid-twenties. The entry dates ranged from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Three of the women went straight into teacher-education programs. The fourth began an Arts degree. Later on, three women completed Master of Education degrees and one completed a Master of Arts. Those completion dates ranged from 1970 to 1980. Although the four women began their doctoral studies at different times in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, they all completed their doctorates in the 1980s. At graduation time, two of the women were in their mid-thirties and two were in their mid-forties. The topics of their dissertations, like the backgrounds and interests of the women themselves, are markedly different.

Apart from their common role as married mothers, the four women's family lives do not fall into any one pattern statistically. Three of the four women have been married only once, for periods ranging from approximately 15 to 30 years. The fourth woman has been married twice, for a total of about 15 years. Two of the women married while they were still in their teens. One married in her early twenties, one in her late twenties, and one re-married in her early thirties. The two women who married in their teens also had their first children while they were still teenagers. Another woman had her first child when she was in her mid-twenties, and one had her first child when she was in her mid-thirties. Among them, the women have a total of 10 children. At the time of the interviews, those children ranged in age from 5 to 30 years. At that same time, two of the women's husbands were classroom teachers, one was an educational administrator, and the fourth was an accountant. All four couples were living in urban settings, with populations ranging from 50,000 to 500,000. They had all been living in the West for at least 10 years.

Such a brief summary does distort lives by over-simplifying them and offering a few facts without any context. However, it is not meant to stand alone. It is simply an introduction to the surprising commonalities and diversities among the women whom I had selected to interview.

APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

My area of research interest is the relationship between women educators' careers and the administration of education. The study will consist of several phases, as follows:

1. Using the modified life-history interview, I shall document the career-related experiences and career patterns of a small number of women who possess doctorates in Educational Administration. Each interview cycle will consist of a series of interview sessions held over a period of several days. These sessions will be tape recorded. Between sessions in a given cycle, I shall review the tape of the just completed session and draft a chronological network of the decision-making sequence that is being described. I shall attempt to capture in this diagram the configurations of choices and the developmental nature of those configurations, as related by the interviewee. Our review of the diagram will then serve as the starting-point for the next interview session. The diagram will likely include three "tracks": the professional/career line, the personal line, and the community/volunteer line. The decision-making network represents my first analysis of the interview data.

2. Following the completion of an interview cycle, I shall draft a short biography based on the series of interviews. I shall then submit it to the interviewee for review and verification. The biography will be an elaboration of the decision-making network, telling back the basic developmental story as I have understood it. It will deal with the basic facts of and interrelationships among the three life tracks that have been identified. The biography will not attempt to incorporate the anecdotes and private thoughts that may have emerged during the interviews. This document represents my second analysis of the interview data.

3. Once the interview has reviewed the biography, it will be the focus of a follow-up interview (possibly by telephone). This interview provides the interviewee with an opportunity to react to the biography, to correct/elaborate/validate the story as she sees fit.

4. After that, I shall analyze the biography and the interview data for significant concepts and issues. I shall review each individual life history and also seek patterns or themes that are common to more than one interviewee. My analysis will emphasize the combination of choice and chance as factors in career development. I shall also seek insights regarding our existing definitions of the notions of career and of administration.

5. At one or more stages during the data analysis, I anticipate returning to the interviewees to check out my understanding of the data and to seek additional confirming or contradictory life-history data.

6. Similarly, I anticipate seeking out reactions to various aspects of my analysis from a few other women in the identified population. These "member-checks" will likely be done by means of semi-structured interviews that seek confirming or contradictory life-history data.

7. The findings will be presented by articulating themes and theoretical issues that arise from the collective life-history data. Full case histories will not be provided. Excerpts drawn from the life histories will not be cited within a biographical context; rather, they will be offered to support and elucidate themes and concepts.

APPENDIX D

MEASURES TAKEN TO PROTECT THE IDENTITY OF INTERVIEWEES

MEASURES TAKEN TO PROTECT THE IDENTITY OF INTERVIEWEES

1. Based on specific criteria, I select interview prospects and approach them. No one else--including my advisor and my committee--knows whom I have approached or whether they have agreed to cooperate.

2. I do not indicate my interview plans or travel destinations to anyone.

3. Any correspondence that I have with (prospective) interviewees is handled in confidence by one well-regarded typist, Margaret Voice.

4. I do all of the other confidential typing (e.g., selective transcription, biographies) myself.

5. All tapes, computer disks, paper copies, biographies are stored in a safe place in my home. No one except me has access to any of this confidential material.

6. The delivery of any confidential material to interviewees is by (my) hand or by registered mail.

7. All names and identifying demographic characteristics will be changed for public reporting purposes.

8. Potentially identifying characteristics, descriptions, and quotations will be used only with the permission of the interviewee.

9. The institutions at which the participants engaged in doctoral studies will not be specified in the dissertation.

10. No demographic profile of the individual participants will be published, although a collective summary profile may be presented.

11. The findings will be presented by means of themes rather than by means of case histories. Excerpts drawn from the individual life histories will not be cited within a biographical context, but rather to support and elucidate themes and concepts.

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent

Researcher: Beth Young-Checkland, B.A., M.Ed.
Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Administration
University of Alberta

Advisory: Dr. D. A. MacKay
Professor, Department of Educational Administration
University of Alberta

I hereby agree to participate in this research project, which examines the relationship between women educators' careers and the administration of education. The source of primary data for this study is life-history interviews, which will document the career-related experiences and career patterns of some women who possess doctorates in Educational Administration.

I understand that I am free to ask questions about the research, and to expect them to be answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that my name will not be disclosed at any time and that the information I provide will be used in such a way as to protect my identity.

I agree that interviews with me may be tape-recorded and that comments I make may be reported verbatim (subject to the previous condition).

I understand that I may review and/or retain a coy of each interview tape, if I wish to do so.

I am aware that when Beth Young-Checkland is doing the analysis and interpretation of the data, she may consult with me from time to time.

Finally, I understand that I am free to refuse to answer specific questions or to disclose specific information, and I understand that I may choose to withdrawn from the study at any time.

______________________________ ____________________
(Signature of Participant) (Date)

____
(Signature of Researcher)

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO INTERVIEWEES, AUGUST, 1987

August , 1987

Dear :

As promised and promised, I finally enclose my draft version of your story. The draft is based on my review and analysis of our interview sessions. I also enclose a copy of the "decision flow" chart of your life, which accompanies the story. Between the two, I've drawn as accurate a developmental picture of your career as I can.

Would you please read these drafts and then share your reactions with me? Regarding the story, I'm interested in your comments on the document as a whole. Also, if there are specific statements that seem to capture something well or misconstrue it altogether, please say so. If you think that I've put too much emphasis on some aspects of your life, or omitted others, let me know. With respect to omissions, in a few places I've inserted a question within square brackets. Those are questions that have occurred to me as I've been writing. I couldn't find any discussion pertaining to them on the tapes, so I'm hoping that you might elaborate on them now. The chart is a primitive effort aimed at capturing the general flow of your career and tying it to a sequence of dates. I hope that it illustrates the interweaving of your career decisions with the other dimensions of your life, as well. Once again, if you find my work inaccurate or misleading in any way, please say so.

There are several steps in the validation process. First, you review what I've written. Then, you pass on your general reactions to me. And, we review the biography page by page to make sure that all revisions and elaborations are on the record. After that, I'll ask you one closing question. The question is this: Are you satisfied to let this version of your story (revised as noted) stand? If so, then it will become the basis for my next stages of analysis and interpretation.

There are several ways of going about this process. If you prefer to prepare written revisions/elaborations and send them to me, then we might have a brief follow-up interview by phone. If you prefer to go over the revisions/elaborations orally with me, then we might book a phone interview or a meeting. Whichever approach we take, I'll tape the actual validation interview for reference. You're welcome to a copy of the tape, if you want one. I leave it to you to decide which of the above approaches would be the most convenient for you, and when.

________________, I'm pleased to have something to show you, at last, for the time that we spent together last summer. I am, of course, very interested in your reactions to my work. I'll be away from August 30th to September 4th. May I call you at home over the long weekend, just to get a sense of a possible time-line for the validation process? If you want to reach me yourself, please call me at home (403 438-5483). I have a machine to take messages when I'm out.

I do apologize for asking you to read such a lengthy piece, after such a long delay, and as a new school year is starting. However, I am looking forward to your comments.

Yours sincerely

Beth Young

APPENDIX G

LETTER TO INTERVIEWEES, NOVEMBER 5, 1988

November 5th, 1988

Dear :

Hello! Yes, 'tis Beth, still reporting slow progress on her doctoral thesis. But progress there is, at last. I'm on the verge of completing a draft. So, I'm writing to let you know that and to give you some idea of the shape the thesis has taken.

First, let me catch you up on my own life as it relates to my doctoral work. Last fall, I completed the validation of the biographies, wrote a chapter describing the experience of doing the research and the evolution of the study ("My Story"), and began the literature review. After Christmas, I took time out to do contract work and prepare a paper to read at the annual AERA meetings. About March, I picked up the thesis again. I started writing the chapter on chance elements in the four careers. I tried various approaches, ending with a long narrative consisting of illustrative excerpts from the biographies. Late in April, after returning from the AERA conference (New Orleans!) I completed the narrative on chance.

Then, my father died. Not long before that, I had agreed that I would act as the sole executor of his estate. I didn't expect to be called upon so soon. Anyway, I interrupted my work on the thesis in order to deal with our family's affairs. It was August before I was free to return to the thesis.

Return I did, though. Since early August, I've been writing like a woman obsessed. I've just completed a coordinated version of the three central chapters On Chance, On Choice, and On Careers. I've promised my advisor a draft of the whole thesis in mid-November, with the understanding that it will go forward to the committee around the end of the month.

The thesis is anecdotal in format. I enclose a tentative Table of Contents for it, so you can see the overall organization. The biographical material is presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, as anecdotes. Each of those three chapters is framed by an introduction and a conclusion that link the concepts and themes of that chapter to "the literature." Each section of a chapter begins with a similar, but more specific, introduction. Then, I present a series of numbered anecdotes which illustrate the concept/theme of that (sub-)section.

Each anecdote is an excerpt from a biography. Most of the excerpts are verbatim, or close to it, except that I've changed or omitted any references to names, places, institutions. And, sometimes, I've summarized. There are 70 anecdotes in total. They range in length from one to fifteen paragraphs, most being between one and five paragraphs long. There are between 15 and 20 anecdotes drawn from each biography. Rarely do more than two anecdotes from any one biography appear in the same (sub-)section. And, the anecdotes rarely occur in chronological order, because they are arranged according to themes.

This anecdotal format, and, indeed, the whole way of organizing the thesis has just evolved in the past three months. The three central chapters have just been typed. Like most everything about the project, this particular product is not what I expected. The way the thesis is now designed, the anecdotes are the story, as it were.

I continue to be interested in and challenged by this project. And grateful for your participation in it. I'm pleased with the proposed thesis: I think it's an engaging and rather powerful expression of the way four women have been living out their careers in education.

Having made (in the evolutionary, "series of mini-decisions" sense of choice!) the decision to draft the thesis as I have, I remain very aware that the biographies from which I have constructed the thesis are yours. If at this stage in the process, you would like more details about the anecdotal format, or about the excerpts I've drawn from your own biography, please call me (403, 438-5483). If not, you'll hear from me again after I've defended the thesis--early in the new year, I hope.

Continuing best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Beth Young
Dept. of Ed. Administration
University of Alberta