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SEVEN LIVES: WOMEN'S LIFE STRUCTURE EVOLUTION IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

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SEVEN LIVES: WOMEN'S LIFE STRUCTURE EVOLUTION IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

by

SUSAN TAYLOR

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1981

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

3/25/81
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Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

I saw merely fallen petals
Blown away by the wind;
How could I know that the garden trees'
Green shadows are many?

Zenrin Kushu

PREFACE

As I reflect on the form and spirit of this dissertation, I see clearly the ways in which it has grown through the efforts of a number of people who have joined me in the work. Here at the beginning, let me acknowledge their contributions.

First of all, of course, I am grateful to the seven women who consented to serve as subjects of this research, allowing me to learn more about their lives than a stranger had any right to expect. Their generosity in hours of self-disclosure has provided me and readers of this dissertation with an enormous amount of material to ponder, and while I cannot thank them by name, I do thank them, and deeply. I also thank Jane Casselman and Eileen McCabe for helping me find and make contact with some of my subjects.

Other people helped me by taking the work seriously and, as non-psychologists, reminding me to keep both feet on the ground while reaching for theoretical truths: my husband, Dennis Lanson; my friend, Jane Casselman; and two women whose lives have been important in my life, Frances Taylor and Ethel Lanson. Moreover, I am indebted to all of them for helping me meet many sorts of

personal and practical needs associated with the dissertation enterprise.

Members of the Adult Development seminars at City University of New York (Spring, 1978; Fall, 1980), and at Yale University (Spring, 1977; Fall, 1980) have contributed by providing an opportunity for spirited exchange of ideas in which a number of my own views have taken shape. Their responses to preliminary versions of this work have also been quite valuable.

I am grateful to the members of my dissertation committee, Drs. Arthur Arkin and Paul Wachtel, for reading and talking with me about the research proposal which guided this project in its early stages, and for the encouragement they offered as I moved through all the stages of the dissertation process. Together with views offered on an informal basis by Drs. Cheryl Kurash, Seymour Moscovitz, Richard Howenstine, Mary Beth Whiton, and Elizabeth Dickey, their suggestions have been incorporated into the present version of this manuscript. In addition, I valued and learned from our discussions of ideas, and of the living reality behind ideas.

I would also like to thank Drs. Douglas Kimmel and Zeborah Schachtel, who formally joined in the work at a later stage, and offered their theoretical and clinical insights as Readers of the dissertation.

Throughout my work on this project, spanning almost four years, Dr. Daniel J. Levinson has been most generous in sharing with me his reflections on adult development, as well as in providing practical suggestions regarding the conduct of research, and critically reviewing portions of the manuscript. Since this

project reflects my interest in exploring some of the meanings and implications of Dr. Levinson's work, his contributions are evident on every page. I respectfully acknowledge the integrity of his willingness to foster my intellectual development by clarifying ways in which my ideas differ from his own, and thank him for teaching and encouraging me in my efforts to understand more about adulthood.

I am particularly aware of the contributions of Dr. Laurence J. Gould who, as chairman of my dissertation committee and director of the clinical program, has helped open many of the conceptual and personal doors through which I have had to pass in conceiving and carrying out this project. With great patience and skill he has reminded me of my right to do work, and has shown me what it means to love the work for itself. For his help with the work and sentient levels of the dissertation enterprise, and for his influence in shaping the occupational component of my first adult life structure, I offer my thanks and my affection.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Jung (1960) divided adulthood into two parts, each with its own nature and tasks, psychology has been moving toward greater recognition of the complexities of this time of life. With the emergence of gerontology as a specialized area of research and theory, textbook versions of "life-span development" (e.g., Mussen, et al., 1979) and "adult development" (e.g., Kimmel, 1980a) have proliferated to such an extent that a recent collection of essays edited by Erikson (1978) is prefaced with the suggestion that society is entering "the century of the adult." That speculation would seem to be confirmed when we note the number of investigators who have begun to map out sequences of events and themes characteristic of adult life.

This body of research, however, encompasses divergent approaches to the very definition of adult phenomena. Our search for a workable paradigm (Kuhn, 1962), one that is both coherent and comprehensive, is further complicated by the absence of a single

methodology accepted throughout the field. Some studies rely on a cross-sectional approach (e.g., Gould, 1978; Neugarten and Gutmann, 1968; Lowenthal, et al., 1975), while others are longitudinal (e.g., Cox, 1970; Maas and Kuypers, 1974; Vaillant, 1977). And just as significant as our need to sort out descriptions of the phenomena characteristic of adulthood, and methodologies with which to investigate them, is the importance of establishing a view of human life which can form the background for research and thinking about the life course itself. There is, in other words, the problem of arriving at a sufficiently sophisticated, far-reaching theory of human functioning with which to enrich further studies.

Any attempt at biography or life-study is a many-faceted undertaking. A whole account of someone's life must integrate many kinds of knowledge -- psychological, clinical, biological, sociological -- into a picture of being-in-the-world which does justice to the complexity of a lived life, but also searches for the simplicity of underlying order. The psychoanalytic approach provides one version of human functioning, focusing attention on processes that may be called, generally, intrapsychic: wishes, impulses, conflicts and ambivalence, fantasies, internal representations, the interplay between conscious and unconscious processes, defenses, and above all the meaning that persons and events take on as symbolized within an individual's frame of reference. All of these terms are useful in describing and analyzing a person's life and current functioning.

Another vocabulary is found in the sociologically-oriented models of human functioning which have been used in studies of adulthood. Terms such as roles, role transitions, norms, status,

socialization, and other aspects of individual functioning in groups, contribute another perspective from which to view the phenomena that comprise adulthood. In fact, research in adulthood may be classified according to the nature of the explanatory terms which are used to formulate and understand issues in the field. (Levinson, 1980a) Various models may be seen as representing a continuum from intrapsychic to sociological approaches, based on the types of interpretive concepts which appear to characterize the background theory of human functioning in each case.

Vaillant (1977) and Gould (1978), for instance, while they make references to processes which operate on the biological and social levels of a person's life, rely mainly on intrapsychic concepts in analyzing the phenomena they study. Specifically, they both draw from the "adaptive" perspective in psychoanalytic theory (Rapaport, 1959) in describing the individual's increasing competence in dealing with reality. This is viewed by Gould as a matter of renunciation of childhood fantasies, and by Vaillant as a matter of the development of increasingly mature adaptive styles. Jung (1960) and Jaques (1965) also rely primarily on psychoanalytic interpretations of the changes they see after mid-life in men; Jung adheres to his own version of "analytic psychology" to account for the changes, while Jaques espouses a Kleinian position.

At the sociological pole of the continuum is the work of Lowenthal, et al. (1975) and of Neugarten (1968), both of whom formulate their models in terms of social roles, role transitions, and like concepts. While both make mention of biological factors, and of variations in the individual psychological meaning of social processes, their discussion is framed in terms derived from social

psychology, rather than those associated with an intrapsychic perspective.

Erikson's work (1959, 1963) occupies a middle ground in this continuum, since as a psychosocial theory it attempts to give equal weight to intrapsychic and to social factors in adulthood. Erikson's vocabulary reflects this orientation, including terms from psychoanalysis and from his study of the individual as member of social systems, and also including the term he introduced -- "identity" -- to express the essential connectedness of the individual with society.

Within this context of research and thinking in the area of adulthood, the work of Levinson and his associates (Levinson, et al., 1974, 1976; Levinson, 1978, 1979, 1980a) has become influential. Using the retrospective life-history interview as a primary means of data collection, the team of researchers interviewed 40 male subjects between the ages of 35 and 45, chosen from four occupational categories (executives, biologists, novelists, and workers), and then evolved a set of concepts designed to elucidate the underlying pattern of each man's life. They also tried to specify commonalities in the experiences of all their subjects -- aspects of adult life which they thought would be shared by men in general. A central element in that analysis is the concept "life structure."

Introduction to "Life Structure." Life structure, "the underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time" (Levinson, 1978, p. 41), consists of the individual's relationships with a number of aspects of the world; the result of choice and commitment by the person in interaction with the environment, such relationships comprise "the primary components of the life

structure." (p. 44) The concept, then, expresses among other things the fact of a person's essential connectedness with the world: its constituent parts <u>are</u> person-world relationships. It also acknowledges the individual's creative activity in making choices and ordering his or her interactions with the world.

A word regarding terminology is in order at this point. Levinson has chosen to use the term "self" to refer to

> a complex patterning of wishes, conflicts, anxieties and ways of resolving or controlling them. It includes fantasies, moral values and ideals, talents and skills, character traits, modes of feeling, thought and action. (p. 42)

On the one hand, in view of the inclusiveness of this definition, we may well wonder what is gained by using the term "self" to refer to what is obviously our everyday concept of "person." Indeed, there are several reasons for preferring to retain "person" in naming "the complex patterning of wishes, conflicts, anxieties and ways of resolving them." For one thing, "person" is basic to the philosophy (as distinct from the social psychology) of human action (Schafer, 1976; Wollheim, 1976), and therefore discussions framed in terms of "persons" will be consistent with that sphere of discourse. For another, the status of the concept "self" in psychoanalytic thinking remains quite uncertain (Schafer, 1973), whereas "person" is more readily integrated into the psychoanalytic framework. For these reasons it appears preferable to avoid introducing the concept "self" where that of "person" would do.

On the other hand, social psychology does suggest a difference between "self" and "person," in that the former represents the person <u>qua</u> socialized participant in social interaction. (Mead, 1934; Lauer and Handel, 1977) Levinson's actual usage of "self"

in analyzing specific cases leans heavily towards this social-psychological perspective. Much of human functioning may be seen as falling within the scope of this description, yet it is by no means clear that this version of "self" encompasses all of our interactions with the world. What of non-social (i.e., biological and endogenous psychological) processes in an individual life? Use of the term "self" presupposes that all areas of human functioning can be described as social in nature, and thus begs a crucial question regarding the role of non-social processes. For this reason, too, use of the broader term "person" seems preferable for the present discussion.

We may note, in addition, that Levinson's work with life structures may be divided into two aspects: one, a descriptive model (Kaplan, 1964) setting forth various features of adulthood which are seen as common among subjects of his study; and two, an explanatory principle which seeks to account for the regularities that are thought to occur. In the case of Levinson's work, "development," referring to maturational factors rather than socialization, occupies the role of central explanatory concept. At this point in our discussion we may be content to examine the model Levinson proposes, and to assess its adequacy on a descriptive basis. Considerations of the theoretical adequacy of his explanatory principle will be postponed for the final section of this presentation.

Process of Life Structure Evolution. What are the forces affecting the "underlying pattern or design" which may be discerned in a person's functioning at a given time? Levinson sees both current psychosocial processes and historical considerations as

playing important parts in the kind of life structure that is actually present. In his view, the life structure evolves in response to interactions among internal and external pressures and possibilities; he believes, further, that life structures evolve through definable periods which are linked with particular chronological ages in adulthood. We must first ask by what process the life structure is created and re-created through time. We may then move on to consider the sequence of life structure evolution, and its age-linkages.

To begin with, Levinson views the initial adult life structure as arising from choices through which the young adult begins to form component relationships with various aspects of the adult world (e.g., through occupation or marriage-family). Each choice represents the individual's best attempts to integrate his/her total functioning with that of the surrounding world. Changes in the life structure may be obvious or subtle, involving modifications in the functioning of a given component, or of the pattern as a whole.

From one theoretical perspective, such changes in life structure appear as the outcome of the basic rhythms of human action in the world, with each choice having its own evolution and built-in mortality. Berger and Luckmann (1967), as social phenomenologists, provide an analysis of the formation of social institutions (the societal correlate of the individual life structure). Translating their concepts to the individual level, we might say that through choices and changes, the person is attempting to create a stable environment for his/her functioning in the world at large. The environment thus created first reflects the person's relation to the world, and then serves to define and shape that relation. Let

us apply their model to life structure evolution systematically, to delineate the moments of this dialectical cycle of action in the world.

In the first moment of the dialectic, the person shapes a pattern of being-in-the-world based on choices. In the second, these choices are confirmed by the surrounding world and thereby take on the status of objective reality. Finally, in the third moment, the choices themselves, thus objectified, become determiners of the nature of further being-in-the-world. (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 61) In the total cycle, then, the individual is both shaper of, and shaped by, his/her pattern of being-in-the-world. Wachtel (1973, 1977), from the vantage point of psychological theory, has given us a similar analysis of the person's activity in creating the reality which he/she then occupies.

A dialectical model such as this provides one account of the impetus for change in life structures over time, an account which sees life structure evolution as the result, simply, of the nature of human action. After choosing, and living through the process of confirmation and "objectification" of choices, the person interacts with the world, for a time, in ways defined by that original choice. This experience of living with the consequences of choice then forms the basis of new choice. The individual has changed the world through his/her action, and must then respond to the new situation once it unfolds. Since the three dialectical moments of this process occur sequentially and require time to emerge, movement through one dialectical cycle and into the next cannot happen instantaneously; it can only be traced through the months and years of a person's life.

Note that this view is consistent with Levinson's assumption that some change will be inevitable in response to the reality created by objectification of one's initial choice, whatever its nature and consequences. In view of each person's capacity for selective attention and for maintaining existing views of reality through a preponderance of assimilatory perception (Wachtel, 1980), we may have to reconsider just how inevitable such change actually is. At least in principle, it is likely that individuals may not show such automatic flexibility in life structure functioning, so that the choice-change cycle is not as normative as the analyses of Levinson and Berger and Luckmann might suggest.

Still, with this caveat in mind, we may look further into Levinson's description of the presumed course of life structure evolution.

Sequence of Life Structure Evolution. From their study of 40 men, Levinson and his co-workers concluded that "the life structure evolves through a relatively orderly sequence during the adult years," a sequence consisting of "a series of alternating stable (structure-building) and transitional (structure-changing) periods." (Levinson, 1978, p. 49) Levinson has developed a more detailed vision of this sequence of periods, which will be discussed in the following pages.

Following Berger and Luckmann's model, we might say that a stable period is the span during which choices are made, objectified, and lived with -- the duration of one cycle of the dialectic between person and world. In Levinson's words, "The primary task of every stable period is to build a life structure: a man must make certain key choices, form a structure around them, and pursue his goals and

values within this structure." (p. 49) Thus, a stable period -- which is thought to last from six or seven to ten years -- is characterized by its function within the person's life, and not necessarily by a particular stability of experience. Indeed, as Levinson points out, stress and various kinds of changes may attend the task of building a life structure. These disruptions, however, are not thought to contradict the major underlying task of the period, which is the seeking and maintaining of stability.

A transitional period

> terminates the existing life structure and creates the possibility for a new one. The primary tasks of every transitional period are to question and reappraise the existing structure, to explore various possibilities for change in self and world, and to move toward commitment to the crucial choices that form the basis for a new life structure in the ensuing stable period. (p. 49)

In Berger and Luckmann's model, such a period would constitute the transition or movement between successive cycles of the dialectical process. A transitional period, lasting four or five years, is usually characterized by more overt stresses, changes, and conflicts than a stable period; one of Levinson's subjects described feeling "'in a state of suspended animation'" (p. 51) during a transition. This experiential report adds to our sense of transitional periods as times of "passage" (van Gennep, 1960; Sheehy, 1976) from one version of the life structure to another. The end of the period is signalled

> not when a particular event occurs or when a sequence is completed in one aspect of life. It ends when the tasks of questioning and exploring have lost their urgency, when a man makes his crucial commitments and is ready to start the tasks of building, living within and enhancing a new life structure. (Levinson, 1978, p. 52)

A key question in examining a person's life structure would be whether the "new" version of the life structure, which begins to be fashioned at the onset of a new stable period, does in fact differ noticeably from the "old" version evolved during the preceding stable period. Levinson contends that there is normatively some degree of change, even if in the direction of reaffirming the previous structure. This would be the case when the life structure must be altered to deal with changes in the actualities confronting the person in relation to the world: the new structure will be different at least to the extent that it integrates new internal or external realities or possibilities -- even if the components remain the same, their meanings will differ. On the other hand, and in Levinson's view more commonly, moderate or drastic changes in life structure will result from a transitional period, marked for instance by a marriage or a divorce, a job change, or some other obvious event. The event itself does not cause the change in life structure, but rather is "embedded within a process of change that ordinarily extends over a span of several years." (p. 52)

These are some descriptive aspects of the stable and transitional periods which, in Levinson's view, comprise an alternating sequence in life structure evolution. The two kinds of periods have been viewed theoretically from the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's dialectical model of person-world interaction. We may also note in passing that the Piagetian concepts of assimilation and accommodation in human functioning (Piaget, 1954) would apply to Levinson's distinction between the types of periods, with the relative primacy of each of these adaptational processes varying

from stable to transitional periods. A stable period, once choices are made, shows a predominance of assimilatory activity, for interactions with the world are filtered through the established structure. A transitional period, by contrast, reflects a questioning, a breaking-up of existing structures in an attempt to arrive at a more adaptive fit between inner and outer realities -- in other words, it reflects a predominance of accommodative activity. Such distinctions -- bearing in mind that both assimilation and accommodation occur in every adaptive act, and that it is only the balance between them which varies -- help us further to clarify the nature of a person's functioning in stable and transitional periods.

"Developmental Tasks" in Life Structure Evolution. Having established that "the life structure evolves through a standard sequence of periods" (Levinson, 1978, p. 41), Levinson goes on to make two further points with respect to the sequence. One is that the periods seem to be linked to specific chronological ages, for his sample, with a range of variation of about two years around the average age for initiation and termination of each period. The second point is that each stable and transitional period is characterized by a typical set of concerns related to the chronological age and its place within the entire life course. Men tend to pursue particular goals, wrestle with particular issues, and engage in particular kinds of interaction with the world, during each period; thus, the life structure will reflect ordering principles which vary systematically with the age-linked periods of its evolution. Levinson refers to these characteristic concerns as "developmental tasks," implying for them a normative, rather than a simply

descriptive status. In what sense is this application of the term "developmental tasks" to be understood?

First of all, it is necessary to remember that the "tasks" relate to development of the life structure, not of the individual personality; in this regard Levinson's usage of the term can be distinguished from that of Erikson and other theorists whose focus is on ego or personality development. The advantage of specifying life structure as the phenomenon to be traced is that this psychosocial concept is capable of incorporating a broader spectrum of factors than is the narrower concept of personality. At least as Levinson formally defines life structure, it encompasses not only personality factors and their vicissitudes, but also social processes at work in the individual life. Once again, the psychosocial nature of the model is emphasized.

Second, it might seem, in view of the structural nature of Levinson's model, that the "developmental tasks" are prerequisites for evolution of a life structure that is increasingly superior qua formal structure. For instance, the life structure might come to approximate a formal ideal of increasing differentiation and integration, seen as the goal of structural development by theorists such as Hartmann, Kris, and Loewenstein (1946) and Loevinger (1976). Levinson, however, makes no such claim as to the ideal end-point of life structure evolution, explicitly disclaiming a hierarchical progression in which later periods represent an "advancement" over earlier ones. (1978, p. 319) "Developmental tasks" are normative, seemingly, in the adaptive sense that they are required in order for the individual to evolve a satisfactory life structure, one that is "viable in society and suitable for the self." (p. 53)

In order to be satisfactory, a life structure must be compatible with the (changing) demands of the social order and of individual motives. Thus, the characteristic concerns linked with each period in life structure evolution mirror both of these factors: what society expects of and offers the individual, and what the person expects and is capable of, at that point in the life course. The characteristic concerns constitute "developmental tasks" in that the individual, if he/she does not address these concerns, will not experience the life structure as a satisfactory one.

Levinson himself, while acknowledging the need for further research in areas such as sex differences and cultural differences, and while noting certain social-class differences among his own subjects, still holds that the sequential, age-linked periods, with their specific "developmental tasks," are

> grounded in the nature of man as a biological, psychological and social organism, and in the nature of society as a complex enterprise extending over many generations. They represent the life cycle of the species. Individuals go through the periods in infinitely varied ways, but the periods themselves are universal. These eras and periods have governed human development for the past five or ten thousand years -- since the beginning of more complex, stable societies. (1978, p. 322)

As one way to test out the validity of this assertion, we may investigate the applicability of Levinson's model of early adulthood to the lives of women. As a preliminary to such research, it will be useful to consider a detailed description of the early adult periods Levinson found for men, and note for each one the gender differences that might be expected to occur, in light of existing research and theory in the psychology of women. Only one study of women making explicit use of Levinson's model has been

described in detail at this point. That research was done by Stewart (1976), who interviewed 11 women from ages 31 to 39 in an attempt to assess the applicability of Levinson's work to their early adult lives. Results of her study will be referred to, along with other investigations from a variety of theoretical perspectives, in predicting possible gender differences.

Periods in the Early Adulthood of Men. Early adulthood is the era ("'time of life' in the broadest sense" [Levinson, 1978, p. 187) in men's lives which Levinson specifies as extending from the Early Adult Transition (17/18 to 22 years of age) to the Mid-Life Transition (40 to 45 years of age). This time of life is one of the four major divisions (pre-adulthood, early adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood) which Levinson distinguishes in the total life span. He notes that, in general, for men these years comprise

> the era of greatest biological abundance and of greatest contradiction and stress. The man's instinctual drives are at their height. He urgently seeks personal gratification of various kinds, but he is burdened by the residues of childhood conflicts regarding such gratification. He is struggling to establish his place in society. (p. 22)

Within the era, Levinson delineates four periods through which men's life structures evolve before mid-life: the Early Adult Transition, Entering the Adult World, the Age Thirty Transition, and Settling Down. These are graphically illustrated in Figure 1. Each period will be described in detail in this section.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

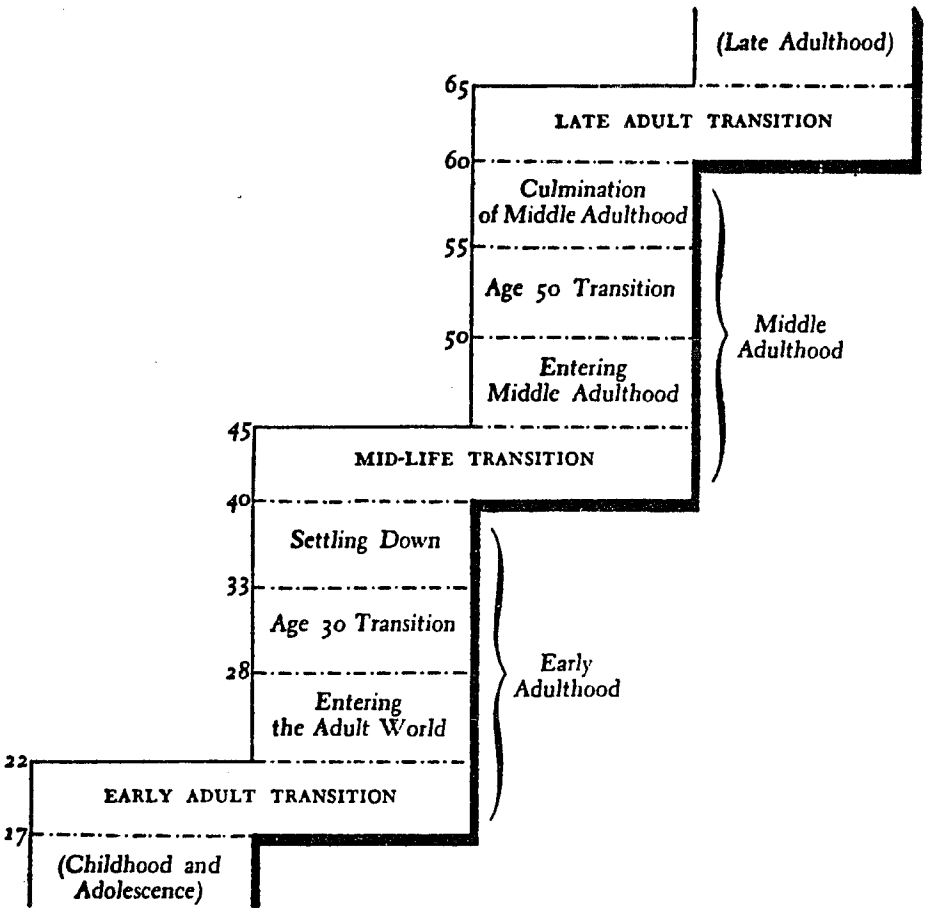


Figure 1. Sequence of Periods in Levinson's Model of Early and Middle Adulthood. (Levinson, 1978, p. 57)

Early Adult Transition. The Early Adult Transition, linked in Levinson's sample to the years 17/18 to 22/23 of a man's life, is seen as having two developmental tasks which permeate the structure-changing activities to be expected in any transitional period. These tasks are the termination of pre-adulthood, and the initiation of adulthood.

In terminating pre-adulthood, the man seeks to achieve a greater degree of separation from his parents and family of origin than ever before. Levinson found that 82% of his sample either moved away geographically from parents, or experienced "major conflict" in the course of working out separation issues. There would continue to be important emotional ties to the family of origin, and the wish to separate from them would be progressively worked out over the life course. Still, the attachment to parents and family would normatively be modified during this period: the man would seek to "remove the family from the center of his life and begin a process of change that will lead to a new home base for living as a young adult in an adult world." (p. 75) Levinson notes that the separation process includes more than the family of origin: "A young man must modify or give up relationships with other important persons and groups, with pre-adult components of the self, with adolescence as an age grade in society -- with the entire pre-adult world." (p. 75)

The nature of these separations -- the most dramatic since early childhood -- is one factor which contributes to the distinctive experiential texture of the Early Adult Transition in men. It may be noted that the adolescent experience of girls has been found to be less tumultuous, with fewer reports of experiencing pronounced

separation from the parents. (Conger, 1977) Therefore, this concern with separation, normative for men, may be a less salient one for women -- especially for "traditional" women whose adult social roles allow them to remain within the same domestic sphere of society in which their pre-adult lives were spent. Whereas Stewart (1976) views this difference as representing deviation from a developmental norm, one might equally well question the validity of the norm in light of such differences.

Initiation of adulthood, the second key task of the Early Adult Transition for men, involves preparation for entry or membership in the social group of adults, which offers possibilities for new patterns of interaction between person and world. The individual prepares to assume new status, occupy new roles, exercise new capabilities, and make preliminary choices as to the most feasible and desirable kind of interaction with the world he will seek as a young adult. Levinson points out that at the beginning of the Early Adult Transition,

> . . . a young man's knowledge, values and aspirations for a particular kind of adult life are rather ambiguous and colored by private fantasies. He needs to obtain further training and learn more about himself and the world. Gradually he articulates his earlier fantasies and hopes into more clearly defined options for adult living. (1978, p. 75)

Institutional settings such as college or the armed forces, job training, or entry-level positions may allow the young man to learn more about the occupational options which are his major preoccupation. Then, "[a]s the transition ends he will make firmer choices, define more specific goals and gain a higher measure of self-definition as an adult." (p. 75) There is no reason for us to question the applicability of this task to women.

Thus, Levinson defines the Early Adult Transition as including two developmental tasks -- separation from pre-adulthood, and preparation for entry to adulthood -- which normatively occupy the man's attention and energy. They are characteristic of this time of life forming the boundary between two eras, and give a particular coloring to the transitional issues which the individual faces.

Entering the Adult World. The stable period following the Early Adult Transition is known as Entering the Adult World, the time between 22 and 28/29 during which the first adult life structure is established. As described by Levinson, this period is a

> time for full entry into the adult world. This requires multiple efforts: to explore the available possibilities, to arrive at a crystallized (though by no means final) definition of himself as an adult, and to make and live with his initial choices regarding occupation, love relationships, life style and values. (p. 79)

Thus, in addition to the general structure-building activities of any stable period, Entering the Adult World includes another major kind of activity derived from its place in a man's life: that of exploring options for adult living.

This exploration is seen as a task for men in light of the number of patterns of interaction with the world which are possible for them. To try out various possibilities, the young man must sample occupational and interpersonal choices with some degree of tentativeness.

> The exploratory stance requires him to "hang loose," keeping his options open and avoiding strong commitments. . . . Even when he makes relatively binding initial choices

> regarding marriage and occupation, they still have a provisional quality: if they don't work out, change is still possible. (p. 79)

A sense of provisional choice predominates in this period for men, as if the individual were playing at certain kinds of interactions with the world, without becoming significantly committed to any of them.

Exploration as an early adult activity is to some extent more permissible for women currently than it has been in the past; for instance, some women have access to social structures that provide a "moratorium" (Erikson, 1968) within which exploration can be begun. Yet there are important class-related differences in the extent to which such exploratory moves are encouraged for young women. While even young men from the working class have been socialized to adopt traditional roles with a minimum of questioning and of seeking for alternatives, and while family and sub-cultural pressure along these lines is brought to bear on them in early adulthood, the situation is even more limiting for young women of the working class. (Rubin, 1976) It is part of the "traditional" working-class woman's role that she not stray from the path between her father's house and that of her husband; the psychosocial meaning of "exploration" of the larger world, for her, has to do with wildness, looseness, sullying of virtue. This association is especially pronounced in certain ethnic sub-groups such as Italian-Americans. (Parsons, 1969)

Thus, while exploration as a task of young adulthood is fostered for men in the middle and upper classes, and to some extent for some women in that sector of society, it seems less prominent in the lives of working-class young adults, and especially working-

class young women. Their socialization has not stimulated the wish for exploration of options in the adult world; social pressure in early adulthood is strongly negative towards exploration should it be attempted; and of primary importance is the fact that for them, the adult options are simply not as extensive as for the middle and upper classes. (Rubin, 1976; Sennett and Cobb, 1972) All of these considerations help us to understand the presence of a concern with exploration in Entering the Adult World for middle and upper-class men, and alert us to the possibility of significant differences in Entering the Adult World for women, especially for working-class women.

There are, moreover, differences in the extent to which the first adult life structure can be experienced as provisional. Class differences in this regard are summarized by Rubin, who points out that when the Early Adult Transition involves marriage as the only socially legitimated means of separating from the family of origin, and child-rearing as the only socially legitimated meaning of marriage, there are significant economic, emotional, and parental responsibilities built into the first adult life structure. (1976, pp. 72-73; see also Rossi, 1975) So, especially in economically deprived classes, a woman whose first adult life structure involves children simply cannot regard this choice as a provisional matter. The reality of the child and its needs (or, often, of the children and their needs) is a constraint which remains whatever the woman's changing wishes and aspirations. This concrete reality, socially-defined (and especially rigidly so in the working class) as primarily her responsibility, forces the woman to take with utter seriousness the reality of her initial

choices. Like the exploratory quality, the provisional quality of Entering the Adult World will be derived in important ways from the conditions imposed by class and gender. We would therefore expect less tentativeness about the first life structure choices among "traditional" women who become mothers in Entering the Adult World; this was, in fact, one finding of Stewart's (1976) study. Rather than interpreting this lack of provisionality as reflecting failure to address a "developmental task," as does Stewart, we might view it as one reason to question the normative nature of the "task" itself.

Side by side with the exploratory thrust for men, Levinson also saw the structure-building task characteristic of any stable period:

> there are pressures to "grow up," get married, enter an occupation, define his goals and lead a more organized life. In the self there are desires for stability and order, for roots, membership in the tribe, lasting ties, fulfillment of core values. (1978, pp. 79-80)

Levinson notes that this wish, activated in Entering the Adult World, is in principle antithetical to that of exploration -- in actuality, individual men reconcile the two sets of wishes according to a unique balance. Some men's lives during this period seem to be dedicated primarily to exploration, with all choices retaining a provisional quality. Other men move quickly into commitments and try to enter the adult world on the basis of a firmly established life structure. A majority, however, avoid either extreme and try to balance their exploratory and structure-building activities during this period.

In summary, Entering the Adult World is a stable period in

in the sense that it involves an attempt to establish some kind of pattern in person-world interactions, even though the pattern may be experienced as somewhat provisional, a first approximation. Paradoxically, however, the structure is one which, for a majority of men, allows enough instability to address the other task, that of exploring options for adult living. Thus, this period takes on its unique characteristics from the coexistence of two disparate movements -- towards fluidity and towards solidity -- with a disparity which is more pronounced than at other times of adulthood. Like any first approximation, the initial life structure requires and is open to revision, and this reminds us that structure-changing will predictably follow structure-building in Levinson's model, however satisfactory the initial adult life structure seems to be.

Age Thirty Transition. The Age Thirty Transition, linked to the years 27/28 to 32/33 in men's lives,

> is a remarkable gift and burden. It provides an opportunity to work on the flaws in the life structure formed during the previous period, and to create the basis for a more satisfactory structure that will be built in the following periods. (Levinson, 1978, p. 84)

This is the first transitional period in which an adult life structure is questioned and modified, for the Early Adult Transition involved changing a pre-adult, not adult structure. During the Age Thirty Transition Levinson noted a resurgence of issues involved in the Early Adult Transition, in the context of a life that has now evolved at least a provisional order, and a person who has already experienced one adult transition.

More than at later times of life, the life structure is experienced by the individual and the world as flexible enough to

permit changes, if these seem desirable or necessary. As the Age Thirty Transition progresses, however, this sense of flexibility gives way to a less provisional approach to interactions with the world. "Life is becoming more serious, more restrictive, more 'for real.'" (p. 85) The Age Thirty Transition, then, begins as unique in its questioning of a life structure that was a first approximation to begin with, and ends as a movement towards a more "serious" commitment to the life structure which will characterize the rest of early adulthood. (Again, we may remember that this "serious" quality might already have been present in the first life structure of a "traditional" woman with children, and that her experience of life as more restrictive, more "for real," may have occurred before age 30.)

Settling Down. Following the structure-changing activities of the Age Thirty Transition, and subject to the individual and societal recognition that his choices are now more "for real," the man enters the second stable period of early adulthood, called Settling Down. During this period, which lasts from 32/33 to 40/41, men experience a pressure to

> "settle for" a few key choices, to create a broader structure around them, to invest oneself as fully as possible in the various components of this structure (such as work, family, community, solitary interests, friendships) and to pursue long-range plans and goals within it. A man has a stronger sense of urgency to "get serious," to be responsible, to decide what is truly important and shape his life accordingly. (p. 139)

In the process of forming a second adult life structure during this period, the man is preoccupied with two sets of issues, in some ways as contradictory as the two which characterized the

previous stable period, Entering the Adult World. During Settling Down, the developmental tasks are establishing a niche in society, and working towards advancement.

Early in Settling Down, a man experiences the wish

> to deepen his roots, to anchor his life more firmly in family, occupation and community. He takes a greater sense of pride in knowing who he is, having his own home base, developing competence in a chosen craft, belonging, being a valued member of a valued collective entity. (p. 140)

This set of concerns reflects the man's general concern: to establish and define himself, both internally and externally. Several aspects of the life structure can be involved in the process of establishment. In terms of occupation, the man must settle on a particular "personal enterprise," a goal for his vocational future which he will attempt to attain by a series of steps throughout the period. In terms of marriage/family, an unmarried man will experience pressure either to marry, or to define himself as "officially" unmarried. A man who was married in his 20s (as were most of Levinson's sample) will have questioned the relationship somewhat during the Age Thirty Transition, and will have reached some decision either to leave the relationship or to remain in it.

In any case, with respect both to occupation and to marriage-family, the man "has a great need to maintain a stable structure. He prefers to deal with problems by making accommodations within the existing framework rather than attempting major structural changes." (p. 143) It is the marriage/family component of the life structure (and to some extent also the man's relationships within his local community) which most often come to represent and sustain his efforts towards establishment.

One contrast with this pattern emerges when we consider the life course of a family-centered woman whose 20s were spent in "settling down" and raising children. Often, her options in the 30s will expand, once her children are old enough to require less full-time attention from her -- for instance, once they have begun school. The second life structure for such a woman might reflect more of a concern with expansion, with moving outwards, than with settling down; she might, as Stewart (1976) found, seek to "open up" to new possibilities. This concern will be directly manifested if there are real new life options for her to consider, and if her immediate social context supports some movement out of the family. (Socio-economic status will have much to do with whether these conditions are met.) So whereas these "traditional" women may form a second adult life structure following the Age Thirty Transition, that life structure may not be characterized so much by an impetus for establishment as for reaching beyond the established structure, into the larger world. The salience of this concern for a particular woman would depend on the social realities which confront her, as well as on factors of individual personality.

In addition to experiencing a wish for stability during Settling Down, men are seen by Levinson as also wishing to advance and progress within the life structure; this involves

> /p/lanning, striving to succeed, moving onward and upward, progressing along a timetable. . . . I use the term "advancement" in the broadest sense: building a better life, improving and using one's skills, becoming more creative, contributing to society and being affirmed by it, according to one's values. (p. 140)

While marriage/family and community are the areas of life which

come to stand for stability and establishment in the life structure, it is occupation which most often represents the man's striving for movement, change, and advancement. Advancement as a concern for women in early adulthood will be considered below, in discussing Levinson's concept of the "ladder" in men's lives (pp. 35-37).

Towards the end of Settling Down, the man who has been attempting both to establish and to advance himself now becomes, according to Levinson, aware of a more intense pressure to achieve the goals he had set for himself earlier in the period. The last few years of Settling Down, from 36/37 to 40/41, represent "the culmination of Settling Down and, more broadly, the peaking of early adulthood and the first stirrings of what lies beyond" (p. 144), and are termed the phase of Becoming One's Own Man. Men are preoccupied with attaining independence and also affirmation as they near the end of Settling Down and there is a resurgence of earlier conflicts related to these issues, including "central features of the pre-adult self -- involving the boy's elemental struggles with dependency, sexuality, authority and the like. . . ." (p. 147) This breaking-out phase of Settling Down may be an occasion for terminating mentor relations (discussed below, pp. 39-42), a move which is often experienced in part as a breaking away from the tyrannical father. It may also have implications for the man's marriage, to the extent that his wife has come to be experienced as a controlling maternal figure from whom he must break free, just as he breaks free of the paternal mentor.

Thus, Becoming One's Own Man is a process which is experienced as the final step in early adulthood, the last push towards completing one's personal enterprise before the transition

to middle adulthood. By the end of Becoming One's Own Man, the man can evaluate how well he has done at achieving his goals for early adulthood. He may focus on some key marker event, such as a promotion or other sign of occupational recognition, and evaluate his standing according to the outcome of this "culminating event," which

> takes on a magical quality in his private fantasy. If it goes the right way, he will know that he has truly succeeded and is assured of a happy future. A poor outcome, on the other hand, will mean that he has failed in a profound sense, that not only his work but he as a person has been found wanting and without value. (p. 191)

It is difficult to assess the applicability of this process to the lives of women, whether family-centered or career-centered. To the extent that Becoming One's Own Man represents arrival at the top of a career "ladder," it can apply only to those who have chosen and pursued a career for a number of years. This would not be true of, for instance, a family-centered woman whose early 30s were spent in first moving beyond the family, and who by her late 30s is only beginning to define and seek advancement. Barnett and Baruch, reviewing Levinson's model, raise a similar concern:

> It is hard to know how to think of women within this theory -- a woman may not enter the world of work until her late 30s, she seldom has had a mentor, and even women with life-long career commitments rarely are in a position to reassess their commitment pattern by age 40. (1979, p. 481)

Yet it is possible that there will be a characteristic concern, among women at this time, with general issues of independence and affirmation, as for men. Application of Levinson's model to women's lives in this period, as in the previous periods, can only be done

with confidence after empirical study of women's life structure evolution. We must always keep in mind that the life course envisioned by Levinson may arise from the activites and involvements typical for men in the social system, and that to the extent that women's lives are linked with other social and biological "timetables," then the nature of these periods for them will be different than for men.

The sequence of early adult life structure evolution, through age-linked periods as described by Levinson, has now been examined. This set of concepts and assumptions represents the process of life structure evolution, in Levinson's model. The following section with deal with the concepts and assumptions of the model relevant to the content of life structure evolution: life structure components and their interrelations within a single life at a single moment.

Single Components of the Life Structure. Levinson specifies a number of single components -- particular relationships between person and world -- of life structures: "work, family, friendships and love relationships of various kinds, political and community life, immediate and long-term goals." (1978, p. 43) In the early adulthood of his subjects, Levinson discovered that several of these were so significant that their development constituted a further set of "developmental tasks," in his model. These essential life structure components are the Dream; occupation; the mentor; and love/marriage/family. Let us examine these concepts in greater detail.

The Dream. In attempting to understand the adult lives of his subjects, Levinson noticed that, in some cases, the person had

formed a representation of future patterns of interaction with the world, beginning around the onset of early adulthood, and had sought thereafter to move closer to that image in reality. This phenomenon Levinson calls the formation and pursuit of a "Dream" -- an image of onself-in-the-world which "has the quality of a vision, an imagined possibility that generates excitement and vitality" (1978, p. 91) and

> is associated with the "I am" feeling: the experience that "I exist," that self and world are properly matched, that I can be myself and act in accordance with the self. (p. 246)

The Dream may be understood as a self-representation or fantasy which includes an image of the context in which the person imagines himself to be embedded, as well as of his imagined activities within that context. This fantasy is accessible to the person's conscious awareness, at least at times, and seems to symbolize a set of motives which are highly meaningful to the person in his interactions with the world. The motives or wishes embedded in the Dream may, however, be cathected to varying degrees, depending on the presence of conflict or ambivalence associated with them. If a particular fantasy of person-in-world is intensely cathected, it can serve as an important motivator and organizer (Spitz, 1959) of the person's interactions with the world. But if the fantasy represents strivings about which the person is conflicted, especially unconsciously, the Dream will be only weakly cathected and will not be pursued as actively during the individual's early adulthood.

Levinson found instances of both these processes among his subjects, as well as cases in which no Dream could be discerned at

all. He contends that

> [t]hose who build a life structure around the Dream in early adulthood have a better chance for personal fulfillment, though years of struggle may be required to maintain the commitment and work toward its realization. (1978, p. 92)

On the other hand, "[i]f the Dream remains unconnected to [a man's] life it may simply die, and with it his sense of aliveness and purpose." (p. 92) If the Dream is not even formed during the first three periods of early adulthood, or if it is not given a central place in the man's interaction with the world during this time, the man "will have to deal later with the consequences" (p. 92), namely with a loss of the "sense of aliveness and purpose" which is said to accompany work towards realizing a Dream.

The successful formation and pursuit of a Dream depends not only on these intrapsychic factors, which reflect the fantasy's pre-adult origins, but also on the presence of supportive figures and conditions in the man's adulthood. One key figure enhancing the Dream's realization is called the "mentor"; this concept will be discussed in more detail as a separate component of the life structure. The other supportive person, who functions to maintain and help actualize the man's image of himself-in-the-world, is called the "special woman." Her role is to foster the man's attempts to

> shape and live out the Dream: she shares it, believes in him as its hero, gives it her blessing, joins him on the journey and creates a "boundary space" within which his aspirations can be imagined and his hopes nourished. (p. 109)

This woman may or may not be a spouse; whatever the formal nature of the relationship, she is included in the man's life structure as an adjunct to the Dream.

Whatever its evolutionary vicissitudes, Levinson believed that some form of Dream was an important component in the life structure of many of his subjects. These Dreams revolved around the man's involvement either with his occupation, or with his family; however, Levinson provides detailed case analyses only of men whose Dream symbolized a relationship with occupation. Apparently work is a more common arena of goal-setting and self-definition for men than is family. This is tacitly acknowledged by Levinson and his team in their choice of subjects: men were chosen to represent different occupational categories, not marital, familial, or community-related categories. Moreover, men's occupation-related Dreams involved goals which required several periods, if not the entire era, for their attainment.

It seems likely that career-centered women would share some aspects of Dream formation with Levinson's subjects, including long-term Dreams symbolizing the meaning of occupational goals. What of family-centered women, whose life course is shaped by involvement in the "timetables" of spouse and children, and by commitment to meeting others' needs? (Bernard, 1975; Miller, 1976) We may assume, first of all, that such women are as likely as other people to experience complex, powerful motivations represented in fantasies of themselves-in-the-world and hence, to form some kind of Dream. But we might expect women with primary involvement in marriage/family to organize their lives into a sequence of relatively short-term goals spanning, perhaps, a single period rather than the entire early adult era. Such time-limited Dreams would reflect a variety of factors ranging from the fact that marriage and family actually are goals which can be attained relatively

quickly, to the fact that commitment to meeting others' needs does not promote long-range planning of one's own life.

In fact, some research does suggest this time-limited quality in the Dreams of some women. Sales (1978), for instance, sees "adaptability" as a central theme in women's adult development, pointing out that while this characteristic may impede long-range planning (as in formation and pursuit of a long-term Dream) and the attainment of goals that require extended time commitments, it has the advantage of allowing women to "adjust more easily to changes that occur and to avoid being locked into outmoded behavioral patterns." (p. 189) Similarly, Angrist and Almquist's 1975 study of college women supports this view of women as having a more tentative, flexible quality in Dreams that emerge. They found that their subjects

> are open to many possibilities and . . . try to remain flexible and adaptable. They do not peg their plans on a single hook; instead they expect, realistically, to incorporate a number of roles into their adult lives. Such openness helps them cope with the many demands on their lives -- marriage, child-rearing, work, community involvement and the myriad other activities they expect to have. (pp. 32-33)

This analysis recognizes the adult realities that confront women, a set of changing situations and roles so varied that it is perhaps simply good reality-testing for a woman to expect that no single Dream can incorporate all her significant experiences and hopes for early adulthood.

Thus, while it seems probable that women are as likely as men to form some kind of Dream, there is the possibility that, at least for family-centered women, the Dream may be short-term, and that there may be a series of Dreams occupying early adulthood.

Occupation. A second major component in the life structures of Levinson's subjects was their concern with the formation and pursuit of an occupation. Levinson sees the term "occupation" as referring to work done in the world outside of the home, specifically work in which the person invests meaning and energy, and with which the person's identity is strongly bound up. This use of "occupation" is adequate in detailing the pursuits of Levinson's subjects, all of whom worked outside the home as men traditionally do; yet it would obviously not apply to the work lives of those people (mostly women, under current social-historical conditions) whose energy is invested primarily in home-related pursuits: housework, childcare, and a multitude of other support services for family members.

Since we know that this type of work ("women's work") is real, yet quite different in nature and context from work done in the outside world ("men's work"), how may we speak of these differences? There seem to be two choices. (Levinson, 1980b) One choice, that espoused by Levinson, is to limit the use of "occupation" to work done outside the home, whether by men or by women. The appeal of this solution is that it allows us to preserve the distinction between work inside and work outside the home. Its weakness is that it leaves us with no means of acknowledging that work in the home may take on the status of "occupation," as previously defined, becoming as strongly cathected, deeply valued, and central to identity as outside occupations are for those who hold them.

The second choice, one which will be adopted for the remainder of this discussion, is to refer to both types of work as

"occupation," while introducing a distinction which helps preserve our sense of the differences that do exist. This distinction borrows the concepts "public sphere" and "domestic sphere" from certain anthropological analyses (e.g., Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974) which rely on these terms in discussing the links between sex roles and the sexual division of labor in societies. The "public sphere" refers to those "activities, institutions, and forms of association that link, rank, organize, or subsume particular mother-child groups," and is contrasted with the "domestic sphere," or "those minimal institutions and modes of activity that are organized immediately around one or more mothers and their children." (Rosaldo, 1974, p. 23)

A key point to be made is that these two spheres are actually separate social systems which, although integrated within the larger social group, have their own characteristic structures and cultures. (Newton and Levinson, 1973) Differences in formal properties -- such as behavioral and attitudinal norms, available roles and role relations, and conditions for status and authority -- are reflected in differences in the relationship to work which is possible for individuals in both spheres.

We may examine one such difference in looking at another concept Levinson uses in speaking of occupation: the "ladder," a hierarchy which individuals hope to ascend from the lowest, junior level to a higher, senior level. Concern with the "ladder" was so central in the early adulthood of Levinson's sample -- and, in modified form, in their middle adulthood as well -- that it was included among the key "developmental tasks" for men's life structure evolution. Whatever the nature of a man's occupation, there

seemed to be some sort of internally experienced and externally recognized hierarchy of attainments against which the man measured his progress. The "ladder," then, defined men's occupational goals, and set out the psychosocial context within which advancement would be sought.

The imagery of the "ladder" is an accurate reflection of the reality of the public sphere, which is characterized by abstract, formal, impersonal principles of organization and role relations. (Rosaldo, 1974, p. 28) A man's status in the hierarchy of differentiated roles must be attained through a series of achievements; he can reasonably hope to ascend a ladder, because there is such a ladder. Thus, when we say that a man is concerned with forming, and later modifying an occupation, with choosing and moving up a ladder, we are stating a "necessity" which arises out of his interaction with the public sphere specifically.

Some men, according to Levinson, "define their plans for advancement not in occupational terms, but in terms of their family or community, or in other non-work contexts." (1978, p. 142) A "ladder" might be found to exist in community life, since most communities are structured so as to resemble the public sphere; but it is difficult to trace the existence of a "ladder" in the family, which occupies the domestic sphere. The domestic sphere is simply not hierarchically constituted. Status is this system is ascribed, not attained by the individual; roles are minimally differentiated. (Rosaldo, 1974, p. 28) We may say, then, that the "ladder" becomes a central component of someone's life structure to the extent that the person is involved with the public sphere of society. For individuals whose primary occupational identification involves the

domestic sphere -- as has been the case for many women -- ascending an occupational "ladder" is simply not an option.

Thus, in discussing occupation as a life structure component, we see that the allied concept of "ladder," proposed by Levinson, is not a necessary correlate of all occupations, but is linked specifically with work conducted in the public sphere. This qualification does not occur to us when we look only at men's occupations, since almost all men concern themselves exclusively with the public sphere in forming a primary occupation. It becomes an essential qualification to keep in mind, though, when we consider the occupational lives of women, some of whom work only in the domestic sphere, and almost all of whom do some work there. Therefore, as a life structure component, occupation takes on distinct characteristics, depending on the arena of the social world in which it is conducted.

Love/Marriage/Family. Although Levinson combines love, marriage, and family as a set of intertwined relationships that form a single component in the life structures of men (1978, p. 332), he also points out that in individual lives a number of relationships may be found under this heading. A man's significant adult love relationship(s) may not involve his spouse; he may, through divorce and re-marriage, be involved in raising a family he did not originally father; and so on. The same possibility of multiple love, marriage, and family relationships is probably also characteristic of women's adult life structures at this point in social history.

As was the case for occupation, however, marriage and family as life structure components may take on meanings which differ for women and for men. The chief difference revolves

around a man's and a woman's experience of responsibility for creating and maintaining a sense of "home," of "family," of all the emotionally laden attributes with which life in the nuclear family is endowed in an industrialized society. The difference also revolves around individuals' sense of responsibility for the specific work of family life: housework and childcare, with both its interpersonal and its impersonal aspects. In all of these areas, the socialization of women has prepared them for the adult roles society will offer them: a greater, more insistent sense of responsibility for the tasks of housework and childcare, and for the overall quality of life in the family, than is felt by most men. (Chodorow, 1974; Erikson, 1968)

One important consequence of these differences is that family, for a woman, is not only the source of emotional gratification and sustenance that it is for a man. It is also, more than for him, the locus of work: in this case, of course, work in the domestic sphere, entailing a variety of tasks and roles. (Bernard, 1975; Lopata, 1971; Rowbotham, 1973) For this reason men have tended to be more often the consumers than the producers of many aspects of family life. A few men have transcended the self-definitions imposed by their socialization, and can conceive of themselves as truly sharing some of the tasks of childcare, for instance, or of housework. Very few men indeed experience the sense of responsibility for all areas of family life which is common among women. (Chodorow, 1974) When this sharing does occur, it is the product of difficult, often quite threatening alterations in self-concept on the part of the man, who takes on roles for which socialization did not prepare him, and on the part of the woman,

who gives up a measure of the covert control over family life for which socialization had prepared her.

Thus, "love/marriage/family" as a set of relationships in the life structure takes on forms and meanings that differ systematically for women and men. The differences have their roots, at least in part, in socialization practices which develop potentials in line with the role requirements that will later be brought to bear on adult men and women. Therefore, while this component will probably be found in the life structures of most women, as it was for most men, it may take on a different significance -- and, as will be discussed below, a different relation to the life structure as a whole.

The Mentor. Levinson believes that the formation of mentor relations is another "developmental task" of men's early adulthood. The mentor is described as an older, more experienced person whose key function is "to support and facilitate the realization of the Dream." (Levinson, 1978, p. 98) Since Levinson does not describe in detail how a mentor might function in the life of a man whose Dream is not related to the public sphere, the mentor will be considered first as an adjunct to the man's relationship to that sphere only. Essentially, the mentor serves to foster an individual's competence and standing in the public sphere, by functioning as a teacher, sponsor, host and guide, exemplar, and counselor to the individual. The mentor relation takes different forms during the man's adulthood, but Levinson considers it crucial that a mentor be found and engaged with in early adulthood.

A man's concern with forming mentor relationships arises at least in part because his Dream involves the impersonal,

hierarchical public sphere, characterized by an absence of built-in intergenerational ties. While formal role relations between older and younger individuals do exist in the public sphere, these do not constitute mentoring in Levinson's sense. Only when role relations are transcended in the formation of a personal bond, established and maintained with some effort on both sides, does true mentoring occur; and this is a problem, in the public sphere, due to the nature of the social structures themselves. Personal ties, where they exist at all, are formed with peers -- as is the case for latency boys. (Chodorow, 1974) This contrasts with the "vertical," intergenerational integration of the domestic sphere (Rosaldo, 1974, p. 25), in which kinship ties with older adults provide a built-in system of mentoring.

By contrast with the public sphere, a mentor to someone whose Dream lies in the domestic sphere would not function to assist the person up a "ladder"; the mentor's role would be that of helping the individual to define and perform the tasks which constitute work in that sphere. In fact, however, much of the domestic mentor's work has been completed before adulthood, owing to the relatively high degree of continuity between pre-adult and adult experiences within the domestic sphere. Almost all children have first-hand experience of "those minimal institutions and modes of activity that are organized immediately around one of more mothers and their children," which constitute the domestic sphere. (Rosaldo, 1974, p. 23) Hardly any children in industrial societies have first-hand experience of the public occupational sphere. Thus, anyone entering the public sphere as a young adult needs a guide or sponsor, a mentor simply to help him or her find a suitable

path through the unknown world. This need is much less pronounced for those whose adult work lives take place in the same sector of society as did their childhoods.

A mentor also functions as a model for work and successful role performance. This modeling is necessary because our culture provides children and adolescents (male or female) with little basis for work-related identification with adults in the public sphere. Of course, the extent of the separation between a child and parental public-sphere occupations varies according to the nature of the occupation. The child of a farmer, for instance, would typically be more easily able to observe and even participate in adult work roles, than would the child of a lawyer. Still, extended contact with one or both parents, in their work roles in the public sphere, is the exception for children in industrialized societies; they are kept apart from adults' work outside the home. As a result, fantasy and reality fragments are the only basis for internalized images of adults actually engaging in work in the public sphere. (Chodorow, 1974; Parsons, 1942) It is the mentor who serves as an adequate object of identification for young adults entering the public sphere, and this function adds to the importance of mentor relations in early adulthood.

In sum, a man's search for a mentor stems both from the structure of the occupational world in which his Dream lies, and from the fact that he has been kept an outsider to that world up until early adulthood. We would expect this also to be true for women whose Dream involves entry into the public sphere in adulthood; but we would expect the situation to be different for women whose Dream is tied to the domestic sphere. Stewart (1976) noted

the rarity of mentors in the life structures of family-centered women, and construed this as a developmental deficit in their lives. Her analysis, however, overlooks the fact that women in the domestic sphere have received explicit training in the skills needed for their work since childhood; and they have had extensive first-hand experience of adults in domestic roles. Mentoring for them is a "given"; much of their childhood was spent in a form of apprenticeship. Whether this constitutes an asset or a problem for women in the domestic sphere, it at least constitutes a difference between them and people in the public sphere.

Thus, mentoring as a life structure component is closely tied to the nature of a person's Dream, and the aspect of society with which that Dream is associated. A Dream may involve an image of the person in the domestic sphere, or in the public sphere, and from this distinction will evolve specific issues of establishing, maintaining, and terminating mentor relations.

Friendship. Levinson notes the relative scarcity of significant friendships in the early adulthood of his subjects:

> A man may have a wide social network in which he has amicable, "friendly" relationships with many men and perhaps a few women. In general, however, most men do not have an intimate male friend of the kind that they recall fondly from boyhood or youth. (1978, p. 335)

Perhaps one reason that men do not generally form intimate friendships with other men is that many of their needs for practical and social supports are met by their wives. Barnett and Baruch (1979) have described the importance of support systems -- such as that embodied in a wife's traditional attention to her husband's emotional and practical needs -- as "protective social processes"

which enhance social and psychological functioning and life satisfaction. For women, whatever their work, who will serve as a "wife"? (Syfers, 1979) Bernard (1975) cites several studies which indicate that only rarely do husbands perform "mental hygiene" functions for their wives; Warren (cited in Barnett and Baruch, 1979) concludes that women rely for help less on their spouses than do men, and that sex differences in this regard are more pronounced in working-class than in middle- and upper-class subjects. It appears that to the extent a woman can find social supports at all, she must look to her women friends to meet a number of emotional and practical needs.

Extensive anthropological data substantiates the importance of close collaboration among women in the domestic sphere. (See, e.g., Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974) This phenomenon, traditional in the domestic sphere in many cultures, has been called a "women's sphere" or "female culture" (Bernard, 1975) or a "homosocial world" (Lipman-Blumen, 1976). The kind of help women extend to each other in the domestic sphere does not consist solely of help with work itself, although this help is important to them in coping with the demands of the wife-mother role. It also consists of sharing of experiences, thoughts, feelings, hopes -- the kind of exchanges of intimacy which constitute the essence of friendship. The many faces of friendship among women in the domestic sphere have been eloquently portrayed by French (1977). Friendships may be vital to women in the domestic sphere simply because they form women's only adequate support system.

Several observers have commented on the role of friendships also for women in the public sphere. Barnett and Baruch (1979)

cite studies describing the "confidante" as the person a woman under stress first turns to; involvement with a confidante often serves to mitigate stress. Epstein (1970) summarizes research into the role of friends in helping professional women in areas such as defining a career line, giving encouragement, reinforcing a sense of professional identity, and offering practical help. She points out that

> Although a supportive structure is necessary for a man's success, women may depend on it even more, because of lack of firm initial motivation and inner direction. Even where early influences are strong, many pulls exist to divert women from careers at later stages of their lives. (p. 148)

Many of these friendships are with women outside of the woman's own profession, however, since the "homosocial world" of the domestic sphere does not appear for women in the public sphere (Lipman-Blumen, 1976); indeed, women are often contemptuous of and/or competitive with their female professional colleagues (Epstein, 1970; Taylor, et al., 1979).

Thus, we would expect to find friendships to be more central in the life structures of women, in the domestic or in the public sphere, than they are for men. This would result from the woman's need for sources of support other than her spouse. If this sex difference in friendship patterns is found, it will be consistent with the findings of Lowenthal, Thurnher, and Chiriboga (1975), who studied women and men at four different points in adulthood, and discovered that women consistently reported both greater numbers of friends, and greater complexity in their relationships with friends, than did men.

In summary, there are five single components -- relationships

between the person and a particular aspect of the world -- which can be investigated in the early adult life structures of women. Four of these are as described in Levinson's consideration of men's life structures: the Dream; occupation; love/marriage/family; and the mentor. The additional component of friendship might be expected to occupy a more central role in women's life structures than it did in men's. With respect to all the components discussed, moreover, we may expect some gender-related differences in the meanings that these relationships have for individuals, differences stemming from various combinations of biological, psychological, and social factors.

Centrality and Integration. We may now turn to another aspect of the content of early adult life structures: questions of overall life structure functioning. These questions have to do, first, with the centrality of certain components, and, second, with the integration or "fit" of all the components together. To begin with the first issue, we see that a "central" life structure component is one which has particular salience or "valence" (Lewin, 1951) in the person's experience. Of the many person-world relationships comprising the life structure, this relationship is cathected especially intensely. Of the goals comprising the individual's motivational hierarchy (Schafer, 1968), the goals embodied in a central life structure component have high priority. They define, in a sense, the person's "primary task" at a given time in life. (Rice, 1965) Levinson himself (1978) discusses centrality, using a spatial metaphor:

> One or two components (rarely as many as three) have a central place in the structure. Others, though important, are more peripheral,

> and still others are quite marginal or detached from the center. The central components have the greatest significance for the self and for the evolving life course. They receive the largest share of one's time and energy, and they strongly influence the choices made in other aspects of life. The peripheral components are easier to detach and change; they involve less investment of the self and are less crucial to the fabric of one's life. (p. 44)

Levinson concluded that, for his subjects, the life structure components that were most commonly central in individual functioning were occupation and marriage/family. He noted that "[i]n early adulthood most men give work a higher priority than family, although the relative balance of the two is quite variable." (p. 333) While occupation was more central in early adulthood than family, for many men, Levinson found that the mid-life transition was often a period in which a man "modulated his involvement in work and gave the family a more central place in his life structure." (p. 333)

It is noteworthy that for men the social system provides a "solution" to both the problem of centrality (first one component is central, then another) and of overall life structure integration (the less central component supports and enhances the man's efforts in working on the more central one). Questions of centrality and integration among components in a woman's life structure are not provided with such neat solutions unless the woman restricts her work life to the domestic sphere. What happens when, in addition to the domestic sphere, she maintains some investment in the public sphere?

For most women this move does not entail diminished responsibility for the domestic sphere, although it may entail a diminished capacity to carry out such responsibilities. (Boulding,

1976) What happens is that the woman's life structure now includes both spheres, not as complements, as in many men's life structures, but as competitors for the woman's attention and energy. The two spheres vie for centrality in her life structure partly by virtue of her role as producer in both spheres, and partly by virtue of her experience of relatedness to both spheres.

In fact, according to Bardwick and Douvan (1971), women in present-day America have not been socialized only for their adult roles in the domestic sphere; through their involvement in the school system they have been exposed to part of the public sphere, and have learned to take up roles in it. Chodorow (1974) argues that this is only a "pseudo-socialization," that girls are taught to play at academic competence but will ultimately be denied opportunities to practice their cognitive and interpersonal skills in the public sphere as adults -- hence, they are encouraged not to take their school experiences seriously.

Chodorow's position, however, overlooks the powerful effect of rewards which girls may experience in school, especially in the primary grades when for maturational and social reasons they frequently outshine their male peers. (Bardwick, 1971) Girls have a chance to form significant positive relationships to work in the public sphere (even though the educational system is only one facet of that sphere) as a result of these early experiences which involve both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for competence in a work role.

The girl, then, is being socialized at home for domestic sphere involvement, and at school for public sphere involvement. During childhood her relationships to both systems become stronger,

to the extent (which differs for individuals) that she experiences both as sources of gratification. The boy, by contrast, normally finds only his public sphere involvement to be gratifying. He has developed defensive reactions against primary emotional ties to the domestic sphere, and social influences reinforce that stance, since only in unusual cases is a boy rewarded more for domestic involvement than for primary bonds with the peer group outside his home. This situation could change, in Chodorow's (1974, 1978) view, given changes in child-rearing practices; but at present it is only the girl who is normally subject to such double socialization.

Socialization is one source of self-representations and of internalized object relations. Thus, when we say that a woman has been subjected to double socialization we are implying that she has developed two sets of intrapsychic representations of herself in relation to others. In one set she is identified with her mother's role in the home and, usually, with attributes of her mother as a person; this is one constellation of values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns with which she can approach interpersonal relations. In the other set she is identified with those whose role is in the public sphere -- perhaps the mother or father, perhaps a teacher -- and has developed a second set of values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns from which to approach interpersonal relations.

One consequence of this double socialization is that where both spheres are represented in the woman's adult life structure, they will compete for centrality -- for cathexis. We have seen that this competition derives both from properties of the woman's role as producer in both spheres (to the extent that she is committed

to both a public-sphere and a domestic-sphere occupation), and from her hope that previous gratifying involvements in both spheres can be maintained. The situation may come to resemble an unstable figure-ground configuration such as the Necker cube, in which neither organization can be sustained uninterruptedly. Where the woman is not functionally paralyzed by the conflict, she experiences continual alternation between one orientation and the other. Role conflict and role overload ensue, bringing a high level of stress which taxes the woman's coping abilities. The nature of such a life structure itself is such that "getting it all together" becomes an ongoing theme of early adulthood -- not a task which emerges only at mid-life, as for Levinson's sample.

There is, of course, the possibility of a positive outcome of this tension. While there are practical, psychological, and social strains inherent in a person's attempt to balance family and career equally in the life structure, there are "beneficial, invigorating, health-maintaining aspects of combining roles" as well. (Barnett and Baruch, 1979, p. 483) Involvement in both spheres may serve as a buffer against losses and change in any single sphere. (Frieze and Sales, 1979) Sheehy, in a 1979 survey of "happiness" in adult women, found that those ranking highest on her life-satisfaction scale had successfully managed to balance family with professional careers.

Moreover, women with significant involvements in both the domestic and the public sphere are in a uniquely advantageous position for developing a richer style of personal functioning than is typical for individuals limited to either sphere alone. The qualities needed for competent performance in public-sphere and

domestic-sphere roles are incompatible in formal terms, yet as Bardwick (1979) points out, complexity in role involvement may provide the basis for growth into increased personal complexity and integration on a higher level of functioning. This aspect of women's dual-role involvement would represent an active, ongoing attempt at the "developmental task" of individuation and resolution of psychosocial polarities which Levinson saw in men's lives beginning only at mid-life.

Thus, it is possible that there may be highly positive as well as highly negative consequences to the attempts of women to integrate family and career as "central" components in the early adult life structure. What is most striking is that the attempt at simultaneous rather than sequential integration would distinguish these women from the men in Levinson's study; integration of the life structure itself would be a constant struggle of a sort not reported for Levinson's sample. Such women are people who are being pulled in two directions, and all their cognitive complexity and emotional balance must be drawn upon in order to succeed at the "balancing act." Work at any single component must take a back seat to the task of developing a workable overall life structure, or the woman herself will suffer: physically, psychologically, and/or socially. It will, therefore, be of great importance to specify characteristics of both successful and unsuccessful attempts at integrating both career and marriage/family as central components in women's early adult life structures.

In conclusion, it is evident that Levinson's 1978 study of men's adulthood constitutes a complex and interesting paradigm which may be applied to the early adult lives of women. While it

may well appear, as suggested in this discussion, that the model as it stands will not fit exactly with the evolution of women's early adult life structures, this fact in itself would be a valuable contribution to work in adult gender differences. As described in Chapter Two, the present study will attempt just such an application of Levinson's model to women's early adulthood.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study attempted to apply Levinson's model to the early adult lives of seven female subjects. It will be useful to begin our consideration of methodology with a description of the ways in which Levinson's work was translated into research questions to be addressed in analyzing these seven lives. Two categories of research questions were explored: issues in the process of life structure evolution in early adulthood, and issues of content of early adult life structures.

Process of Life Structure Evolution. Within this category, Levinson's conclusions regarding stable and transitional periods, with age-linkages and specific characteristic concerns, were examined for their applicability to the subjects' early adulthood.

Criteria for establishing the existence of transitional periods followed Levinson's specification of the key characteristics or "tasks" for particular times of life. When an individual showed focal concern with the issues of terminating an existing life structure and preparing to initiate another one, a transitional

period was said to occur. In operational terms, this meant that the subject was engaged in giving up one or more components of the configuration as a whole, together with actively considering alternative components or configurations and making decisions as to the changes that would be sought. Evidence for two transitional periods in early adulthood was evaluated; these were called, as in Levinson's presentation, the "Early Adult Transition," and the "Age Thirty Transition," in the absence of any *a priori* indications that these labels might not be appropriate.

Once the transitional period was delineated, several aspects of its unfolding emerged as significant. First, age boundaries for the period were determined for comparison with those discovered by Levinson for male subjects, and marker events signalling the beginning and ending of each period were noted to substantiate these boundaries. Second, individual styles of negotiating each transition were noted and categorized, giving a fuller sense of personal variation in the working-out of transitional issues. Finally, the actual outcome of the transition was determined for each subject and assessed in terms of the degree of continuity/discontinuity between the previous life structure and the structure-changing decisions which had been made during the transition.

Criteria for establishing the existence of a *stable period* also followed Levinson's specifications of the nature of these time spans. When an individual demonstrated focal concern with building the person-world relationships to constitute a life structure until the next transition, despite antithetical wishes to explore (first life structure) or advance (second life structure) in the

adult world, a stable period was said to occur. In operational terms, this meant that the subject was engaged in some balance of following through and attempting to actualize decisions made during the previous transitional period, and of moving out or up in the world in ways potentially de-stabilizing to the structure. Evidence for two stable periods in early adulthood was evaluated. The first was called, as in Levinson's presentation, "Entering the Adult World." However, it seemed inappropriate to use the label "Settling Down" for the second stable period, as did Levinson, in light of the possibility (discussed in Chapter One) that this stable period might not have the same "settling down" quality for women as for men. This period, therefore, was called "Restructuring Early Adulthood" in order to highlight its presumed structure-building characteristics without assuming a thrust towards "settling down."

Once each stable period had been delineated, further data on its evolution was sought. First, as for transitional periods, age boundaries were determined and compared with those found by Levinson for male subjects, and marker events representing the beginning and ending of the stable period were specified to substantiate these boundaries. Second, individual styles of life structure formation were noted and categorized, providing a deeper view of the variations possible in structure-building periods. Finally, the outcome of the stable period was determined for each subject and assessed according to the degree of satisfaction (viability and suitability) the person experienced with her life structure, by the end of the period.

Levinson discerned a final phase in the second stable period

which he named "Becoming One's Own Man." This label was changed, for the present study, to the gender-free term "Declaring Oneself," and its existence was assessed according to criteria derived from Levinson's descriptions. When an individual demonstrated focal concern with the issues of independence and affirmation, the "DO" phase was said to occur. In operational terms, this meant that the subject either experienced a subjective wish for attaining independence and affirmation, or engaged in actions reflecting a push towards independence and affirmation, or both. These criteria were applied only to subjects who had neared the end of early adulthood, according to Levinson's timeline, since only in those lives would his model predict that the "DO" phase had evolved.

Content of Early Adult Life Structures. As discussed in Chapter One, there was some question whether the components and integration of women's life structures in early adulthood would be comparable to those of men. These issues were investigated under two major headings: the Dream and allied concepts, and issues of centrality and integration of the life structure as a whole. These focal areas were chosen both because of their generality in permitting examination of ways in which life structure content might differ for women and men, and because of their relevance to clinical formulations and concerns.

With respect to the Dream, several areas were investigated. First, the presence of any such vision of oneself-in-the-world, which "generates excitement and vitality" and is linked to a "sense of aliveness and purpose," was assessed in the lives of the seven subjects according to subjective report and clinical inference. Once a Dream was found, its formal properties and specific content were

described. Then the Dream's origins in pre-adult and adult experiences were briefly analyzed, together with its impact on life structure formation. The Dream's fate in early adulthood was examined as well, according to the availability of supporting figures (mentor and "special man," as defined by Levinson, and friends), and the impact of a Dream's fate on life structure satisfaction was noted.

With respect to issues of centrality and integration within the life structure as a whole, the major question investigated dealt with factors (both internal and external) which enabled women to organize their person-world interactions around one or more central life structure components, in a satisfactory manner. Internal and external factors which prevented such satisfactory life structure integration were also assessed, where necessary.

Because the present study is an exploratory one, specific hypotheses could not be formulated. The questions described above, dealing both with the process of life structure evoltuion and with the content of early adult life structures, were intended to highlight similarities and differences between the early adulthoods of seven female subjects and Levinson's male sample. This endeavor is a necessary preliminary to the task of placing Levinson's work in a broader perspective which may be clinically useful -- a task to which the present study is one contribution.

A review of methods used in this study includes a description of subjects, materials, and procedure.

Subjects. Seven female subjects were studied, this number arrived at by compromise between Levinson's "n" of 40, and the practical constraints attendant upon research conducted by a single

investigator in a relatively short period of time. The "n" of seven was practically feasible, while also large enough to avoid undue bias in case of one or two idiosyncratic life-histories.

Subjects were chosen according to the primary criterion of age: they were between 35 and 41 years of age at the time of interviewing. Subjects within this age range shared experiences of certain broad socio-historical events and processes within which their life structure evolution proceeded. They also presumably shared a common place in Levinson's model of life structure evolution, since all had completed the first three periods (Early Adult Transition, Entering the Adult World, and Age Thirty Transition), and were at varying points in the fourth period (Restructuring Early Adulthood); some, in addition, had entered the "DO" phase by age 40/41. Thus, the seven subjects were members of a single generational cohort, despite differences in other demographic variables.

As an overview of salient features of the subject group, Table 1 presents aspects of the subjects' pre-adult worlds.

Insert Table 1 about here.

Table 2, in turn, presents an overview of the subjects' early adult experiences.

Insert Table 2 about here.

Inspection of these tables provides a preliminary orientation to the nature of the seven subjects according to various demographic categories. More detailed biographies of the subjects are presented

TABLE 1

Aspects of Pre-Adult World for Seven Subjects

Subject	Ethnicity	Religion	Father's Occupation	Primary Community
DENISE	Italian	Catholic	artisan	New York City
JAN	British	Protestant	technical-professional	Australian city
KATE	Irish	Catholic	college professor	New York City
LOUISA	WASP	atheist	salesman	Northwestern town
NICOLETTE	Italian	Catholic	machine operator	Midwestern small town
NINA	Middle European	Catholic	businessman	New York suburb
SARA	WASP	Protestant (fundamentalist)	mechanic	farming village, upstate New York

TABLE 2

Overview: Early Adult Experiences of Seven Subjects

Subject (Age)	Birth Year	Education	Occupations	Marital Status	Husband's Occupation	Children's Ages
DENISE (36)	1943	A.A. (21) B.S. (35)	paraprofessional (21-36) housewife (22-36) college student (31-35)	married (21)	college teacher and businessman	9
JAN (39-40)	1940	R.N. (21)	nurse (21-40) housewife (26-40) college student (35-40)	married (26)	technical-professional	7 6
KATE (39)	1940	B.A. (23) M.A. (28) Ed.D. (36)	nun (19-33) college teacher (28-39)	single		
LOUISA (38)	1942	B.A. (22) M.A. (35) M.Ed. (36)	teacher (22-29) housewife (21-38) graduate student (33-38)	married (21)	college teacher	5
NICOLETTE (35)	1945	H.S. (17)	housewife (21-35) college student (28-35)	married (21)	upper-level executive	12 8 7
NINA (35)	1945	B.A. (22) M.A. (26)	college administrator (26-35) graduate student (32-35)	single		
SARA (41)	1939	H.S. (17)	housewife (18-41) dairy farmer (20-39) bookkeeper (18-39) civil servant (39-41)	married (18) * (age at death)	dairy farmer, currently machinist	21 20 17* 15 12

in Chapter Three.

Materials. A retrospective life-history interview protocol was used, including a set of questions similar to those used by Levinson (1978) and by Stewart (1976) in her investigation of women's life structure evolution. The interview protocol was applied flexibly in light of developments within the interview situation, with the requirement that all questions were covered, at some point, for each subject.

The retrospective life-history interview, primary research tool in Levinson's study, resembles to some extent the psychiatric or clinical interview used in psychotherapeutic practice. With regard to content, this type of interview, like those characteristic of the early stages of psychotherapy, attempts a systematic reconstruction of life events which have shaped the nature of the person's current manner of being-in-the-world. This construction of biography is a collaborative endeavor, relying both on the subject's own sense of the significance of particular events, and on the interviewer's hypotheses -- informed by some theory, however vaguely or clearly articulated -- as to the areas of experience which might most fruitfully be explored.

As in a clinical setting, not only the objective, but also the subjective aspects of prior events are examined. The timing and external circumstances of a life event, such as a wedding, must be clearly established; but equally important is the elucidation of the subjective meanings of this event for the person, along with the thoughts, feelings, and fantasies which accompanied both the event and its current recollection. In this sense, the retrospective life-history interview delves into areas of experience which are

not normally shared between relative strangers, and attempts to map out subjective realities which are considered "private" or "personal," as well as objective realities which are more readily available as public knowledge.

Because there is some commonality in the content of a life-history and a clinical interview, there is also some commonality in the process by which the two types of interview are conducted. A key element in both is the establishment and maintenance of a substantial degree of rapport between subject and interviewer. The subject must be able to trust in the integrity of the researcher's purpose in evoking relatively "deep" material and must also have evidence of the interviewer's non-judgmental stance towards whatever thoughts, feelings, or fantasies are revealed. The interviewer is called upon to create a climate in which the subject experiences acceptance in the face of extensive, occasionally difficult, self-revelation; without this kind of trust, material may be truncated or concealed. Optimally, subject and interviewer will be able to engage in a reliable "working alliance," whose purpose is the facilitation by each partner of the shared task of biographical reconstruction.

Another aspect of the interaction process is common to both clinical and life-history interviews. Along with accepting the nature of the subject's disclosures, the interviewer must also respect the sequence in which disclosures are made. It is, therefore, important that the flow of recollections and associations be allowed to continue as volunteered by the subject; interruptions for the sake of clarification may be necessary, but interruptions for the sake of diverting the subject's focus are to be avoided. This

relatively unimpeded flow of material provides the researcher with an additional source of information derived from analysis of the subject's associative process; it also provides the subject with a reinforced sense of the interviewer's general acceptance of her contributions. In practice, the interviewer is called upon to refrain from interventions when the subject is producing material, and to use a variable combination of specific and open-ended questions to elicit material when necessary.

In these ways, then, there are similarities between the clinical interview and the retrospective life-history interview. At the same time, there are substantial differences between the two, mostly having to do with differences in the tasks for which subject and interviewer are met in each case. While the therapist's theoretical orientation will determine specific formulations of the therapeutic task, there is generally some agreement that the goal of clinical interviews is alleviation of symptoms. This leads to a focus, common to clinical interviews but not found in life-history interviews, on pathology and its sources in the subject's life.

The goal of the retrospective life-history interview is, by contrast, explicitly a non-therapeutic one. Subject and interviewer come together to construct the subject's biography; while this attempt may produce some change in the subject's way of thinking about her own life, such change is incidental to the primary task of the interaction. It may be noted, however, that insights and new perspectives often do develop from the experience of sharing a narrative of one's own life with an interested, accepting listener. The telling of the story, and the hearing of the story, are two intertwined processes which may in themselves have significance in

the person's experience. (Lewis, 1977)

The interviewer's role in this process differs from the affectively neutral ("blank screen") approach taken by psychoanalytically-oriented clinicians. Since regression is by no means a goal of these interactions, it is necessary to preserve a number of the social conventions for interpersonal contact which the therapist often flouts. Interventions to set the subject at ease are sometimes desirable in this procedure, as are direct responses to direct questions (other than those having to do with the hypotheses of the study), and at times sharing of the interviewer's own experience on the grounds that self-disclosure begets self-disclosure. (Jourard, 1971) Yet the interviewer is clearly not in the role of friend or confidante, although some subjects may prefer to construe the role as such. The interviewer's task is, rather, to develop an appropriate balance of impartial interest, systematic inquiry, and some degree of social responsiveness.

Along with differences in the interviewer's interpersonal stance when the interaction takes place for life-history research rather than for psychotherapeutic purposes, there is also a difference in the extent to which participatory observation is used, implicitly and explicitly, by the interviewer. The interviewer will have available a number of non-verbal cues as to the nature of the subject's experience at various points during the interview; this information is a valuable resource from which the researcher can derive hypotheses regarding the subjective meanings associated with events which are being discussed. Tone of voice, hesitations, postural changes, topics which shift or drift away -- all of these cues give evidence for the occurrence of processes such as trans-

ference and defense in the interview setting. But while the interviewer is obliged to note and ponder such developments in the interaction process, there is no reason for them to be explicitly point out to, or interpreted for, the subject; in fact, there are many reasons for this material not to be discussed, in view of the limited contract which exists between subject and interviewer. This differential use of process material on the overt level (even though the material is used similarly on the covert level of the interviewer's own developing understanding of the subject), is another feature which distinguishes the retrospective life-history interview from the clinical interview.

In conclusion, the retrospective life-history interview protocol developed by Levinson is typically put into practice in a dyadic interaction which shares some properties with the clinical interview, but is distinguishable from the latter in several significant ways. Differences in the interviewer's role and focus, with respect both to content and to process, may be seen as derived from the difference in tasks for which subject and interviewer are met in the life-history context and in the therapeutic context. These similarities and differences are implicit in research making use of Levinson's method and protocol.

Procedure. Volunteer subjects were recruited through personal contact with the investigator. They were given a general orientation to the purposes of the research, and signed release forms consenting to the tape recording of interview sessions.

A series of four to six retrospective life-history interview sessions, each from one to two hours in length, was conducted with each subject. Interviews were held at intervals of one to two weeks,

where possible, to allow both subject and interviewer to reflect upon the information yielded in each meeting; subjects were also asked to remain available for follow-up contacts. The total number of hours of contact with each subject was between seven and 11, with a mean of eight hours per subject.

Interviews were held, whenever possible, in the subject's home or workplace, to provide additional observational data on her style of functioning.

Tape recordings of interview sessions were used to construct biographies detailing both the content of life structures at a particular time, and the process of life structure evolution over time. Following collection and preliminary organization of the data, the study's specific research questions were addressed, in light of the seven patterns of life structure evolution which emerged.

CHAPTER THREE

SEVEN BIOGRAPHIES

Before attempting to apply Levinson's model to the early adulthood of these seven subjects, it will be useful to examine each woman's life in itself. The lives will then be analyzed in two stages: Chapter Four will discuss the process of life structure evolution in subjects' early adulthood, and Chapter Five will discuss the content of their early adult life structures. Concluding remarks of a theoretical and clinical nature will be presented in Chapter Six.

The present chapter consists of brief biographies of the subjects, to provide for some sense of the individual events and themes which appear. The biographies will be presented in descending order of the subject's age at the time of interviewing.

SARA, interviewed at 41, was born close by her present home, a tiny farming community in upstate New York which had been settled by generations of her family. Her father left high school at 17 to become a mechanic and welder; her mother, married at 15,

helped her husband in his work in addition to keeping house. Like most families in the area, they also kept a garden and a few farm animals for the family's use. Sara sees her upbringing as "non-traditional," in that farming and housework were equally divided among all family members, with her younger brother doing dishes and Sara herself learning to weld as a teenager. Both children were raised in their parents' fundamentalist Protestant beliefs; in high school, however, Sara "rejected those ideas, although I'm still somewhat prim and proper." Her parents accepted this decision, as they accepted her other choices, with little rancor, and expression of respect for her wishes.

Sara took business courses in high school, and after graduation she was considering further study to become an executive secretary, a position she saw as both responsible and glamorous. Instead, however, her best friend's 24-year-old brother, D., just returned from the Army, entered her life at 17, and although she had had "lots of boyfriends" before, she knew that this relationship was more serious. In addition to instant physical attraction, they shared a love of animals and outdoor activities, and "he was so much fun, he was just humorous; he seemed to be knowledgeable about lots of different areas, and pretty well read." D. was working on his family's farm, and planned to build up a successful dairy herd there. In six months they were engaged, and six months later, when Sara was 18, they married. (The wedding trip was brief, since it was haying season.)

Sara's vision of her future was that "I was going to be a housewife with four kids and live happily ever after." She had helped her mother with housework "ever since I can remember," and

also with sewing, gardening, cooking and preserving food, so that "when I actually became a housewife, it wasn't a mystery." Her "house" was a trailer near the family homestead, which D's parents ran as a nursing home; Sara worked there as a nurse's aide, cook, and bookkeeper for about two years, until the birth of her first child when she was almost 21. She describes those early years of marriage as "a period of adjustment" which both she and D. were glad to have had, and a transition during which she learned to "talk to my husband first" about problems and concerns, even though her mother remained important to her. (She still phones her mother at least once a day.)

In her 20s Sara was primarily occupied with bearing and raising four sons and a daughter (now aged 20 to 12), the last of whom was born when she was 29. Only the first child had been planned; spacing of the others derived from failures of birth control, but Sara says, "I was glad to get my children," and describes their early years with a sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment. She had never practiced any of the skills needed for childrearing, and often turned to female relatives or friends for advice and practical help; in addition, D. was active in caring for the children from infancy on. He and Sara tended to agree on values and standards for the children, and supported rather than undermined each other's decisions. Sara comments that the experience of parenting "definitely" changed her:

> I have a lot more patience than I ever in this world thought I would have. I'm a lot more compassionate, more willing to listen, more willing to take time to really listen to what someone's telling me. That's a direct result of raising children.

She also thinks that at present, her children "all have pretty good heads on their shoulders"; she and D. encourage them to develop and express their own ideas and styles, but "I don't try to be their pal; I'm their mother, I don't mind playing that role."

After the first two children had been born, Sara and D. discussed buying their own house near the farm, but eventually decided to accept his parents' offer to share the family homestead once the nursing home was closed; this living arrangement has continued to the present, with Sara's in-laws occupying a self-contained upstairs apartment. D. inherited his grandparents' half of the farm, and continued working to develop a dairy herd. Sara had kept the books for the dairy business from the start, and gradually also began to help D. with the farm work.

> The way farmers' wives usually start, I started by feeding the calves, and then it mushroomed. I always had loved animals anyway, and I just really, really liked it, so I just started doing more and more things. As time went on I found that I liked doing the field work too.

She describes the almost endless work of farming, with its own demands and rhythms; in addition to the actual dairy business, her farm work grew to include helping to plant, tend, harvest, and preserve produce; breed, raise, doctor, and slaughter beef cattle and pigs; tend the horses; milk and make butter for the family; preserve beef, pork, and game; and so on. As in many such enterprises, "Our farming was a family affair. We all went to the barn, we all milked the cows, we all had duties." She values the chance farming gave her to work and still be with her children as they were growing, and comments that

> I've been made a better person by being so down to earth and in touch with things, being outside and feeling free. It has made me a broader person, to have to do so many varied kinds of tasks; not just using physical abilities, but mental too.

Gradually, Sara's involvement in the farm led her to exercise and develop her skills as "a strong businesswoman," as she handled purchases of farm equipment and conducted most of the dairy farm's business transactions. Like her physical work on the farm, this business-related work began slowly and "mushroomed." Around the time she turned 30, Sara and D. made two major decisions: first, when she was 29, to end family growth with a vasectomy; and second, when she was 31, to send Sara to a national school so that she could learn to breed cows, a contribution of immense value in their attempts to upgrade the dairy herd. In fact, Sara became quite expert in the business of breeding cows, work usually reserved for men; and in addition to working on their own herd she was and still is hired by neighboring farmers to improve their stock.

Whereas in her 20s Sara's activities centered on the children, with increasing involvement on the farm, in her 30s she divided her energy almost equally between these two types of work. She and D. "really actively threw ourselves into building up the farm" and they developed a thriving, successful dairy operation by the time she was in her mid-30s. They both gained respect in the community by joining the local Emergency Squad, in which they are still active; from this Sara derived a sense of strength in dealing with many life-and-death situations. At the same time, her experiences of dealing with the community on farm business helped her become "more assertive, more self-confident" in her 30s.

In her late 30s to early 40s, Sara has experienced a number of major changes in her life. First, when she was 39, she and D. were forced to sell the dairy herd and equipment because of difficulties in the dairy cooperative to which they had belonged. This meant that, while the land and the rest of the farmwork remained, the dairy business which had consumed their energies for many years was ended. Moreover, she and her husband had to find other work in order to survive financially. After some part-time jobs, D. became a machinist at a local plant, while Sara took her present job as county fiscal officer. As a new worker, D. was only offered work on the night shift, and so between their jobs and the continuing farm chores, time together has been brief except on weekends. Despite these time constraints, however, Sara experiences the marriage as having grown stronger over the years:

> There's been mutual growing, just a lot more tenderness. More understanding, I guess. When you know someone so well you don't have to communicate vocally because you know what they're thinking and feeling. I think it leads to a greater respect.

Sara has approached her work for the county bureaucracy with some amusement: "I just can't take all those memos as seriously as everybody else does." Competent at her present job, she has defined several possible next steps for advancement, and is preparing herself, through college courses and additional civil service exams, for undertaking one particular step up. Although she has made friends with most of her co-workers, no one in a senior position has encouraged her ambitions: her immediate supervisor, a man much her junior, actually tried to discourage her from taking college courses, "maybe because he hasn't been able to get

anywhere himself," and because he finds her "indispensable" in her present job. Her husband, on the other hand, believes that she could go even further than she herself envisions, and actively supports her attempts to work herself up the ladder. Both he and Sara find their present jobs easier than full-time farming, without the pressures of financial uncertainty and day-and-night work; and although they continue to farm part-time, and are thinking of starting to breed heifers again, both agree there is "no way" they would return to the dairy farm business.

A second major event during this time was the death of a son, age 17, in a car accident when Sara was 40. This is an experience of which she still cannot speak without weeping, and one which apparently deepened her interest in religion. The full impact of this loss could not be established, since it had occurred only a few months before interviewing.

Sara has also attended to the quality of her life during this period, apart from the changes brought on by selling the herd. Her long-time interest in music, for instance, blossomed around 40/41 when she began guitar and voice lessons. Her hobby of photography became more involving when she got a professional camera at 38 and began to be invited to photograph weddings and other community events. Moreover, her religious affiliation changed around 40, as she began attending the Catholic church after she and her husband broke with the Protestant denomination they had always attended. She attends the Catholic service because

> I love the folk mass; it gives me more of a feeling of where it's all going to, and a sense of what the whole universe is about and what my part of it should be. The

> masses are uplifting enough so that when I leave them I'm happy.

At 41 Sara says, "Now I'm ready to all-over slow down a little bit" in her lifestyle. She asserts that she wouldn't have changed anything in her life so far, and feels "compensated for my loss of youth," in that she has won "a lot of respect in my community." Her vision of the future is quite optimistic, if hazy; she and D. look forward to traveling once they have retired, and she believes that "the best is yet to come. Growing old gracefully used to sound pretty corny; it no longer does."

JAN, interviewed at 39-40, was born in northern England; after several moves, when her father would get fed up with his job and move on, the family went to Australia where Jan lived from 12 to 22. Her father, a college graduate with advanced training, worked as a professional in a technical field; her mother, a high school graduate, helped run a family business, while her mother's mother lived with the family into Jan's adulthood, taking care of almost all the housework and other domestic chores. Jan, an only child, was brought up primarily by her "overprotective" mother. There was a family tradition of intergenerational conflict: the father, a "free spirit," was described as always acting against his parents' wishes; the mother and grandmother "competed with each other to be queen of the house"; and Jan was "terribly rebellious" against her mother: "I was always against her; it was a very hostile relationship always."

In her mid-teens, in hospital for a minor operation, Jan was impressed with the nursing nuns who attended her, looking like "ministering angels." She then decided to become a nurse herself,

despite her parents' attempts to discourage this choice. ("Why not be a doctor instead?" asked her father, who saw nursing as too menial a job for his daughter.) As soon as she met the age requirements, at 17, Jan entered nursing school, happy for the chance to leave home and live in the hospital dorm: "I just hated living at home and all the supervision that went on. I wanted to get out of the house." She completed nursing school at 21, and during the intervening years evolved what she calls the "Master Plan" for her future. By 19 she had decided on a timetable and itinerary for world travel, planning to support herself with short-term nursing jobs while she went to England, Europe, America, and the West Indies. The Master Plan had no end point in her mind: "It was infinity. I don't think I'd even worked it [a final goal] out." But she knew that "I certainly wasn't going to be buried alive in Australia," and enjoyed "just willy-nillying around, being so free just to come and go and do anything I wanted -- the excitement and adventure of it." An explicit part of the Master Plan was her determination never to marry or have children; her relationship with men consisted of occasional casual dates, with no ongoing involvement until later when she met the man she eventually married.

In fact, Jan carried out much of the Master Plan, from 22-24, working and sharing apartments with other nurses in England and then New York City. At around 24, however, she suddenly felt worn out with traveling after a cross-country bus trip, and decided to stay in the U.S. because of her love for ski trips to New England, and in New York City specifically "because it's a melting pot and all people are accepted here. You could be

anything." It was on a ski trip that she met K., a fellow British exile whom she married at 26. K. was highly-educated, a scientist who was moving up in a business related to his field; they were drawn together in part through his attachment to Jan's pet dog, left in his care when she briefly left the country.

Jan's memories of her initial impressions of K., and her decision to marry, remained vague throughout interviews and follow-ups which spanned over a year. She did not seem to experience continuity between past and present, or a sense of agency in the shaping of her life. In describing her attraction to K., for instance, she said,

> Well, I guess I must have liked him. He seemed to be doing pretty well, he had a good car, a nice car, new car. . . . He seemed to have, well, not a lot of money, but he had more, he had a lot more money than I had. There was the common heritage. . . . We were both crazy about animals. And he didn't smoke. But we didn't really have any real mutual interests, I guess. . . . I just cannot remember. It's a time I really can't think much about.

Similarly, when asked how her initial determination not to marry came to be changed, she replied, "I'm not sure it ever did change. I maybe thought it did. And I was thinking, Gee, I'm getting to be 26. . . . I really thought that I didn't want to get married, yet I thought, If I don't what -- I'd better." One topic from this time about which she talked in detail was the relationship between K. and her dog, a bond in which both she and K. seem to have invested much interest and enthusiasm:

> The dog was a big bond in the marriage, because he was so fond of the dog. He said that this was the first thing that he had really ever loved, was this dog.

> This dog was the first thing that ever returned his love, too; the first thing that he could love that returned it.

This was the only connection, in all of the interviews, in which Jan used the word "love."

Early in the marriage, after a year which Jan described as "stable," there began "a conflict of interests, a battle of wills." Jan resisted "waiting on him hand and foot," and involved herself in some civic groups which took her out of the apartment several evenings a week; her husband, an outdoor sports enthusiast, spent most weekends involved in his favorite sport, which Jan "hated" and refused to participate in. (The dog, however, accompanied him.) This was the beginning of overt and covert power struggles which seem to have characterized the marriage up to the present, with almost daily swings in Jan's mind as to whether she should continue to stay in the relationship. Jan and K. did, however, manage to agree on one common goal: a move to the suburbs, which they finally achieved when she was 29.

Part of the couple's reason for moving to suburbia had to do with raising a family, but Jan remained highly ambivalent about the prospect of parenting. On the negative side she dreaded "the time consumption. And also I was afraid of the terrible ordeal of how it would be born." She had no previous experience tending children, and had never even played with dolls. Yet she was attracted by the thought of "dressing it up, feeding it, watching it grow." Especially after buying the suburban house, she felt pressure from peers and family to start a family; she also believed her husband would probably have left her if she refused -- although she "didn't really care" if he did leave. In the end, Jan admits

that "I just don't know" why she decided to have a child, except that "it was sort of more or less taken for granted," and also that at age 31 she was issued an "ultimatum" by her gynecologist, who (incorrectly) diagnosed a fibroid tumor and told her she must bear children "now or never." After almost a year of unsuccessful attempts, she became pregnant at 32; and having made a commitment to herself to provide her child with at least one sibling, she became pregnant again at 34.

Jan approached her two daughters, born when she was 33 and 35, hoping that, as K. had assured her, once she had them she'd love them. "That's not the case, I found out. Once you have it, it's a nuisance." She was bitterly disappointed each time to find that she had not produced a son. However, although her overall experience of mothering was described in highly negative terms, she was able to recall a few good moments, especially when the girls were infants, she was working only part-time outside the home, and there was only a small house to care for. Once, watching her first child playing outside, she remembers that

> I felt that she was growing up, and that she was healthy, and that she, you know, that she would have a good life, and that I would always know her and I would always hope that we would have a good relationship. That when she grew up, you know, she would still want to come and see me.

But when the older child reached toddler age, Jan felt her authority challenged; faced with a choice between discipline and "training," in which she felt like "the heavy," or a more libertarian approach, in which she would be seen as "irresponsible," she felt quite ineffective at parenting, especially since her husband subverted her discipline and then criticized her because the children

"are just very wild, they're like animals." She now experiences her daughters as competitors who burden her with demands and interfere with her other pursuits. Together with their father, they are "three people hanging around my neck constantly."

Like her marriage, Jan's family experience has turned out to provide none of the gratifications she might have hoped for -- although she "does not remember" what her original hopes were, or whether they were initially gratified before the present situation evolved. Her current view of parenting seems to reflect self-criticism and an inability to understand the complex sources of her family's chaos and conflict; she simply says,

> I regret it. I really do. I shouldn't have had them. It's too much of a sacrifice. I'm too selfish to make it. I want to let them develop by themselves, but in the meantime I'm being trodden on.

Although her husband was willing to hire a full-time governess for the children, this idea was dropped after initial attempts failed.

Jan's sense of desperation about the family surfaced when she was about 35; she describes the five years between then and interviewing as a time of "turmoil and dissatisfaction" in which she gained a great deal of weight and developed insomnia which was "solved" by her decision to return to full-time nursing work, at nights. (These bodily difficulties followed an abortion, six months after her second child's birth, which she still believes "was the right decision" for her.) The family moved to an expensive, larger house which she felt unable to keep in order. An extra strain on her schedule -- but a welcome one, in view of the satisfactions it offered -- was her part-time return to college at a small local school, at 35. This experience, which still continues, seems to

have provided the only reinforcement for Jan's sense of self-esteem and effectance, in a life otherwise filled with dissension and frustrated hopes. College, among other things, was "a get-away," a small version of her frequent fantasy of "disappearing, just absconding, leaving no trace at all."

Jan turned 40 during interviewing, a "horrible" experience accompanied primarily by feelings of loss: at around 39 she began to write an autobiographical novel which was the occasion for a life-review filled with regret for choices made and not made. "I'm not very happy with my life, really. And I know that if I had it over again I'd do a lot of things differently. I wouldn't ever do this again." In addition, she felt a loss of sexual attractiveness due to aging -- a process greatly exacerbated in her case by a weight gain verging on obesity. She still dreams of moving out of the house, to "just one room, if it was all mine." She was expecting to graduate from college a year after interviewing, and was considering further study, in several wildly disparate fields, with no specific career goals, afterwards. Jan thinks of growing older as, possibly, involving some material gains, but other than that sees the future as "frightening," with only further losses awaiting her in her 40s.

KATE, interviewed at 39, was born near New York City, an area in which she has spent most of her life. Her father, a college professor and administrator, earned several advanced degrees and was the author of respected texts in his field; her mother, a college graduate, did not work outside the home after marriage. Kate and her older brother were educated in parochial schools throughout childhood and adolescence. But whereas Kate had "a passion to excel"

in school, her brother had a record of failure, truancy, and transfer from one school to another. (This pattern continued into his adulthood, which he has spent as a drifter and, in Kate's words, "a con person.")

The family was deeply committed to Catholicism, attending daily mass throughout Kate's childhood, for instance, and ending each day with a family rosary. (In fact, Kate's father had spent several years in a religious order before his marriage.) Kate says of her parents that they were so involved in thoughts of an after-life that "there was no present" for them. Her father, especially, was highly disciplined, serious, ascetic; she remembers him as constantly at work on graduate studies and teaching duties, seldom wanting to spent time with her. She perceived her mother, a more vibrant, outgoing person, as having been oppressed by marriage to this relatively cold, emotionally and financially "stingy" man, but as never questioning his wishes or considering divorce.

Kate spent two years of mid-adolescence in hospital with polio, one of them in an iron lung. Surrounded by a roomful of despairing, sometimes dying children and adolescents, she developed a "Crash Program to Get Well in Half the Time," exercising nightly in hopes of getting even one toe to move despite predictions that she might never walk again. "I decided if I didn't die outright, there was hope." After over a year of complete immobilization, she did regain use of her legs, little by little, and now experiences only occasional reminders of the old difficulty. She believes "everything else in my life springs from that," and describes the experience as one which "whacks you right into perspective; if you don't die, you're going to come out halfway decent."

A central part of her two-year hospitalization was the daily company of nuns from her parochial high school; they tutored her even when she could barely respond, so that she lost not a single day of schoolwork. Kate sees their immensely comforting, strengthening presence as one reason for her decision to become a nun herself. When she returned to high school as a senior, she was already prepared to enter a convent as soon as her health would permit. She saw the vocation as "the noblest thing a person could do, a superior life, terribly dignified and responsible"; besides, "I think I owed somebody something" for the return of her health, which she still experiences with a sense of wonder.

Kate studied for a year at a Catholic college while she overcame the last traces of polio, and then was admitted, at 18, to the religious Community she had chosen. The decision seemed irrevocable: "there wasn't another choice, once you did that; you enter there, and then you die." Yet side by side with her dedication to a selfless, scholarly, cloistered life, was an equal determination to "do whatever I had to do, to survive." She discovered that "survival" for her entailed a number of covertly rebellious acts during the novitiate, from inwardly mocking her stern, serious superiors, to reading forbidden secular books (e.g., Madame Bovary, Darwin, Marat/Sade) during a year supposedly devoted only to sacred subjects. She obtained some of these books with the help of an older nun who encouraged her intellectual explorations; then she would read them at night, by the beam of a tiny flashlight, while esconsced in piles of clean sheets in the novitiates' linen closet. She endured endless menial daily tasks by studying and memorizing passages from these books, preserved on index cards.

Thus, Kate rebelled from the start against some of the confining rules of the Community. At the same time, she threw herself passionately into studies, secular and sacred, graduating first in her class from the College run by the order, and dreaming of returning there one day to teach the younger nuns. Once this aspiration became known she was assigned to teach in a ghetto elementary school, since personal preferences and wishes were routinely discouraged by the Community in the interests of selflessness and humility. So Kate, from 21 when she finished the novitiate and was formally professed, to 28 when she was finally allowed to teach part-time at the College, "endured the agony of my soul" teaching young children for whom she never developed any fondness. The "agony" was mitigated by her additional assignment to do graduate work at a distant religious university, for several summers, an experience which allowed her to explore even further the realm of ideas outside the convent. She met theologians and doubters who eventually left the religious life, actively questioned church dogma, and for the first time in her life "began to enjoy the male mind." Throughout this time, she insisted on her right to new experiences even if rules had to be broken, but she managed to remain discreet enough to avoid outright confrontation with the Community. For instance, she would "escape" through the convent's basement windows to attend an opera; or use her meager financial allotment for summers at the university, to pay for flying lessons.

As she neared 30, changes began in several areas of Kate's life. She had begun teaching at the College, attaining full-time status by age 30. She also began doctoral studies, at 29, this time at a major metropolitan university that was her first secular

educational experience, one which "enlightened my mind more than any other place." Her love of ideas and new experiences flourished, and she marveled at her new freedom to stay out all night talking and drinking with classmates, and engage in similar activities which would have been impossible (though not unthinkable) for her before. It must be noted that Kate's increasing boldness in breaking rules synchronized with upheavals within the Community itself in the late 60s; many regulations were relaxed in response both to Vatican II and to massive discontent among the younger nuns. (The Community lost over half its members during these years.) She was also assigned to supervise the dorm at the College, which now took in lay students, and was therefore able to ignore Community restrictions even more effectively.

The other major development in Kate's life around age 30 revolved around her relationship with J., "the one man I will always love," whom she met at 29 and began dating at 30. This constituted the first emotional and sexual involvement in either of their lives; they shared an intense spiritual passion as well. This important relationship, together with the other changes, led Kate finally to leave the Community at 33, to live on her own as "an honest woman." She continued teaching at the College, and remained involved with J. for several years, but her major wish in leaving the convent was to indulge "my obsession with freedom," to be able openly to explore ideas, relationships, and many kinds of activities in the wider world, without apology or compromise. This pursuit, so long thwarted by her loyalty to the Community's values and teachings, has remained central in her life up to the present.

Her love for J. continued on what she saw as an ideal basis

for several years, with visits on alternate weekends. He, however, began to insist that they marry and have children. At 34 Kate was literally on the verge of marrying him, standing before the Justice of the Peace, when she realized, "I just couldn't do it. I was petrified; my heart almost took leave of itself." She experienced the relationship as engulfing her, except when it was kept on a part-time basis; in the face of J's demands, unable to establish her own boundaries except by separation, she ended the relationship -- several times, with a final ending when she was 36. This decision was "harder than leaving the convent." On her most recent contact with J., several months before interviewing, it appeared that neither would compromise despite their continued fidelity to each other. Kate, however, still cherishes the hope that J. will relent and agree to a "part-time" relationship.

After the break with J., Kate continued to progress professionally; she finished her doctorate, was promoted and granted tenure, and published a book in her field. Yet these achievements were experienced as "frosting" in her life, not as central concerns. Her early commitment to scholarship has become tempered with a deep wish to put the quality of her life first, and she has worked out a lifestyle which by age 39 is highly satisfying to her. She lost weight after breaking with J. and delights in dressing fashionably, now able to enjoy narcissistic gratifications which were ruled out in the earlier part of her life. Friendships, artistic pursuits, travel, "aesthetic pleasures," and the joys of solitude are her central preoccupations. While she suspects that "this moment of placidity could maybe lead to boredom" in the coming years, her contentment, attained after much travail, is real to her and

evident to others.

> I don't want to get a good report card anymore. I don't care where I am in the class now. I want to contribute some mildly good work, to be human, approachable, ready to listen. I've lost a sense of heroics. I think the heroics are grappling with everyday life.

LOUISA, interviewed at 38, was born near the city in the northwestern U.S. in which the first half of her early adulthood was spent. Her father, a high school graduate, worked as a salesman; her mother, who worked only as a housewife during Louisa's childhood, completed a college degree when Louisa was in high school, and worked as a teacher after that. Louisa and her younger brother and sister were brought up as "confirmed atheists," like most of her father's family; this, together with her parents' liberal political beliefs, forced Louisa early in life to cope with a nonconformist role among her peers. About this role she still expresses some conflict and uncertainty: on the one hand believing her "different" views to be superior, yet on the other feeling left out and wondering whether it might be better to fit in.

Louisa remembers being branded a troublemaker in nursery and elementary school; she would bully other children and get into fights despite cajoling from parents and teachers. This did not prevent her from making a satisfactory adjustment to school in general, however. Through high school she was an above-average student who automatically took leadership in a number of school and community groups. She delighted in dreaming up unique, creative projects with her male and female friends -- many of whom, in the late 50s, aspired to be artists and beatniks. A committed feminist, she vowed never to marry or have children; she did, however, date

in high school, and had two year-long steady relationships. Her ability to achieve local and statewide recognition as a high school student was in keeping with her parents' assertion throughout her early years that she would become a lawyer and then the first woman president of the United States. (Their expectations shifted during her adolescence, however, when she was pressured to find a more "realistic," "stable" career for herself.)

Louisa's own interests drew her towards the field of communication; she went to the nearby state university to prepare for a career in a specialized aspect of television programming. She soon found the liberal arts program difficult to master: away for the first time from parents and teachers who had always praised her "responsibility" and "maturity," she plunged into dating and other non-academic activities, and her grades fell. The switch into teacher training, halfway through her freshman year, eased academic pressures while satisfying her parents' demand, one she also felt, for "stability." Aside from her family's high regard for teaching as a profession, Louisa was drawn to it as a field in which she could exercise her creative, administrative, and leadership skills; so by 19 she was committed to this career.

Simultaneously, Louisa was continuing a relationship with G., the man she had decided to marry when she met him at 17. An outstanding student and class leader like herself, G. was "unlike any other boy I knew" in sharing her love of intellectual discussion and organizing creative projects. She says that, up to the present, "G's and my main connection is that we think we're two very rational people in a sea of irrationality." But whereas Louisa had had experience with both casual and steady dating before

becoming involved with G., he "was a true scientist type; he had spent his life in a basement building machines and playing checkers" before they met. They had kept in touch for a year, during which Louisa dated other men, when G. began an intensely romantic courtship involving elaborate occasions and gifts, and the relationship became a steady one when Louisa was about 19. She continued to hold marriage as the ultimate goal of the relationship, especially after they became sexually involved, yet there were several final partings before they agreed to marry.

Although the relationship seems to have been at least as important to G. as it was to her, Louisa still believes that their marriage at 21 was primarily her doing, and that her "obsession to get married" unfairly curtailed G's ability to explore other emotional and sexual relationships after finally "emerging from his basement."

During their senior year in college, therefore, Louisa and G. married with the shared goals of teaching and traveling for eight years, and then having one biological and one adopted child when in their late 20s. They put this plan into action with a great deal of enjoyment and enthusiasm, planning detailed itineraries for several extensive summer trips which they took with friends. The initial plan began to change, however, when at 28 Louisa had been unable to get pregnant for the two years they had been trying to start a family. While this difficulty was still unresolved, G. accepted a scholarship for masters study at a prestigious north-eastern university, when Louisa was 29; their geographical move, and subsequent decision to remain for his doctoral study, signalled G's new concern for career advancement, the implications of

which were not clear to either of them at the time.

The years of G's graduate study remain clouded with anxiety in Louisa's memory, perhaps because of the number of difficult situations which the couple faced. Their infertility was discovered to be due to an illness of hers which might or might not be cancer; at 30 she underwent surgery which showed cancer not to be present, and also raised their hopes that she could now conceive. G., however, had been deeply anxious that Louisa might die, and just before the operation he had a brief sexual relationship outside the marriage, much to Louisa's distress. She spent a number of months reconciling herself to G's decision to begin "a program of sexual exploration" with other people; conquering her initial panic that his sexual affairs must mean the end of their relationship, she "went through a long process, like desensitizing," before accepting the emotional and logistical realities of a non-monogamous marriage. The relationship has continued on this basis ever since, with Louisa defending G's wish to "have sexual relationships with as many people as possible," and trying to protect him from the criticisms of friends who are "horrified" by their arrangement. In part she believes the non-monogamous stance to be "intellectually correct," and in part she acknowledges that "we have been sexually incompatible from the start -- G's libido is twenty times more than mine" and accepts his statement that this is due to "repression" on her part. She remains convinced of G's continuing commitment to the marriage, reflecting only that "we did used to be closer in some sense. I have distanced myself since all of this started."

Thus, around age 30 Louisa faced a number of threats to her hopes for the marriage, both with respect to the relationship with

G. and with respect to having children. She comments, however, that they both "had a lot of faith that the marriage would continue" (by the time of interviewing, neither had ever seriously considered divorce), and based on this they decided to apply for adoption when Louisa at 31 had still not conceived. The adoption had been finally approved, and they were awaiting assignment of a child, when Louisa found she was pregnant. During that year G. finished his doctorate and was appointed to a teaching position at a major university in New York City, so the couple moved to their present apartment and G. began his present job, when Louisa was 32. Their son was born just before her 33rd birthday.

The first year of their child's life, coinciding with G's first year in a high-powered, competitive job, was "really tough" for Louisa. Exhausted by a Caesarian birth, she was faced with a son who was colicky, wakeful, demanding -- a classic "difficult" baby. Although she had always counted on "an egalitarian division of labor," she ended up with primary childcare responsibility since G. "felt he had to work 80 hours a week," and she herself had given up teaching when they moved. Louisa remembers moments of "hysteria, like I was splitting apart, like I could go insane" during this period, and admits to "a certain amount of residual bitterness" at G. for abandoning her then. During this year she decided against having another child, biological or adopted, in view of that experience. Her only escape was in taking graduate courses, starting with one at a time, at the university where G. worked, which offered her free tuition.

In her second year of motherhood, Louisa's situation was eased somewhat because her son became easier to handle, G. gave

more time to the family, and she was able to enroll the child in a play group in their building, which "saved my life." Since that time, Louisa and G. have worked towards a more equal division of childcare responsibility which has allowed her to complete two masters degrees and work towards a doctorate in communication -- a branch of the field she had dreamed of entering back in college. The couple have had to adopt tightly-bounded schedules to allow for their career pursuits and time to go out with friends, separately or together, in addition to caring for their son and spending time together as a family. At the time of interviewing, Louisa found that "the time I spend with him /her son/ is fun," and that the giving and receiving of love with her child has been an important part of her life.

Louisa's graduate career was highly successful, a source of challenge and excitement for her. Since finishing her first masters at 35 she has taught several undergraduate and graduate courses in her field, and intends to apply for full-time college teaching work once her doctoral dissertation, now in its final stages, is completed. Her major commitment is to develop abstract models in communication theory which can be translated into techniques with a practical application. She has already begun developing ties in the area of "cinefeminism" which she sees as her ultimate professional home; with some women colleagues she helped set up a nonprofit corporation for research and productions of a feminist nature, and has actively pursued funding for their projects.

In the months just before and during interviewing, Louisa experienced increased strain in the marriage. The professional

advancement for which G. had been striving for years did not work out; his sense of rejection led to an alternation between depressed behavior and more intense demands on her. Louisa experienced him as blaming her unfairly for all his discontent, and the friction between them grew more difficult to tolerate. Finally Louisa and G. entered couples therapy, and Louisa feels a sense of relief and hope that commitment to therapeutic work will be helpful to them both. She looks to the future with wry acknowledgement of potential difficulties with career and marriage, yet with secret optimism and faith that she will be able to cope with whatever changes may occur.

DENISE, interviewed at 36, was born into an Italian Catholic family in a working-class neighborhood in New York City. Her father, a high school dropout and craftsman, never succeeded in his attempts to set up businesses of his own, but was always barely rescued by loans from more well-to-do relatives. Denise's mother had attended two years of college, which she left to marry and work as a housewife. Although the family of seven lived in a four-room apartment, Denise was exposed to upper-middle-class values and behaviors through the example of more prosperous members of the extended family. Her male relatives tended to be businessmen or professionals, while the women were often educated and artistic; thus her home environment was less deprived than financial troubles would suggest.

Denise, the oldest of five children, was "a lazy student, a classic underachiever" who loved to read but resisted disciplined study. While her mother encouraged her to set high goals for herself -- "be the best, whatever you decide to do" -- her father

argued that education past high school was useless for a woman and did not push her to achieve in school. Complicating the picture was the next sister, two years younger, who outdid Denise in schoolwork, housework, and care of younger siblings; Denise described their mother as praising the sister's efforts while always criticizing hers. Denise's response was often to withdraw from the competition and take refuge in books, or with a favorite aunt with whom she had a close, mutually gratifying relationship throughout childhood and adolescence. (In fact, the support functions of Denise's extended family -- aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, godparents, in-laws -- cannot be too strongly emphasized; even at present these relations are still many, and are still deeply significant to her.)

A sociable adolescent with several close friends, Denise at 17 chose to enter a paraprofessional field recommended by a trusted uncle. During senior year of high school she made plans to attend a two-year training program in this field, with the approval and help of M., the boy she intended to marry. They daydreamed together about their marriage, once both had finished school and started their careers, and even picked out names for the three children they would have. Denise was devastated by his sudden death from hepatitis, when she was 18 and just about to enter college; the experience was all the more painful because his family had not accepted her on religious and ethnic grounds, and cut her off from sharing in the mourning process. She says that for many months she was "numb," going through with her plans for career training but doing so poorly that she had to study an extra year to make up failed courses. Despite prompting from parents

and friends she had no wish to date or even to socialize casually; she put on weight and stayed home with her family, trying to find a physical and emotional space in their apartment in which she could deal with her loss.

Denise had been dating again for about a year when, at 21, just after graduation from her training program, she met F., the man whose "campaign" for her hand eventually succeeded. Like M. and many of her male relatives, F. was "a go-getter," committed to high goals of material and business success. Denise had intended to date a number of men more casually for several years, and did not feel ready to settle down, but F. "came on like gangbusters" and within several months they were engaged, and married the next year when she was 22. Denise decribed this move as "the only decision I ever made on my own," for once married she experienced herself as "intimidated" and subject to F's iron will.

The couple moved in with a relative of F's, in the same neighborhood as both of their families; Denise worked as a paraprofessional, while F. worked and went to graduate school at nights. Both enjoyed the freedom they had, during the first years of marriage, to go out as a couple or with friends, to cultural or social events. After about three years, however, there were several changes: they moved to a suburban house; Denise was forced to give up a challenging job in the city, because of the arduous commute, and took a more routine job nearer their new home. Around this same time, her mid-20s, F. finally agreed to her wish that they start a family.

Denise did not know about her first pregnancy until it ended in a miscarriage when she was 26. Only under medication, in the hospital, did she pour out her "hysteria" and grief about this loss,

and express deep wishes to have a child, feelings which she had not fully acknowledged before. When she then discovered she was pregnant again, she left work (returning part-time after the baby's birth), to be sure not to risk another miscarriage; but despite feeling "fulfilled" at the prospect of having a child, she was also "climbing the walls" to be home alone, without a car, among suburban neighbors she didn't know, and with only the tv and refrigerator for company. She described a series of nightmares about losing the baby, continuing for the first half of the pregnancy, and felt "nervous and apprehensive" throughout -- something she later decided was responsible for her daughter's having colic as an infant. During these months, F. continued his determined push for career advancement, often away from home on weekends and evenings, for work or graduate school. Pressured because "he was turning 30 and hadn't made his first million yet," he expressed little interest in the pregnancy and refused to attend childbirth classes which he considered "garbage." Once their daughter was born, when Denise was 27, he was impatient and resentful of the changes in their life required by childcare, and did not become involved with the child at all until she reached toddler age.

Denise, for her part, felt disappointed and "cheated" by his response to parenting; having known from the start that F. "wasn't too family-oriented," she had still hoped to bring his views closer to her own. She was then even further outraged to find that, once F. started paying attention to their daughter, he made her the family's princess, showering her with more material things than Denise thought wise, and overriding many of his wife's policies and decisions about the child. Denise notes that most of their marital

disagreements since becoming parents have arisen from conflicts over setting limits for their daughter.

By 29/30, Denise was ready to have a second child, but found that F. "always found another reason to put it off." They never had an outright confrontation on the issue of having more children, but as the years went by, "I'd bring it up and he'd drop it," and by the time of interviewing Denise was finally beginning to acknowledge that the family would definitely not grow any larger. (This recognition was delayed, of course, by her continued hopes for changing her husband's mind.)

Instead of getting pregnant again, Denise followed F's advice that she take some courses at the small local college at which he had begun teaching in addition to his business activities. So in her early 30s she gradually re-entered academia, and found that "I'm not so stupid after all." Liberal arts education was exciting and stimulating to Denise, and she became deeply involved, especially in social science courses and field work. She derived "more self esteem, more confidence about my own self-worth" from the experience of doing well in school, and began to question her husband's views and decisions much more vocally than before. He remained quite encouraging of her academic goals, nonetheless, giving practical help around the house when she had extra school work, and proudly celebrating her graduation, at 35, with academic honors.

While her college experience was a happy and exhilarating one for Denise, it was time-limited; at 35 she faced the future with some vague plans for work in human services, but was uncertain of the direction she would take. F. encouraged her to continue into

graduate school in a helping profession, and in the year before interviewing she had taken one graduate course each semester to experiment with this possibility. She was eventually accepted to the graduate program of her choice, but at the time of interviewing did not feel ready to commit herself to it. She experienced conflict and distress, her indecision seeming to reflect both a reluctance to so clearly abandon her original hope of having another child, and a continued feeling of inferiority with respect to academic or professional competence. Against these difficulties were arrayed a genuine enthusiasm for work in human services, of which she had some experience through college-related practica, and the more solid sense of herself which she had attained from doing well in school. When interviewed she was still "drifting."

Other than the conflict over her future career, Denise expressed mostly positive feelings about her life at 36. She and F., despite the power struggles and values differences in their marriage, had never considered divorce; Denise reflected, "I love him, so what am I gonna do? There are certain things you overlook." She still works part-time as a paraprofessional, and enjoys parenting, although "there is always a great deal of competition between a mother and a daughter." Denise has also remained in close touch with many members of her and F's extended families; their house is often an informal gathering place for friends and relatives. She would still prefer for F. to spend more time with the family than with work, but is grateful for the affluent lifestyle which his two jobs provide. Her hope for the future is "just to be me; I'm happy the way I am -- I just want to continue."

NICOLETTE, interviewed at 35, was born in the small mid-western town in which she lived till her marriage at 21. Her father was a blue-collar worker, her mother a factory worker and housewife; neither parent had finished high school. The other families in her neighborhood tended to share this socio-economic status, and were predominantly Italian Catholics like her family. Nicolette was the younger of two daughters, and recalls being particularly attached to her father who called her "Nicky" up to adulthood because "I was the 'son' he never had." Unlike her sister, who was always protected and kept extremely dependent, Nicolette was encouraged to be outspoken, aggressive, and academically successful during her childhood.

Adolescence brought changes in the relationship with her father, who was forced to recognize that this buxom teenager was no longer a "son," and apparently brought also some internal conflicts within Nicolette regarding her sexuality and her academic aspirations. She began to attend mass frequently, adopting church dogmas and codes with an obsessional fervor; her parents, whose religious observance was much more perfunctory, were astonished and a bit concerned at this newly-developed devotion. Nicolette's religious beliefs had as one function a defense against awareness of her own sexuality; taught that sex was not a proper concern for an unmarried girl, she remained quite ignorant of and embarassed about "the facts" until marriage, and would not even look at her own unclothed body in the mirror. Since some of her best friends in high school were sexually promiscuous, her determination not to know about this side of herself was apparently deeply-motivated.

Despite vague dreams in junior high school of becoming a

lawyer, Nicolette decided by age 13 to take the business track in high school, rather than college prep courses. In addition, she allowed her grades to fall below the A-B level which she now believes she could have attained; rather than studying she became caught up in the social activities of what she cheerfully admits was the "in crowd" at her high school. A cheerleader, she spent much of her time with girlfriends and "went to every dance there was." In spite of her social success, however, she felt somewhat outcast among her friends because she was not planning to go to college, and still describes with bitter triumph the academic failures of some of these friends who, after lording it over her through high school, could not adjust to college.

Nicolette's position in the "in crowd" was enhanced by her relationship with J., whom she met at 14 and married at 21. She regarded J. as "good husband material" from the start; he was "serious, mature, more sophisticated" than the other boys she knew. J. was from a professional, cosmopolitan, WASP family and had plans for college and graduate study, with a future as an executive; all of this was quite impressive to Nicolette and her friends. While she was drawn to his "maturity" and prospects, J. was both sexually and personally attracted to this outgoing, fun-loving, expressive girl, and they started to date steadily at 15.

During her senior year in high school, Nicolette and some of her non-college-bound friends talked of studying at computer school and living in an apartment of their own -- an idea which seemed exciting and daring to all of them. After graduation, however, Nicolette worked as a secretary for a year before her mother's sudden death -- when Nicolette was 19 -- ruled out this plan.

She remained at home to keep house for her father (the older sister having left home to marry years earlier) until he remarried some months later, and the money her mother was to have given Nicolette for computer school was given to her stepmother instead. Nicolette therefore continued to work as a secretary, going to bars with her girlfriends and dating a series of men briefly, although officially "pinned" to J. During the years between high school graduation and her marriage, while J. was away at college, she attempted three times to register for courses at a local branch of the state university. Each time, J. "talked me out of it"; at the time she thought he was afraid she'd meet another man, but now she wonders whether he might have considered her unable to handle the academic challenge.

Nicolette and J. married when she was 21, and from then until she was 29, their life revolved around establishing their family and completing J's professional training and career development, which required a number of geographic moves. Their daughter and two sons were born when Nicolette was 23, 27, and 28; this was the family size she had wanted, although the spacing of the last two children was extremely difficult. Whereas her daughter's first years were, for Nicolette, a time for reflection, reading, and the first self-exploration she had ever done in her life -- "a whole self-realization, self-actualization type of thing" -- her home at 28/29 was "a zoo." "I went to mass and got groceries and I had three kids. . . . I just prayed to get through each day." She felt overwhelmed with the unending responsibilities of childcare and financial struggles, despite J's real commitment to the family and the help he gave after work each day. In fact, part of Nicolette's distress during this time derived from her sense of envy and

inferiority in the face of J's career advancement: she felt dependent, "inferior, like I was losing hold of things, like I was not growing" as he moved up the executive ladder. Nicolette, who "had always been a fighter," found herself in her late 20s feeling "bored, unstimulated . . . very vulnerable, very weak; anybody could hurt me."

At 28, when these feelings of being trapped in an inferior position came to a head, Nicolette signed up for her first course at a local college. In the course, a study of the women's movement, she was outspoken in defending the extremely unpopular view that marriage and family, without career, could be fulfilling to a woman. At the same time she was inspired by some of the feminist positions she studied, since "it helped me understand why I wasn't content just to change a diaper." She began to write feminist poems, to the amazement of J. who kept asking, "Where is all this resentment coming from?" This remains an unanswered question in Nicolette's mind, since she expresses nothing but praise for her husband, "an angel"; their relationship seems to be one of mutual love and respect, and it is not clear what role, if any, J. played in maintaining the sense of subordination she experienced so keenly.

Another major development for Nicolette around this time (at 28) was her decision to begin birth control after the advent of her third child. She had remained devout enough in her Catholicism to see this as a radical choice which, while necessary for her and her family, would deprive her of needed spiritual comfort. She suffered for several years, attending church but not confession or communion, until at 31 she spoke to a young priest and was told that her decision would not affect her standing in the church. She

comments self-critically that "I still had to get a man's approval" before experiencing her choice as legitimate, but it is equally true that she chose to consult a man who appeared progressive and sympathetic.

After finding that she enjoyed part-time college study, and did well at it, Nicolette began seriously working to accumulate credits towards a degree. She found her self-confidence rising, inside and outside of the classroom, and focussed on business as a major. The family's last move, when Nicolette was 32, signalled J's attainment of the professional advancement he had worked for, and their ability to settle down: financial worries behind them, they bought a suburban house and Nicolette matriculated at a small local college. She describes the years since that move as "the part of my life I've been waiting for. I've done just about what I wanted to do, without many obstacles or barriers." The marriage appears to be thriving, and she and J. enjoy living with their children. "It's like having five people in the house now, not two parents and three children." Nicolette especially enjoys sharing confidences with her adolescent daughter, in whose high academic standing, creativity, and social successes she has much investment. J. has worked as hard as she to create a physically and interpersonally comfortable home environment despite the pressures of his highly responsible executive position.

The one discordant note in Nicolette's life at the time of interviewing had to do with her career aspirations; at 34, tired of the long haul of part-time college study, and able to work outside the home once her youngest child had entered school, she left college and took a full-time job. Her hopes were to move into a

position of responsibility, although it seemed apparent that she was hired primarily as a secretary. When this became obvious to her, she left the job, but still refers to it as "my big failure of the decade," a response which is some indication of the intense pressure she puts on herself to achieve successfully. At 35, then, she returned to college full-time, contemplating the three remaining semesters with some sense of drudgery and less enthusiasm than before. She has already, however, identified the organization for which she hopes to work as a manager once graduated, and has begun the steps recommended by their representative as a key to employment there. She has rosy images of her future in management, the realism of which (either with respect to the nature of the corporate world, or with respect to her place in it) is difficult to assess. At interviewing, however, she felt "in a limbo," waiting through the time it would take before she could begin her career.

NINA, interviewed at 35, grew up in an affluent suburb of New York City. Her father, a self-made businessman, worked his way up from a menial position to become the owner of a prosperous business, earning a college degree after many years of part-time night study. The family was "not loaded, but we never had to worry about money." Her mother, a graduate of business school, worked as a housewife during her children's early years, and now holds a supervisory clerical position. Both parents were devout Catholics, also sharing a common Middle European heritage. Nina is the fourth of eight children, now aged 42-19, and sees herself as the youngest of the "first half" of the family, with an especially close connection both with the younger "half" and with her own "half": "I'm the typical middle child -- the center, with the spokes all around;

the one everybody related to." The family has continued to be a central concern of hers, up to the present.

Since childhood Nina has been particularly susceptible to illness, but "it's never stopped me from goals that I've wanted." She was known in the family as being "emotional, but not fragile" -- "a chatterbox, inquisitive, fun-loving." Of all the children, she was especially close to her parents, who were "very loving, very outgoing. They recognized the individuality of each of us; I don't remember any jealousy among us." She was always fascinated by her father's work, and he used to take her with him to his shop, calling her "my little Gypsy." Like her older sisters, at high school age Nina was sent to the parochial boarding school which their mother had attended, and although she did not at all want to leave home, "I did it for my parents, because I loved them that much." Graduating with a good record, she then returned to her parents' home and lived there while attending a small, Catholic, women's college in the area.

Nina "fell in love about 7000 times" throughout high school and college, but was not tempted to form serious relationships because "I've got a life to lead." Her original ambition, since mid-adolescence, was to become a high school teacher, but in college she became interested in social sciences and considered going on for graduate study. These plans were disrupted by the sudden death of her father when she was 20, "a turning point in my life. It changed the pattern of my life, made me see that I had to survive." Aside from dealing with her own sense of loss -- she had not begun any emotional separation from her parents at that point -- she "tried to take over my father's role," and was prepared to leave

school immediately to earn money for the family. When her mother refused to endorse this sacrifice, Nina compromised by returning to her plan for teaching, so that "I could provide for myself when I got out of college; I didn't want to take, take, take from my mother." (In fact, she did take on a parental role towards her younger siblings in subsequent years; they turned to her in crises, and she gave three of them money for college. As another indication of Nina's special role in the family, she was given ownership of her mother's house, on which she still pays the mortgage.)

Nina's wish to become a teacher foundered once she started student teaching and "couldn't stand the classroom"; she decided to go into guidance counseling instead because "I liked being a boss." An uncle who worked in college administration then suggested she enter that field, and so at 22, after finishing college, she began graduate study at a major New York university, supporting herself by directing one of its residence halls. At 24 she began full-time work at another university, and since then her career in college administration has required moves to two more institutions near New York City, carefully chosen to provide her with various kinds of administrative experience. After years as director of several residence halls, Nina began apartment living: at first with a female roommate (27-29), and since then by herself. For the past six years she has lived in a New York suburb noted for its singles scene, and commutes to the suburban college where she has worked for four years.

Around 29/30, Nina formed the more specific goal of becoming a college president, having observed a number of people in this

role and believing she could perform as well as, or better than, they did. A big step for her in arriving at this vision was being able to "admit that I liked power, to verbalize it and not feel guilty about it." She specifies wanting to become the first woman president of an Ivy League school, and intends to be "a humanistic president, to have ultimate power to make decisions that could positively affect undergraduate and graduate students." Nina envisions working to create a setting "where people are accepted as they are, and ideas are accepted and not belittled; everyone can feel that they can speak and be listened to."

In addition she hopes to become "a positive role model to women and men, as an androgynous person." In her current job she has expressed her special interest in women's education, helping develop a curriculum on women's career development in which she has taught credit-free courses for women in transition, on topics such as "creative risk-taking," "being a change agent," and "being single." At 31 she began to explore the doctoral study she knew would be required to advance towards presidency, taking credit-free courses for one year before matriculating, at 32, at the major university which she still attends, part-time. She plans to complete the doctorate in several more years of part-time study, with a possibility of full-time study if she can acquire the money by selling her mother's house.

Nina's vision of her future includes the possibility of marriage, but she is not presently involved in a long-term intense relationship. Her love relationships have followed a pattern of serial monogamy, beginning at 24 when she was "blindly in love" with A., a man who she later decided "was using me for his own

career advancement." She describes this year-long episode as a "traumatic experience" in her life, her first sexual involvement, and the one time she actively dreamed of marriage. She was "hysterical" but firm about ending the relationship once she decided that A. had no real interest in her, and did not date at all for three years afterwards. There have been three "amative relationships" in her life since then, lasting from one to three years. In each case it has been her decision to end the relationship, based on her sense that the man is not willing or able to fulfill her needs. All of her sexual involvements have been in a context of "total commitment" and love, although she has not seen marriage as a compelling possibility with any man except A., commenting that "some men in your life have a part of your heart forever. Not the main part. And sometimes that part is not filled by anybody, and that's okay too."

At 35, Nina sees herself as having "really blossomed; the older I became, the more secure I became with myself." Despite continuing physical problems (a pre-ulcer at 29, serious bronchitis at 34), she maintains an active lifestyle, involved in sports and cultural pursuits. From her work she gets "a sense of personal pride, of knowing that you are a part of someone else's support network," and holds a position in her national professional organization. Female friends constitute an important part of her life, providing "a caring, and a sharing of the good times and the bad times, that's definitely been mutual," while she also maintains contact with male and female colleagues who have become "good friends." In looking ahead, she comments that, "In my career I can look to the future, but in terms of what my life will be I

can't look that far ahead -- I try to deal with my day to day situations. I'm a survivor."

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS: PROCESS OF EARLY ADULT LIFE STRUCTURE EVOLUTION

In considering results related to the process of life structure evolution, we will take up the four periods of early adulthood in chronological order; their presence in the biographies of the seven subjects will be determined according to criteria set forth in Chapter Two. Once a period has been seen to exist, certain significant features (age boundaries and marker events, individual styles of negotiating the period, and individual outcomes of the period) will be described. Further discussion of these results will be presented in Chapter Six.

Early Adult Transition (EAT). With some individual variation in transitional style, all subjects showed evidence of an EAT. In changing their relationships with parents, subjects met the first criterion of EAT: giving up or modifying one or more components of the existing life structure. Five subjects effected geographical separation from their parents towards the end of adolescence: KATE, JAN, LOUISA, and NINA, by living in dormi-

tories; and SARA, by moving out to get married. For KATE, the geographical separation was accompanied by almost total psychological separation as well, since after entering the convent she was allowed outside visits only once a month. JAN took steps to attain long-awaited liberation from parental "supervision" once she moved into her quarters at nursing school, while LOUISA, too, was driven early in her college years to break free from the "maturity" of which her parents had been so proud; in defiance of their expectations she stayed out late on dates, allowed her grades to slide, and failed to visit them except on holidays.

NINA and SARA modified their relationships with parents for reasons in addition to the geographical separations. NINA's bond with her mother changed following the death of her father when she was 20; after that NINA showed willingness to assume new financial responsibilities for herself and other family members, vowing "not to take, take, take" from her mother anymore. And SARA's marriage at 18 brought about changes in the relationship with her parents; although she moved only a short distance away, and phoned her mother at least once daily, she now began to "talk to my husband first" about any problems that arose.

Meanwhile, DENISE and NICOLETTE developed more adult relationships with parents while remaining in the parental home. Both of them were from working-class Italian communities which, although located in different parts of the country, shared a belief that leaving the parents' home for any reason other than marriage was, in DENISE's words, "almost tantamount to being a bad girl!" DENISE sought and achieved some psychological distance from her parents in the process of mourning the death of her fiance, and through para-

professional training which helped her develop a more adult self-concept. NICOLETTE developed a new relationship with her father following the death of her mother when she was 19; she took over a number of domestic responsibilities in addition to holding a full-time secretarial job, and hence was seen as less of a dependent child. Moreover, when her stepmother entered the house within a year, she became even more separated from her father.

The second criterion of EAT -- considering various options for the first adult life structure -- was met only by the three subjects who were college-educated during this period. LOUISA and NINA both intended to pursue careers, and actively considered several career choices; LOUISA, in addition, explored the possibility of combining career with marriage. KATE, although cloistered in the convent during EAT, still considered the alternative world-views and life plans which tantalized her from the pages of secular books. For these three subjects, choices had to be made from among various options, in preparation for initiating the first adult life structure. LOUISA chose firm commitments both to marriage and to teaching as a career; NINA chose a career field without determining a specific path within it; and KATE made a formal commitment to the Community she had joined, while retaining a private sense of the provisional nature of that choice.

For three other subjects, a preferred option for the first adult life structure had already been chosen by late adolescence (or even earlier), and remained unchanged despite brief flirtations with alternative plans. NICOLETTE and DENISE, who had both chosen marriage/family, passed through several years in a holding pattern until the marriage actually occurred. (For DENISE, even the death

of her first fiance did not shake her wish to center a life structure on marriage/family.) JAN chose early a life structure based on independence and travel, waiting only to complete nursing school to put her plans into action.

SARA is unique in this group in that she chose shortly after high school to marry, and was wed by 18. In this she was following a pattern typical of the small farming community in which she, her husband, and generations of their families had grown up; her own mother, in fact, had married at 15. So SARA not only made an early choice, but also moved quickly to actualize that choice.

The concerns characteristic of EAT -- separation from the pre-adult life structure, and preparation for initiating the first adult life structure -- can thus be seen in each biography, around the onset of early adulthood. Age boundaries for EAT were comparable with the range 17/18 - 22/23 found for Levinson's subjects, although the transition tended to end earlier for this sample. Onset of the period was taken to occur around the subject's final year of high school, at 17/18 in all cases, when some transition was upcoming in view of high school graduation. Ending of the period was seen as marked by events indicating some resolution of the issues of separation from pre-adulthood and preparation to begin early adulthood: marriage (DENISE, LOUISA, NICOLETTE, SARA); entry to adult occupations (JAN, LOUISA, NINA); and "dying to the world" in the ceremony of profession (KATE). These events occurred between 18 and 22 for this sample, with a modal and median age of 21. EAT, therefore, was found to occur from 17/18 - 21.

Three different individual transitional styles were found for subjects in negotiating EAT. The first style was characterized

by pronounced evidence of transition, including active questioning and eventual decision-making (LOUISA, KATE, NINA). The second style was a kind of holding pattern in which choices made fairly early, with regard to marriage or lifestyle, could not be put into action for several years (DENISE, JAN, NICOLETTE). The third style also involved early decision-making, but with relatively swift implementation (SARA).

The outcome of EAT was reflected in varying degrees of continuity/discontinuity between the pre-adult life structure and the choices for a first adult life structure made during EAT; a continuum from extreme continuity, through moderate continuity, to moderate discontinuity, was found.

The lives of DENISE, KATE, and SARA displayed extreme continuity between EAT choices and past history of pre-adult involvements in the world. For both DENISE and SARA, marriage/family as a central component was highly consistent with the values, expectations, and training characteristic of childhood and adolescence. Moreover, each chose a marriage partner whose ethnic and socio-economic background was the same as her own, and whose expectations for the future closely resembled those with which she had been raised. Similarly, KATE's choice of the convent was highly continuous with a family history of religious observance and values of discipline, devotion, and abstinence, and with a previous school history that was exclusively in all-female religious settings. Her father had attempted to enter religious life before marriage, and like him KATE intended to pursue an academic career within church-related settings. As if to symbolize this continuity, she took as her religious name a combination of the given names of both parents.

Furthermore, the calling of nun was highly consistent with her self-image as an idealistic heroine who had sought "a noble life, like Don Quixote" ever since her experience in the iron lung.

For NICOLETTE and LOUISA there was moderate continuity between pre-adulthood and initial adult choices. NICOLETTE's choice of marriage/family as a central component was highly consistent with her upbringing and training, and she had been "going steady" with J. since both were 15. On the other hand, she was aware that his career development would require a series of geographical moves almost immediately, and that choice of this partner reflected built-in discontinuity because of the difference in their backgrounds. (As she had been preparing to enter his world since her mid-teens, the shift was not abrupt.) LOUISA's choice of a joint marriage-career focus was fairly consistent with the values with which she had grown up, including the explicit feminist orientation of both her parents, and their respect for teaching as a profession. Her choice of marriage partner also reflected continuity with respect to background, values, and expectations; moreover, they had decided to remain in the same geographical area in which both had grown up. Some discontinuity was present, however, in that LOUISA was abandoning earlier images of career achievement which her parents had fostered (e.g., by asserting that she would be the first woman president of the United States), and also her own previous interest in a career in communications.

Moderate discontinuity between pre-adult and adult life structure choices was found for NINA and JAN. While NINA's emphasis on career as central, and her choice of career in college administration, were consistent with her own previous history and with values

characteristic of her family, a great deal of discontinuity entered her life with the death of her father when she was 20. Her expectations then became less open-ended than before, due to her conviction that she would have to support herself independently and help support her siblings -- a shift in self-image and approach to life decisions which was a significant source of discontinuity for her. JAN, on the other hand, deliberately intended to achieve as much discontinuity as possible from the "boring," "restrictive" environment in which she had grown up. Her plan for world travel did, however, represent covert continuity with the life pattern of her father, a "free spirit" who had moved the family around within England and across the world to Australia; and it was also continuous with her history as a loner not given to forming close interpersonal bonds. Thus, the discontinuity for her was moderate rather than extreme.

Summary: An Early Adult Transition occurred for these subjects between the ages of 17/18 and 21, with the characteristic concerns for separation from pre-adulthood, and preparation to begin early adulthood. There were three different individual styles of negotiating the transition, and choices made by the end of EAT represented a continuum from extreme continuity to moderate discontinuity with the pre-adult world of the subjects.

Only three of the seven subjects engaged in active questioning of their options for early adulthood during EAT, and there was a predominance of continuity between pre-adult life structures and choices for the initial adult life structure. This finding would seem to indicate a pattern of relatively smooth transition for many of the women, with separation issues often minimized by

gradual rather than abrupt changes, and by the maintenance of continuity with the pre-adult world in all but two cases.

Such patterns confirm our speculation that concern with separation might be less pronounced for many women -- especially those whose initial focus would be on marriage/family -- than it was for Levinson's men, during EAT. The findings also show that, while subjects did prepare themselves to enter the adult world, this preparation involved less searching through various options for the future than was the case for Levinson's subjects, and was often characterized by the simple continuation of choices made earlier, in adolescence. The three women who attended college during EAT were exceptions to these generalizations, however: their experience of the transition seemed closer to the experience of Levinson's men, although there were no instances of extreme discontinuity between pre-adulthood and choices for early adulthood, even among the college-educated.

Entering the Adult World (EAW). With some variation in styles of structure-building, all subjects showed signs of an intial stable period after EAT. The first criterion of EAW, that of following through decisions made during EAT, is one measure of life structure stability during this time, and was met by every subject except JAN.

Four subjects (DENISE, LOUISA, NICOLETTE, SARA) devoted a number of years following EAT to the living-out of decisions which they experienced as non-provisional choices for a first adult life structure. NICOLETTE and SARA spent these years managing a growing marriage/family enterprise. For NICOLETTE, married at 21, the plan to have three children was fulfilled during the years 23-28;

involvement in marriage/family was practically an exclusive one during that time. SARA, similarly, married at 18, was occupied from 20-29 primarily with marriage and the births of five children; work on the dairy farm was an additional, more peripheral concern, but by and large she lived by the early plan that "he was to be the dairy farmer and I'd be a housewife."

DENISE, married at 21, spent the next six years adjusting to the marriage, in combination with a series of paraprofessional jobs which were somewhat involving but never as central as her marriage/family commitment. Her original plan had made provision for several children, but having even the first at 27 proved difficult due to her husband's reluctance to begin parenting, and her miscarriage. Finally, LOUISA spent a number of years balancing marriage with teaching, both begun at 21/22, and developing the shared lifestyle which she and her husband had envisioned for themselves. She also followed through the original intention to delay parenthood for eight years, in line with timetables of professional requirements for herself and G.

NINA was occupied for a number of years with following through EAT choices which she experienced as fairly provisional. While remaining within the scope of an initial commitment to college administration, the nature of her jobs and the direction of her occupational development had not been specified in the original plan. Moreover, she had made no specific decisions regarding the place of marriage/family in her life structure; her hopes of marrying A. were replaced by a more provisional stance towards marriage after that relationship ended.

KATE and JAN both showed a kind of splitting in their

attempts to follow through EAT decisions. For KATE, commitment to the Community had originally been made side by side with a private vow to "do whatever I had to, to survive." In fact what she did for a number of years was develop two conflicting centers in her life structure, with separate, conflicting person-world relationships. On the one hand, she remained within the Community and did not actively begin to consider separating from it until around 29; on the other, she consistently acted on wishes to go beyond the convent walls, to discover and enjoy life in the outside world. Since her original EAT commitments had been split from the start, it was necessary for her to develop this kind of double life in order to actualize them.

For JAN the splitting was reflected in a sequential, rather than simultaneous attempt to live out opposing wishes. From 21-24, she followed her "Master Plan" for world travel, freedom, and adventure. Then, abruptly, this phase ended, and by 26 she had settled in New York City and marriage -- "for security," from "fear of being pitied," and because "I guess I must have liked him." The marriage choice did not include a commitment to parenting, and so from 26-30 she was able to sustain some sense of continuing independence within marriage. JAN, thus, was the only subject whose initial EAT decisions did not carry through more than a few years, and who subsequently developed a quite different life structure without a noticeable period of transition.

The second criterion for EAW has to do with the prevalence of exploration of the adult world during the years following EAT. All but one subject engaged in some sort of exploration, either within marriage (LOUISA, NICOLETTE, SARA), before marriage (JAN),

or as a single woman (KATE, NINA). Exploratory moves included travel (JAN, LOUISA), inner exploration and self-discovery (KATE, NICOLETTE, SARA), trying out various relationships with the other sex (NINA), adventures of the intellect (KATE), and testing various career-related settings and jobs (LOUISA, NINA). DENISE is the only subject who showed few attempts to explore the adult world in any of these ways.

These exploratory activities tend to challenge self-definition and world-view, and hence are potentially threatening to life structure stability; however, in no case did the thrust towards exploration outweigh the wish for stability during this time. Moreover, SARA's experience illustrates one way in which a seemingly stable commitment to marriage/family can still leave room for significant exploration of oneself and the world. She comments that, especially when her children were of preschool age, she felt

> zest for life itself, the willingness to go out on a snowy afternoon and play with the kids rather than watch a football game on television. Maybe because life itself is still full of challenges and you're curious enough to be probing around, and to have this little person probing with you is an adventure.

All subjects met at least one criterion for EAW, and most met both; hence this stable period can be said to be present. Age boundaries for EAW were comparable with the range 21/22 - 28/29 found for Levinson's subjects. Onset of the period was taken to be the age at which subjects first attempted to put EAT choices into action, and ranged from 18 - 22, with a median and modal age of 21/22. Events taken as marking the close of the period were those which represented a culmination of efforts to actualize EAT

decisions: the youngest child's attainment of some independence (DENISE, NICOLETTE, SARA); a sense of having done enough of balancing marriage and career (JAN, LOUISA); or successful attainment of initial career goals (KATE, NINA). These events occurred at 28/29 for all subjects. Thus, as for Levinson's sample, EAW in this group occurred from 21/22 to 28/29.

Three different individual styles of life structure formation were apparent among these subjects in EAW. For five subjects, a stable structure seemed to predominate during the period, clearly centered on one or (at most) two key components. For DENISE and NICOLETTE, the structure centered on marriage/family; for SARA, on marriage/family with some additional involvement in the dairy farm; for LOUISA, on marriage with teaching also quite central; and for NINA, on a career. One subject, JAN, showed a style of life structure formation characterized by a split-sequential evolution of incompatible structures centered on independence and exploration, for several years, and then on a move towards greater stability and security in marriage, for the remaining years of the period. Another subject, KATE, showed a life structure formation style characterized by a split-simultaneous evolution of incompatible structures centered on independence and exploration, on the one hand, and commitment to a stable Community, on the other.

The outcome of EAW was reflected in varying degrees of satisfaction characteristic of life structures by the end of the period. Satisfaction is assessed according to both the viability of the structure in the outside world, and the suitability of the structure in meeting individual needs. With regard to viability, only KATE evidence a real problem; her separate lives

inside and outside the convent increasingly threatened each other, and such a split-simultaneous pattern could not remain indefinitely viable. With regard to suitability, KATE and JAN both experienced difficulties: KATE because of the practical and psychological costs of leading a double life, and JAN because her marriage met neither her needs for independence nor her wish for emotional gratification (although it did provide the material "security" she sought). The remaining subjects seemed to experience their life structures as more or less satisfactory by the end of the period, whatever difficulties they may have encountered earlier, in the course of structure building.

Summary: The stable period Entering the Adult World occurred for these subjects between the ages of 21/22 and 28/29, with the characteristic concerns for following through decisions made in EAT, and for exploration of the adult world within a stable structure. There were three different individual styles of life structure formation, and most subjects experienced the life structure as satisfactory (viable and suitable) by the end of the period.

Four of the seven subjects followed through initial choices for early adulthood which they experienced as non-provisional. These were all women who had married at the onset of EAW; and only one worked in the public sphere and was childless. The other three subjects, two single throughout the period and one single for half of it, all working in the public sphere and none with children, did retain a sense of provisionality of their choices. This finding confirms our speculation that EAW would be a less provisional period for married women with children, than it had been for Levinson's

subjects, even those who were married men with children; and that childless women working in the public sphere might resemble Levinson's subjects more closely in this regard.

All but one subject engaged in some form of exploration of the adult world during EAW, a finding which does not confirm the speculation that exploration would tend to be absent from these lives. It was notable, however, that all the women chose forms of exploration which did not seriously jeopardize the stability of the overall life structure. So although exploration was present as a concern, it did not constitute as central a concern as did the maintenance of a stable structure, during EAW.

Age Thirty Transition (ATT). With a great deal of variation in transitional styles, all subjects showed evidence of a transitional period following EAW. Yet while all of them met the second criterion for ATT (considering various options for a second life structure), only three gave substantive signs of the first criterion: termination or modification of one or more components of the existing life structure. Of these three, KATE effected the most disruptive termination: at 33 she departed from the Community she had entered at 18, saying, "I cannot live out any of the vows, and I find the whole life pointless and ludicrous." This actual separation was the culmination of several years' gradual withdrawal, during which she developed "a sense of an ending."

SARA's experience of termination during ATT involved the end of active childbearing for her, as her family entered what Lopata (1971) calls the "full-house plateau"; this termination, however, was her own choice, and was minimally disruptive for her. The termination contemplated by JAN during ATT was an ending to

the sense of independence and provisionality she had maintained during EAW, through the early years of marriage. In deciding whether to have children, it was the loss of free time and a kind of self-determination which she anticipated having to give up. A great deal of ATT was spent for her in dreading this termination, although she was unable actually to prepare for it.

DENISE was faced, during ATT, with an opportunity to confront the termination of family growth, once her husband indicated indirectly that he wanted no children other than the one already born. His manner of simply putting off the move to have another child -- "this isn't the year for it" -- together with DENISE's hope that in time she could change his mind, combined to make it possible for her to avoid actively coping with a termination which was in fact occurring.

With regard to the second criterion for ATT, all subjects did undergo a period during which additional life structure components were explored and considered, and key decisions made in order to include these new components in the second adult life structure. For DENISE and NICOLETTE, the move involved enrollment in college courses, at first hesitantly and then with increasing confidence as they proved their abilities; for NINA a similar pattern accompanied the return to graduate school for doctoral training, although unlike DENISE and NICOLETTE she had a specific career goal in mind. SARA also began the process of reaching into the outside world on a new basis; once her family had reached the "full-house plateau," she assumed new responsibilities on the dairy farm, contributing both physical work and her developing skills as "a strong businesswoman." In addition, she eventually

decided to learn how to breed cows, a vital contribution to building up the kind of herd necessary for a successful dairy farm.

LOUISA and JAN, on the other hand, contemplated adding the "family" component to life structures that already included marriage and career. JAN experienced a great deal of struggle in making the decision to have children, expecting parenthood to involve a number of highly negative aspects, including loss of freedom and "the terrible ordeal" of birth itself. LOUISA, while long convinced that she wanted children, was forced both by the adoption process and by the transformation of her marriage into a non-monogamous one, to actively question her commitment to parenting in her early 30s.

KATE's decision to leave the convent coincided with her exploration of love, and possibly marriage, after her involvement with J. At the same time, she was undertaking doctoral studies in New York City at the first secular institution she had ever attended. Thus, she was preparing to enter the world in several new ways, while also preparing to terminate the initial adult life structure.

All subjects, then, prepared to initiate a second life structure, whether they also dealt with terminating aspects of the first one. Age boundaries for ATT were from 29 - 32, compared with 27/28 - 32/33 for Levinson's subjects. The transition was thought to begin when subjects were first conscious of some need to change key aspects of the first life structure, as marked by a variety of events: active consideration of a first pregnancy (JAN, LOUISA); modification of the plan to have another child (DENISE); an insistent pull towards new kinds of involvements in the world (KATE, NICOLETTE, NINA, SARA). These developments occurred

between 27 and 30 for all subjects, with a modal and median age of 29. Marker events for the end of the transition were the moments of choice in which changes in life structure were decided on, between 31 and 33 for all subjects, with a median age of 32. JAN decided to get pregnant, while LOUISA began adoption proceedings; DENISE, NICOLETTE, and NINA matriculated in undergraduate or graduate programs; SARA decided to attend breeding school; and KATE left the convent.

Three different transitional styles were found for subjects as they negotiated ATT. KATE and JAN showed pronounced evidence of transition, with much conscious questioning, conflict, and ambivalence, and finally a key choice. KATE's decisions were accompanied by a strong sense of their "rightness" for her; her experience was that "distances get greater and greater, and pretty soon you say, I have no purpose in connecting myself any longer." JAN, by contrast, gives the impression of continuing doubt both as to the degree of her commitment to the choice of parenting as a life structure component, and as to the sources of that choice. At least in retrospect, her decision was not a firm one.

Four subjects showed a transitional style characterized by gradual moves towards change beginning in the transitional period itself. NICOLETTE began her forays into academia around the beginning of ATT, but did not matriculate at any program until the end of the period. DENISE also entered college slowly, although later in ATT than NICOLETTE, once she began to understand that her husband was serious in his intention to have no more children. LOUISA, despite some turmoil surrounding changes in the nature of her marriage, proceeded at a fairly regular pace to apply for adoption nonetheless. NINA prepared herself for the graduate study necessary for her new goal of becoming a college president;

first she took some non-credit courses, and then finally matriculated in a graduate program at the end of ATT.

Finally, SARA, more than other subjects, showed a style of transition involving more or less continuous change beginning earlier, in EAW. Her involvement in the dairy farm had started slowly, and "mushroomed"; her business activities had their roots in her bookkeeping for the farm, from the beginning. When she and her husband made the firm decision to have no more children, and the youngest child attained some independence, she made the decision to enroll in breeding school -- a sign of her increased commitment to the family business. It appears, however, that the difference between her new involvement and her previous interest was a matter of degree rather than of kind.

As might be anticipated from these various transitional styles, there were varying degrees of continuity/discontinuity between the first adult life structure and choices for the second adult life structure, made in ATT. A continuum from moderate continuity, through moderate discontinuity, to extreme discontinuity, was found. DENISE, LOUISA, NINA, and SARA experienced moderate continuity between the two sets of choices; new components were chosen with minimal disruption of the previous structure. (In DENISE's case, disruption was minimized because she saw college as only a temporary substitute for the second child she still hoped to have.) NICOLETTE's choice to pursue a college degree, unlike DENISE's, represented long-suppressed wishes to achieve, demonstrate competence in the public sphere, and gain recognition after an adolescence and early adulthood in which she saw herself as "dumb." For that reason, her decision to add

college as a life structure component represented moderate discontinuity, since it was accompanied by changes in self-concept and a re-awakening of powerful motivations.

KATE and JAN, whose experience of ATT had been the most difficult, were also the subjects for whom there was most extreme discontinuity between the first life structure and choices made for the second. JAN's decision to have children meant giving up time and a kind of independence which she had been able to hold onto through the first years of marriage. At the same time, it meant the taking on of additional responsibilities and "sacrifices," about which she was fearful and hesitant, and potential gratifications, about which she was doubtful. For KATE the discontinuity was something anticipated and long-awaited, though still painful to effect; despite her sense of loss of the Community, she was already significantly invested in the alternative components -- her "obsession with freedom," the relationship with J., and her attempts openly to explore ideas, relationships, and behaviors in the outside world.

Summary: An Age Thirty Transition occurred for these subjects between the ages of 29 and 32; all subjects showed characteristic concern with exploring and adding new components to their life structures, while some subjects also were concerned with termination of one or more components of the previous structure. There were three different individual styles of negotiating the transition, and choices made by the end of ATT represented a continuum from moderate continuity to extreme discontinuity with the initial adult life structures of the subjects.

Five of the seven subjects negotiated this transition in

a gradual manner; only two experienced pronounced concern with questioning and choice. While no initial speculation had been made regarding possible differences for women and for men in experience of ATT, it is still interesting to note that, as in EAT, there was a tendency to minimize issues of separation in many cases. By contrast with the "crisis" nature of ATT, found for a majority of Levinson's subjects (1978, p. 87), massive discontent and doubt did not surface for a majority of the women. This may be because these subjects were less willing to allow potentially disturbing thoughts and feelings to surface (as was the case for at least two of them), or perhaps because the previous life structure had been experienced as fairly satisfactory to begin with.

Although the transition tended to be gradual, however, it did typically result in some significant changes between the first adult life structure and choices for the second. There were no instances of extreme continuity among these women, and two cases of extreme discontinuity were found. In both of these cases, moreover, the initial adult life structure had not appeared satisfactory by the end of EAW; thus, the two subjects seem to have been actively attempting, after a relatively turbulent ATT, to improve their situations as best they could.

Restructuring Early Adulthood (REA). Due to wide variations in style of structure-building, it is difficult to establish the existence of a stable period following ATT. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that half of the subjects were only a few years past ATT, so that for them long-term stability could not yet be assessed.

Only three subjects met the first criterion for this stable period: following through decisions made during ATT. These were NICOLETTE, who at age 35 has worked to balance marriage/family with a return to college, aiming towards the career in management she had chosen by the end of ATT; SARA, who up to age 39 continued to balance marriage/family with partnership in the family dairy farm; and NINA, who continues at age 35 to pursue her goal, evolved during ATT, of becoming a college president.

For four subjects, a period of living out ATT choices was followed by a marked change in course which had not been planned for in ATT. JAN lived by her decision to have two children, at 33 and 35, cutting back to part-time nursing work; but then she found that around 35/36 she "started to get resentful," developing insomnia, putting on weight, and taking on both the return to college and the full-time night nursing job. KATE left the convent at 33, intending to live independently, continue teaching at the College, and remain involved with J. However, the disparity between their hopes for the relationship reached a climax when she broke with him at 36; thus, while living out her commitment to an independent life-style, she instituted a significant change in life structure in her mid-30s.

LOUISA, once she had decided by age 31 to remain in a non-monogamous marriage, and to adopt two children, began to revise her plans almost as soon as her child was born (32). Her experience of the early stages of parenting was so difficult that she decided not to have a second child; in addition, at 33, she began to take graduate courses part-time. By 35/36, she had discovered a passionate enthusiasm for communications theory, and at age 38 she

has maintained a joint commitment to doctoral study and family involvement.

Finally, DENISE at 36 is apparently engaged in a similar change of course. Since 29/30 she has continued trying to increase the size of the family by wearing down her husband's resistance; these efforts have, however, been unsuccessful. She now recognizes that there will be no more children, but appears not to have squarely faced the reality of this, or her feelings of angry deprivation and loss. Meanwhile, in ATT she had decided to take college courses as an avocation; after this became a commitment to finishing a degree, graduate training in human services emerged as a new possibility. Between 35 and 36 she has spent much effort deciding whether to go on with a graduate program; "it's never taken me this long to decide anything." Thus she, like LOUISA, JAN, and KATE, became involved after the mid-30s in pursuits which had not been part of the choices originally made in ATT.

All subjects showed signs of the second criterion for REA, attempts towards advancement; for these subjects advancement involved new, renewed, or continuing involvement in the public sphere (college, graduate school, career). The one subject with the most substantial degree of advancement during REA, KATE (she was promoted at the College, received tenure, published a book, and was given a sabbatical to finish a second book), was also the subject for whom concern with advancement was least pronounced, experienced only as "frosting." The other subjects experienced wishes for advancement ranging from a driven, highly competitive or perfectionistic approach (JAN, NICOLETTE), to simple enjoyment of doing work and exercising competence (NINA, LOUISA, SARA, DENISE).

For most subjects, advancement has been possible without jeopardizing the stability of the overall structure. In fact, there was considerable subjective experience of a wish for stability and rootedness in subjects' memories and current thinking about their lives since ATT. For instance, SARA and her husband shared the wish to preserve their family farm as long as possible, struggling heroically to keep it going despite setbacks when she was 35/36; only when she was 39 did they finally decide to sell the herd and equipment. KATE recalls great satisfaction in being able to set up her own apartment and maintain her work at the College, saying, "I love to set down roots because I never was able to before." DENISE, at 36, says she wants to "be able to enjoy what I have . . . I just want to continue" the present life structure.

Yet since subjects are talking about current experiences of REA, it is difficult to assess their subjective reports; perhaps it is simply characteristic of them that they would wish for stability at any time, even the most dramatically transitional time, if it could be attained. Therefore such subjective experiences lend only partial support for the existence of a stable period following ATT.

Within REA, two <u>styles of life structure formation</u> were shown by these subjects. For SARA and NINA there was a stable structure with a clear center throughout the period: SARA focussed her energies on marriage/family and farm, while NINA spent most of her energy on career pursuits. The remaining subjects showed the split-sequential pattern, with significant changes around 35/36, found for JAN in EAW. No subject showed the split-

simultaneous structure which had been found for KATE in EAW.

Because of the variation in styles of life structure formation, age boundaries of REA, comparable to Levinson's finding of 32/33 - 40/41, are difficult to establish within this group. Subjects began to live out ATT decisions between 31 and 33, with a median age of 32; on the other hand, half of them began to live out new decisions at 35/36, usually in conjunction with continuing their previous activities as well. At the other end of the period, only one subject (SARA, now 41) showed signs of having ended the stable period when the dairy farm was given up at 39. It is still too soon to see the ending of REA in the lives of the other subjects. Thus, REA for this group could be described as occupying 32 to the present, often with a switch at 35/36; or as occupying 35/36 to the present. More specific boundaries cannot be determined when subjects are in the age range of the present sample.

There were varying degrees of satisfaction characteristic of life structures by the time subjects were interviewed during REA. All subjects maintained viable structures, and many also evolved suitable ones. NICOLETTE, for instance, describes the years from 32 to 35 as "the part of my life I've been waiting for," finding highly suitable the combination of marriage/family with outside pursuits. This type of structure, combining marriage/family with commitments in the public sphere, was also suitable for SARA and LOUISA. For NINA and KATE, on the other hand, life as a single woman with significant, valued career involvements and friendships was highly suitable.

DENISE, by contrast, while describing her current life structure as suitable for herself, shows signs of experiencing it

as less than suitable: for instance, she has gained weight and had episodes of depression. JAN is the only subject, however, who is explicitly unhappy with her current life structure; the practical and emotional demands of marriage/family are not suited to her own needs for independence and solitude.

It is interesting to note that most subjects are optimistic about further evolution of their present life structures. Four subjects (DENISE, LOUISA, NICOLETTE, NINA) expect, or at least hope, to obtain challenging jobs with a career line, once they have completed their education. SARA intends to work her way up through the ranks of the county bureaucracy, and also has hopes for mutual enjoyment when she and her husband retire. KATE believes that her present lifestyle and career involvement will continue to be gratifying, also indicating some hope that J. will eventually re-enter her life. Only JAN expresses no plans or hope for the future which can excite or comfort her; she sees her future as "frightening," a slow decline in which aging will be a matter of loss with no compensation ("except materially").

Summary: The stable period Restructuring Early Adulthood occurred for these subjects between the ages of 32 and the present, although significant changes in life structure around 35/36 for four of the subjects make these boundaries difficult to establish. There was characteristic concern during this time for both structure building, and advancement in the world. Subjects showed two different types of individual styles of life structure formation, and most subjects experienced the life structure as satisfactory (viable and suitable) by the time of interviewing, with optimistic views of further evolution.

Although a number of subjects voiced the wish for stability and rootedness during this period, their actions did not point in the direction of "settling down." Rather than narrowing the range of their involvements in the world, they tended to choose, in the second adult life structure, to add new components while maintaining in many cases their investment in the components that had previously been central. This finding confirms our initial speculation that the second stable period would be characterized less by a concern with "settling down," as was found for Levinson's subjects, than by a wish to "open out" and extend oneself into new areas of involvement.

It is also noteworthy that concern with advancement during REA was present in these lives to the extent that women became active in the public sphere; as for Levinson's men, their wish to advance was always within the context ot a public sphere occupation, whether career or education.

Declaring Oneself (DO). There were three subjects who at the time of interviewing had reached the age of 40/41, by which time the "DO" phase of REA might be expected to manifest itself: JAN, KATE, and SARA. Some indications of this phenomenon were present in their biographies.

The first criterion establishing the existence of "DO" is concern with and/or effort towards the attainment of greater independence in the life structure. Strong trends in this direction can be seen in KATE and JAN. KATE, at 36, decided not to marry specifically because she wanted to preserve her independence, and she has continued to value that as a central aspect of her life structure. JAN, since about 35/36, has experienced an

intense wish for greater independence from marriage/family, and talks of moving out to live alone in "just one room, if it was mine"; of course, this wish could also be seen as her response to a family life which has turned out to be fraught with problems. And since both of these subjects had shown a marked need for freedom throughout all of early adulthood, the presence of this wish towards the end of REA may reflect character styles rather than life structure evolution per se.

SARA's undertaking of independent activities since 39/40 is perhaps more telling, in that she did not show a particularly pronounced wish for independence earlier in adulthood. Towards the end of REA she began some highly gratifying involvements which were new for her and were undertaken alone: guitar lessors, voice lessons, and attendance at the Catholic church. The latter move constitutes "a rebellion": as a Protestant she had always been taught that Catholicism was "pagan." However, she continues to attend folk masses because "when I leave them I'm happy, and maybe I enjoy being pagan a little bit."

It should be noted that, in some ways, all the subjects who changed their life structures after 35/36 were showing a trend towards greater independence, especially those who moved out from intensive marriage/family involvements into productive contact with the public sphere. For JAN, NICOLETTE, and DENISE, enrollment in college not only signalled a move towards greater independence, but also helped in that move by strengthening the internal sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. This could indicate that younger subjects such as DENISE and NICOLETTE are in fact beginning to show signs of the concern with independence characteristic of "DO."

It is difficult to assess the presence of the second criterion for "DO," concern with and/or effort towards affirmation. KATE and SARA reported a sense of being affirmed towards the end of REA, both personally and in terms of their work. Yet this affirmation was not described as a central aspect of their experience during this time; it was almost, in KATE's words, "frosting." JAN, on the other hand, displayed a fierce need for affirmation with regard to her school involvement, in class and in other school activities. Her need may be seen as a developmental occurrence, or as a response to being deprived of positive regard in all areas of her life other than school; she might have sought affirmation in college to compensate for blows to her self-esteem associated with feeling unloved as a wife and "ineffective" as a mother.

KATE's and SARA's descriptions of their lives at the time of interviewing provide some subjective experience of the "DO" phenomenon. KATE said,

> I've never been a happier person. I didn't realize it was possible to be this content after shucking all those things that everyone said would make you happy for sure!
>
> What's great about getting near 40, growing up, is when at last you can proclaim to yourself what you choose, what you believe. I think that's one of the joys. I would never want to be young again and be dictated to. I think that's one of the most exhilarating things about aging: that you can sort things out for yourself, and can cast away everything else.

In a similar vein, SARA described herself as feeling "more confident, less self-conscious," and as having gained "a lot of respect in my community." Such spontaneous comments add to the evidence that a

"DO" phase occurred at least in the lives of these two subjects, towards the end of REA.

The occurrence of "culminating events" mentioned by Levinson for male subjects may also be seen for SARA and KATE. For SARA, sale of the dairy herd, while in some senses a negative experience since it represented the termination of a central pursuit, was nonetheless gratifying in that "the animals brought top dollar" at the auction -- a testimony to the care and skill with which SARA had upgraded the herd through her expertise in breeding. KATE, towards the end of REA, was awarded a sabbatical leave by the College; this reflected the special esteem in which her contributions were held, and also proved to be a rich experience for her personally.

Summary: There was some evidence, both objective and subjective, to establish the occurrence of a phase of Declaring Oneself, towards the end of REA, with characteristic concerns for independence and affirmation, and the presence of "culminating events." Since only three subjects were old enough to have experienced such a phase according to Levinson's model, however, it was not possible to investigate the nature of this phenomenon in much detail.

In conclusion, we have seen the process of life structure evolution in the early adult lives of these seven subjects, as analyzed in terms of Levinson's model. We may now turn to the content of the subjects' early adult life structures, to be described in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS: CONTENT OF EARLY ADULT LIFE STRUCTURES

Findings relevant to the content of subjects' life structures in early adulthood will be subsumed under two headings: the Dream, and issues of centrality and integration of the life structure as a whole. These focal areas are chosen both because of their generality in permitting descriptions of the important life structure components, and because of their relevance to clinical formulations and concerns.

The Dream. To begin with, it was apparent that each subject had at least one Dream; in fact, for most subjects there were two or more Dreams in the course of early adulthood. The content and functions of these Dreams, or representations of person-in-world, will be discussed following a preliminary consideration of the formal properties of the Dreams.

One striking feature of most subjects' Dreams was their time-limited nature. Only NINA and KATE, whose initial Dreams centered on career, might have required all of early adulthood to

attain their goals, as did Levinson's career-centered male subjects. (KATE's Dream of teaching at the College was, in fact, attained during EAW; but this was due to fortunate circumstances rather than to intrinsic time limitation of the Dream itself.) For the other subjects, dreaming of marriage/family, the fantasied end-state could be reached within a few years. NICOLETTE comments on this aspect of her initial Dream, describing it as "a goal with long-term effects and long-term benefits, that can be achieved on a short-term basis." Moreover, once such a Dream is actualized, it can be maintained only with difficulty as the sole image of person-world relationships for the rest of early adulthood. After the "full-house plateau" has been reached and the youngest child has developed a measure of independence, the Dream becomes something to maintain, not to achieve. If the woman responds to this new situation by deciding to move out into new relationships with the world, as did all of these subjects whose initial Dream was family-centered, then she will often be guided by a second Dream.

In addition to their time-limited nature, the Dreams of these subjects were also characterized by a paradoxical <u>combination of specificity and vague generality</u>. Subjects were often specific about, for instance, the number of children they wanted to bear or raise. In LOUISA's case, there was even greater specificity: she saw herself bearing one child after eight years of marriage, and then adopting a second child. Such details were important, as evidenced by the degree of tenacity with which they were held -- for instance, by DENISE, who would still like to have two or three children as she had initially intended. Dreams not related to marriage/family were also fairly specific: KATE knew that her

initial Dream was to teach a particular subject at a particular college, and that a later Dream was to continue her love relationship with J. specifically, "on alternate weekends."

Many Dreams, however, consisted of hazy, often unrealistic visions of person-in-world, especially those involving marriage/family. Subjects' images of themselves as wives and mothers were ruefully described in retrospect as containing a sense of ease, contentment, even bliss, which was not present in reality. Interestingly, all of these subjects mentioned that their unrealistic visions of married life and parenthood were derived from television commercials or other media, even though many of them were already adolescents at the advent of television. These women imagined not only that they would do housework, but that they would find it fulfilling; not only that they would change diapers, but that they would beam at their infants in the process; not only that they would prepare meals, but that this act of love would evoke answering expressions of love from husband and children. Somehow in the process of Dream formation, specific images of real women enacting the wife-mother role were overlaid with these rosy images present in popular culture. While it is true that some career-centered Dreams were also vague and undefined (NINA's, in EAW, and NICOLETTE's, in REA), these did not also include the promise of happy-ever-after, found in almost all subjects' Dreams of marriage/family.

One generalization to be made is that Dreams of marriage/family tended to be specific in some aspects, but were generally vague and unrealistic fantasies involving complete gratification of interpersonal needs; Dreams of career, on the other hand, tended to begin vague but become more focussed, with more realistic images

of the types of gratification to be anticipated. Within this generalization, as might be expected, there was room for individual variation in formal aspects of the Dreams, variations due in part to differences in character style. LOUISA, for instance, an intellectually-oriented person in solid contact with most aspects of reality, elaborated a precise, complex vision of herself-in-the-world by the end of EAT. DENISE, by contrast, with the emotional and interpersonal orientation characteristic of an hysteric style, evolved images of herself-in-the-world which, defined by the wishes and needs of others, were of necessity left unfocussed. KATE and JAN, functioning in a schizoid style, tended to have split, conflicting representations of themselves-in-the-world, with a Dream corresponding to each fragment. Thus, generalizations about Dream formation within this group must also take into account the role and nature of fantasies in overall psychological functioning, differing according to character styles.

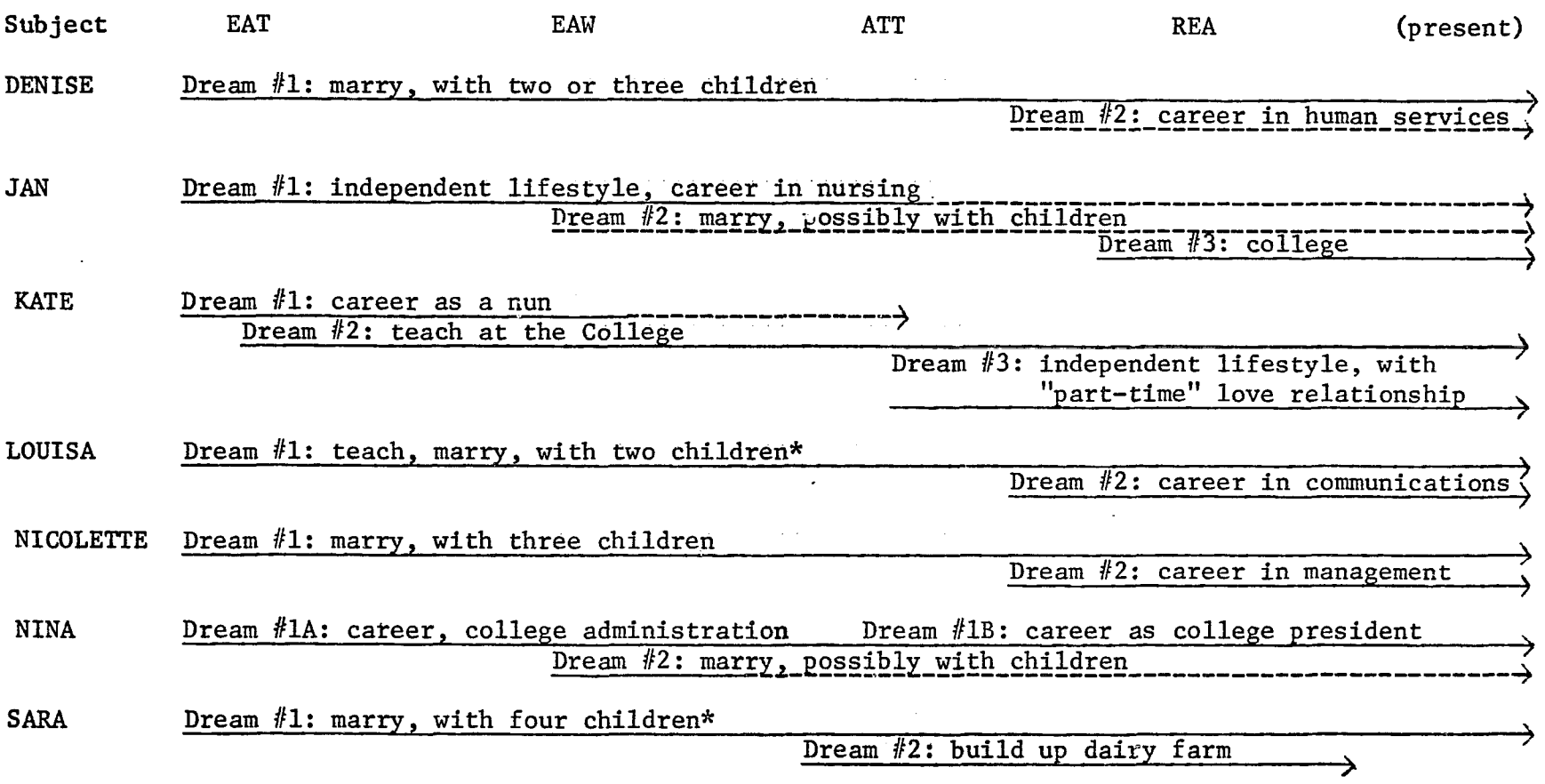
Having noted some formal properties of the Dreams of these subjects, we may now turn to consider the content of the Dreams, as presented in Table 3. It is evident that the Dreams tended to involve either marriage/family, or career, or both; and that there were often two overlapping Dreams in subjects' second life structures.

Insert Table 3 about here.

With respect to the process of Dream formation, it is apparent from Table 3 that all subjects except NINA showed formation of multiple, often quite disparate Dreams in the course of

TABLE 3

Sequence of Dreams in Early Adulthood for Seven Subjects



KEY

_____ Dream strongly cathected

_ _ _ _ _ Dream weakly cathected

* (details modified over time)

early adulthood. (The change in NINA's Dream is simply in the direction of more precise focus, rather than a shift in priorities or arenas of fantasied involvement in the world.)

As with Levinson's subjects, all of these women had adopted an intial Dream by the end of EAT; the Dreams revolved around marriage/family (DENISE, NICOLETTE, SARA), career (KATE, NINA, JAN), or a combination of marriage/family and career (LOUISA). For some, there was serious consideration of more than one vision of themselves-in-the-world. LOUISA, for instance, was excited by the possibility of a career in communications, before choosing the more "stable" field of teaching, in combination with marriage, as her intial Dream. SARA had visions of applying her business training in becoming an executive secretary, before she met D. and formed the Dream of being a farmer's wife.

Other subjects seem to have arrived at a vision earlier in adolescence which remained the only image of the future that generated the sense of aliveness and purpose characteristic of Dreams. Even though these subjects may have considered alternative paths for early adulthood, the rival images did not take on the status of serious contenders for replacing the original Dream. NICOLETTE, for instance, considered leaving her parents' home to attend computer school, but does not appear to have doubted that this would simply fill up the interim before her initial Dream of marriage to J. could be put into operation. Similarly, DENISE, while going through the training necessary for her paraprofessional career, still held onto the Dream of an eventual marriage/family commitment. KATE, who considered an early marriage in the year before she entered the convent, rejected this path as "not noble

enough" and committed herself to the path she had chosen in her mid-teens.

For DENISE and NICOLETTE, the initial Dream of marriage/family had roots extending back to childhood, and also was supported by family, peers, and subculture, as the only legitimate Dream a young woman could pursue. KATE's Dream, while similarly supported by the immediate environment which was strongly dominated by religious influences, was chosen more independently, yet still before EAT. It is possible that these subjects illustrate Erikson's concept of "identity foreclosure" (Erikson, 1968) in their early choice of Dream; however, the choice seems to have resulted in satisfactory initial life structures for DENISE and NICOLETTE, while KATE was able to modify her Dream and life structure after ATT when the original version proved unsatisfactory. Therefore, there is no evidence in the lives of these subjects to suggest that an early choice of Dream was premature or constraining.

Changes in Dreams over the course of early adulthood occurred for various reasons. In five cases (DENISE, JAN, LOUISA, NICOLETTE, SARA), a Dream of marriage/family, whether actualized in the first or the second life structure, simply became played out as the sole organizer for person-world relationships, due to its time-limited nature (NICOLETTE, SARA), to problems in going further towards attaining the Dream (DENISE), or to problems in living out the Dream once it was attained (JAN, LOUISA). All five subjects chose to keep marriage/family as one central component of the life structure, while also engaging in activities that would allow for formation of additional visions of themselves-in-the-world. SARA is the one subject whose second Dream had been forming throughout EAW and ATT;

for her the only change in REA was that involvement in the dairy farm took on greater salience in her image of herself-in-the-world. For LOUISA and NICOLETTE, a second Dream involving career evolved only after a return to school (graduate and undergraduate, respectively), and was a shift in fantasied person-world relationships which neither could have predicted beforehand.

For DENISE and JAN, the return to school was undertaken, but did not result in the formation of an additional, clear Dream. DENISE, at 36, had considered a career in human services but without the sense of "aliveness and purpose" characteristic of a Dream. In fact, she experienced the possibility of further professional training as her husband's wish for her, not as her wish for herself. She was conflicted about abandoning an original Dream not yet attained, and seemed unable to imagine herself reaching or even pursuing professional status. JAN, at 40, had abandoned whatever hopes she might have had for marriage/family, but had not yet completed college nor formed an image of what her life might be like after college. In these two cases, commitment to an original Dream of marriage/family became problematic due to internal or external conflicts, but formation of an alternative Dream was also difficult.

Unlike JAN, bound to her husband and family by a number of legal, emotional, and practical ties, KATE was able to abandon an initial Dream once its unsuitability became evident to her. While she continued the college teaching to which she had aspired in the convent, this was now in the context of an independent, solitary lifestyle, the antithesis of convent living.

Changes in Dream reflect shifts in the way the individual

represents herself-in-the-world, and there are differences in the extent to which more than one such representation can be integrated within awareness. Only in some cases (JAN and KATE) did multiple Dream formation indicate the operation of conflicting self-representations which could not be reconciled during early adulthood. In the other cases, subjects were able to integrate more than one Dream, symbolizing more than one set of motives and representations of person-world interactions, during the era. In developing more than one Dream they were responding to changes in outer or inner reality, and attempting to resolve difficulties or limitations in the life structures they had evolved.

We may wonder whether these Dreams which appeared in the second half of early adulthood were person-world representations which actually had existed earlier, but had remained outside of awareness until various conditions changed to allow them to emerge as conscious Dreams. It is certainly true that in some cases, the second Dream reflected powerful motivations from pre-adulthood which seem to have been put aside for the first part of early adulthood to permit the attainment of more strongly-cathected goals.

For instance, both LOUISA and NICOLETTE evolved Dreams of success in public-sphere pursuits which had deep roots in pre-adolescence. Throughout their childhoods, successful achievement in school had been emphasized, rewarded, and enjoyed. Yet in response to pressures from without and from within, such motivations seem to have taken a back seat in adolescence and in the first adult life structure; concerns with marriage/family dominated instead. We may describe this process using Schafer's

(1968) concept of "hierarchy of motivations": the motivations bound up in marriage/family became the more strongly-cathected for LOUISA and NICOLETTE, while those related to public-sphere achievement became more weakly-cathected (due to conflict, ambivalence, or other forces) during the teens and 20s. Then, when LOUISA and NICOLETTE had attained sufficient gratification of the needs embodied in marriage/family, and when they were able to work around the external constraints posed by marriage/family commitments, they were free to explore the public sphere in more depth, and to arrive at a more precise version of Dream symbolizing their wishes for achievement in the outside world.

It is likely that deeper understanding of a person's Dreams -- based on more extensive and more intimate contact than was possible with these subjects -- will be necessary if we are to answer the many questions about Dream formation and functioning with which these lives present us. Yet even at this level of understanding, it appears quite useful to formulate a Dream as representing a strongly-cathected set of motivations, with a history in the person's life both before and during adulthood, and to consider the strength of cathexis (i.e., the motivations' place in a "motivational hierarchy") to be a vital determinant of a Dream's power actually to affect life structure evolution.

According to Levinson, the contributions of a mentor are useful, even necessary, if a man is to actualize his Dream; in fact, developing mentor relationships is included by Levinson as a "developmental task" for men in early adulthood. It is, therefore, especially noteworthy that none of these seven subjects, whether centrally involved in career or marriage/family,

showed evidence of the kind of intensive, dyadic mentor relationship which Levinson found for some of his subjects. Rather, the women seem to have relied on a number of individuals to fill various mentoring functions in actualizing their Dreams.

For women whose Dream centered on marriage/family, female friends and relatives provided the major mentoring functions related to marital or parental activities. In fact, as previous work has suggested, much training and observational learning had already occurred before adulthood, with mothers and women from the extended family engaged in early "mentoring" of children and adolescents. When other women were consulted in adulthood for advice or help with marriage/family concerns, it was only when prior learning proved inadequate, or special problems arose. Other than such periodic consultations -- experienced as essential despite their sporadic nature -- there was no sign of mentoring for women in the domestic sphere.

For women whose Dream involved career in the public sphere, peers or respected older colleagues were relied upon to affirm the worth of a Dream, and/or provide practical support for the woman's attempts to live it out. KATE, for instance, during the novitiate, formed a special relationship with an older nun who affirmed her wish and ability to teach at the College, and also encouraged her exploration of ideas by secretly supplying her with secular books. Yet this was a fairly short-lived relationship, and only one of a series of figures whom KATE found to assist her in the convent. LOUISA also, in the course of graduate work during REA, was inspired by a particular professor from whose course she derived many ideas central to her doctoral dissertation.

There was, however, no development of a special relationship with this teacher, either during the semester of study or afterwards when he left the university. And NINA describes a number of relationships, mostly with professional peers, from which she learned useful skills or approaches to her work, but none of these included the kind of intense involvement characteristic of mentoring.

Where mentoring was scarce, friendships often formed an essential support network for all subjects except JAN, whose life structure was apparently devoid of most kinds of interpersonal ties. The other subjects spoke spontaneously, affectionately, and gratefully of the emotional and practical support they gave and received in friendships. In fact, many of the individuals who contributed mentoring functions were described as, simply, friends. LOUISA, for instance, unable to find support for her developing dissertation project among the faculty at her graduate program, relied on an informal study group of fellow students, and one friendship in particular, as a source of affirmation and an arena of important intellectual work. NINA continued ongoing friendships with the colleagues who, formerly her superiors on various jobs, had encouraged and taught her. And, of course, women who raised children found themselves relying on neighbors and other friends for childcare services and specific advice, as well as for sharing and comparison of experiences and feelings. This traditional role of female pairs and groups in childrearing had been vividly described by French (1977) and Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974).

Husbands, also, for many married subjects, contributed to Dream attainment. Husbands who shared the responsibilities and

joys of childcare (with NICOLETTE and SARA and, after the child's infancy, with DENISE and LOUISA) helped create the kind of setting and emotional tone which the women had envisioned in their Dreams of marriage/family. Conversely, women whose husbands were unwilling to develop that kind of involvement in family (JAN and, during the first years of parenthood, DENISE and LOUISA) were disappointed and resentful both because of the enormity of their responsibilities, and because of the disparity between their Dreams and the difficult, constricting realities they faced.

The role of husbands in helping subjects pursue involvements outside the family will be described below, in considering "centrality and integration." Meanwhile, it should be noted that in no case did husbands take on the role of "special man" comparable to the role of "special woman" described by Levinson. Despite their significant contributions to their spouse's efforts, none of these men subordinated his own pursuits to the other's needs and interests, as is characteristic of the "special woman." Rather, they collaborated as partners in a joint enterprise, in the case of marriage/family Dreams, and as friendly helpers, in the case of career Dreams.

In general, it would seem that the seven women pursued their Dreams without the kind of "mentor" Levinson describes. Their patterns of including many individuals in the life structure to provide support for Dreams -- peers, older colleagues, relatives, friends, spouses -- appears quite different from the pattern of exclusive dyadic relations with older colleagues characteristic of Levinson's subjects with mentors. Whether these women might have been able to actualize their Dreams more effectively, had

mentors been present, they certainly experienced their efforts as receiving support from other sources, and were able to make good use of mentoring functions wherever they could be found.

All subjects whose Dream involved career, whether in EAW or in REA, were concerned with an occupational "ladder." As Levinson found for his male subjects, it was necessary for these women to contend with the hierarchical structure of the public sphere, and to resolve questions of how they would approach the climb upwards. No subject who took career seriously failed to include the "ladder" in her life structure. At the same time, no subject without a career focus -- i.e., no subject for whom marriage/family was an exclusive central component -- did show such a concern. It would appear that the "ladder" concept was relevant only for life structures with career at the center -- alone, or in combination with marriage/family.

A final observation on the Dream's impact on life structure formation has to do with the role of "love" as a component. While only KATE spontaneously voiced a Dream explicitly including love, this component was quite central in many life structures, and was at least present in most -- whether the love was erotic, parental, filial, or friendly. Women with central marriage/family commitments (NICOLETTE, DENISE, LOUISA, SARA) spoke of love within the marriage and family as an essential aspect of their lives. NINA, whose love relationships followed a pattern of serial monogamy, valued them along with her friendships, although they were not as central as career for her. KATE's current life structure, despite its solitary focus, includes lasting relationships with loved friends; however, her only erotic love relationship has

become a matter of history and of future possibility which, though dim, still constitutes an important feature of her Dream. Finally, JAN was the exception, as there appeared to be no recognizable love relationships of any kind in her current life structure, while possible earlier love for husband and/or children was not described in any of the interviews.

It is not clear why, given the centrality of some kind of love in these life structures, most statements of Dream did not include love as an explicit feature. Perhaps, at least for those whose stated Dream involved marriage/family, the presence of love was simply taken for granted as part of the picture. Perhaps the subjects were reluctant to acknowledge this important aspect of their images of themselves-in-the-world. In any case, love of various kinds did appear to be at or near the center of many life structures throughout early adulthood.

Centrality and Integration. The second aspect of early adult life structures to be discussed -- centrality and integration of life structure components -- relates closely to the pursuit of Dreams in the individual's life. In almost all cases, particular life structure components (marriage, family, career, other involvements in the world) were made central according to their part in a Dream. When a person's life structure was centered on pursuits unrelated to a Dream, it was experienced as unsuitable and hence unsatisfactory. Subjects who chose one component as central seemed to have little difficulty in relegating other concerns to a more peripheral role. When more than one Dream was present, however, and two life structure components competed for centrality, a serious concern arose for integration of the life structure as a whole.

LOUISA was one subject who attempted to combine two components as central in EAW: she balanced marriage and career throughout her 20s. This was not particularly difficult in that her husband's career was then compatible with hers -- both were public school teachers -- and neither was then striving for advancement, so they could design a lifestyle which supported their work. In REA, however, LOUISA was in a situation much more difficult to integrate: assuming primary responsibility for childcare after 33 when her son was born, she temporarily abandoned other involvements in the world, making marriage/family the sole center. This life structure was experienced as highly unsuitable for her. Once she returned to serious graduate study, however, at 34, she worked to establish supports both for her childcare responsibilities (getting help from her husband, and joining a cooperative play group in their apartment building) and for her academic pursuits (from the study group of women students she joined, and later from the non-profit cinefeminist group she helped start). Without such supports, which were not easy to maintain (she and her husband, for instance, have had to adhere to extremely tight schedules to make sure childcare is always covered, and she has "forgotten what it's like to sleep in" mornings), her joint pursuits of family and career would have been virtually impossible.

DENISE and NICOLETTE managed a similar integration of family and outside involvements when they matriculated as undergraduates in REA. They relied on their husbands for support in taking over some family-related responsibilities, and like LOUISA they found that some low-priority domestic chores (e.g., housecleaning) simply did not get done as regularly as before, since neither spouse would

invest time in them. This arrangement was both suitable for DENISE and NICOLETTE, and viable with respect to their husbands and families, possibly because they did not undertake college study on a serious basis until their children had attained a certain amount of independence, so that childcare could more easily be shared, and the children themselves could begin to contribute to running the household. In addition, their husbands seem to have sincerely supported their ambitions, and been willing to compromise their own schedules when necessary to provide help.

JAN, on the other hand, did not manage to integrate marriage/family with college in REA, although she had experienced little competition between marriage and her nursing work in EAW. (The nursing, though, had involved little upward striving for her then.) REA was difficult for her because she experienced childcare demands as unwelcome and overwhelming, with college taking on greater and greater salience for her as a source of many kinds of gratification; duty kept her bound to the home while ambition and enjoyment drew her to school. She was hindered in both pursuits by the response of her husband, who ridiculed her academic aspirations, refused to accommodate his established lifestyle to her needs for practical support, and criticized her "training" of the children while subverting her attempts at discipline. He was, however, willing to hire a governess, but after initial attempts failed this plan was dropped.

JAN, therefore, had established no supports for her activities; with husband and children uncooperative and often overtly hostile to her wishes, she balanced school work, family responsibilities, and full-time night nursing work at great

psychological and physical cost to herself. Her life structure was experienced as highly unsuitable, yet she felt unwilling to give up any of these pursuits at the time of interviewing. Life structure integration emerged as one of the most troubling concerns for her from 35-40.

SARA was able to integrate family and farm work in part by waiting until her children were fairly independent before she engaged extensively in the dairy business, and in part because on a farm, work and home life are not as discrete as in urban, industrialized settings. (Parsons, 1942) The children grew up wanting to share in their parents' work, accompanying them to the barn and the fields, and assigned tasks commensurate with their abilities. Furthermore, SARA grew to experience the dairy farm as a joint enterprise in the same way that her husband experienced the family as a shared responsibility. Both were willing to work very hard throughout early adulthood in pursuit of their common goals, and SARA's life structure was both viable and suitable even though there were two central components.

The two unmarried subjects, KATE and NINA, did not experience difficulties with centrality and integration similar to those of subjects balancing family with outside involvements. (Interestingly, though, they were the only subjects who hired part-time domestic help rather than simply letting housework slide in response to time pressures.) NINA has consistently maintained career as more central than love relationships, in that when men in her life have made geographical moves and asked her to join them, she has been quite certain that this would be unthinkable unless the move would be compatible with her career development. She has never yet

been faced with a love relationship intense enough to cause her to question this commitment, and experiences her life structure as highly satisfactory as it is.

For KATE, on the other hand, an extremely intense love relationship did compete for centrality in her REA life structure; rather than career, however, the competition was with her independent lifestyle, which she has maintained as central ever since leaving the convent. Despite the pain and loss of breaking an important bond, she is still convinced that marriage to J. would have been "a bad mistake," and finds her solitary lifestyle highly suitable and viable.

Thus, centrality and integration of life structure components constituted a focal concern for all subjects in REA, with greater or lesser degrees of difficulty in reconciling competing relationships with the world. It appears that for most subjects the presence of two central pursuits reflected two sets of motivations which had been mobilized earlier in life and re-awakened in adulthood: motivations to achieve in the outside world and to seek intimacy and generativity in the domestic sphere, for instance. DENISE, LOUISA, NICOLETTE, and SARA all experienced these two particular wishes as strongly compelling, due to current pressures as well as earlier experiences, and therefore there were two central components in their life structures in REA. For JAN, however, marriage/family was not solidly connected to an enduring dynamic pattern, so that its centrality in her life structure, and competition with outside pursuits, was anomalous. KATE and NINA, again for reasons in the present and the past, did not experience a pull towards marriage/family that was nearly as intense as the

pull towards career and other pursuits in the outside world; hence there was only one central component in their life structures. It is probable that other women might maintain only the marriage/family component as central throughout all of early adulthood, with little pull towards achievement in the outside world; however, none of these subjects followed that pattern.

Furthermore, we may note that when subjects did attempt to integrate two central components within a life structure, their success depended not only on the strength of their motivation and coping skills, but also on their ability to find or create support systems for their pursuits. It appears that support would be sought first from the family itself (husband, relatives, older children), as for DENISE, NICOLETTE, LOUISA, and SARA; where this was not forthcoming, as for JAN, few other sources of support could be located. LOUISA, a city dweller, was able to join a childcare cooperative in her building, but this was not feasible for the suburban women. LOUISA was also the only subject attending school who could build up a network of support for her work itself: first in the study group and then in the non-profit group she helped form. The other women, working on an undergraduate rather than graduate level, apparently experienced learning as an individualistic pursuit, not a collaborative one. (In fact, NICOLETTE at interviewing expressed a great deal of distress over the isolation she experienced in her school work.)

The foregoing discussion of Dreams, centrality, and integration in early adult life structures provides a more detailed image of the aspirations of these seven women, and their active attempts to translate their hopes into real involvements in

the world. We can see much variation among the women in the nature of their wishes and goals, and the means by which they worked to attain them. These are matters of particular interest to clinicians, whose focus is often on disturbances in Dream formation or actualization; and the clinical implications of these concepts will be discussed more explicitly in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In reviewing and assessing the present study, four areas will be considered: methodological concerns, review of Levinson's model in the light of this study, theoretical considerations, and application of the present study to clinical interests and concerns.

Methodological Concerns. While the present study satisfies the aim of applying Levinson's work in an exploratory way to the lives of women, it does so in a way which raises several methodological issues.

In the first place, the choice of subjects poses a problem for this study. Although some effort was made to recruit subjects from diverse socioeconomic standings, there is still too much homogeneity among subjects to provide data for examining the impact of key demographic variables such as race and social class. Whatever their origins, most subjects in this study occupied privileged positions in the social structure when interviewed: with one exception they were affluent, white, urban or suburban Northeasterners. SARA alone, representing a middle-class rural setting, provides

some important contrasts to the other subjects. It is necessary, however, for Levinson's work to be assessed with a more varied group of women -- and of men -- than has yet been studied; otherwise the boundary conditions of this model cannot be specified.

In addition, there still remains the need for a full-scale replication with women of Levinson's original project, one that would include a sample size closer to 40, and an age range extending further into middle adulthood, than was possible in the present study.

All of these limitations with regard to subjects affect the extent to which the present study provides a satisfactory basis for evaluating Levinson's work empirically.

Another methodological limitation of the present study has to do with specifying operational definitions for key concepts from Levinson's model. By relying on highly simplistic criteria for recognizing such phenomena as stable and transitional periods, for instance, it was possible to achieve the goal of the present study: to apply Levinson's work in a preliminary way to the evolution of women's adult lives. It was not possible, however, using such simplified definitions, to do justice to further subtleties of analysis which this model seems capable of evoking. Levinson does not specify the criteria he used in establishing the boundaries of various periods, yet it is clear that he was working with definitions that were more complex and sophisticated than those included here. The task of operationalizing his concepts, therefore, remains to be thoroughly addressed; and the simplifications of the present study, while an adequate beginning effort, constitute another limitation on the degree to which this has been a valid testing-out

of Levinson's work.

Finally, a third methodological concern has to do with the procedure by which Levinson's theory was translated into actual data-gathering in the retrospective life history interviews. A wealth of data was obtained from each subject using this method, yet certain aspects of each biography seem, upon analysis, to be somewhat impoverished. This is due, at least in part, to the number of hours of contact between subjects and interviewer. The duration of six to 11 hours, with a mean of eight, while comparable to Stewart's (1976) two to 6.5 with a mean of 4.6, now appears to constitute some limitation on the depth and complexity of the material that could be systematically pursued. Levinson's current (1980b) estimation of the minimal length of contact for an adequate life history interview stands at 16 hours; it would seem, therefore, that by this criterion alone the present study fails to provide a thoroughly adequate basis for evaluating aspects of Levinson's model.

In view of these limitations regarding subjects, operational definitions, and procedure, what ought to be the status of the present study as an attempt to explore the applicability of Levinson's theory to the lives of these women? It would seem most appropriate to regard this work as the pilot study which it was, in fact, intended to be; as such, it highlights strengths as well as problems in Levinson's original presentation, and points the way for future efforts to clarify the model and theory in their application both to women and to men. With this understanding -- that we are operating from a limited empirical basis which nonetheless presents findings that are interesting and suggestive -- we may turn to

further consideration of the model, the theory, and their clinical applications.

Levinson's Model Re-Viewed. In the course of the present study it became apparent that Levinson's descriptive model of life structure evolution functions as an extremely useful heuristic instrument, giving rise to a number of novel perspectives on adulthood. At the same time, it appeared that this model, generated from the study of men, might need to be revised in some respects when applied to the lives of women. Let us consider some of the confirmations of and suggestions for change in the model which emerged from this preliminary exploration of the evolution of women's early adult life structures.

At the heart of Levinson's model is the conclusion that life structure evolution proceeds through an alternation of stable and transitional periods. While bearing in mind the methodological limitations of the present study discussed above, limitations which contribute to difficulty in delineating boundaries of specific periods, we may nevertheless note that the present study yields no conclusive findings in support of the assumption that stable and transitional periods alternate in all cases of life structure evolution.

Not all the lives studied, for instance, seem to show the occurrence of true transitional periods, as described by Levinson. Some subjects tended to make fairly hasty decisions, or gradually developed changed life structures, rather than engaging in the processes of separation from the old and preparation for the new, characteristic of transitions. On the other hand, there were some cases in which true transitional periods did seem to occur.

This situation was accounted for, in the present study, through the assumption that individual differences in transitional style result in different manifestations of life structure change. Visible transitions are present in the lives of individuals who are given to reflective decision-making, and absent in the lives of those whose character style is not analytical but rather intuitive or impulsive. At the same time it may be noted that societal conditions (the actual availability of choices versus a fairly constricted range of opportunities) probably have at least as much impact on transitional phenomena as does character style; but since all the subjects of the present study occupied a societal niche in which many opportunities for change were open, this factor could not be isolated.

Similarly, not all of these lives showed true stable periods, as described by Levinson. The presence of major life structure changes in the middle of the second "stable" period, around 35/36, might indicate that this period is short-lived, if present at all. This "split" style was present even in the first "stable" period, for some subjects. Here, as with transitional periods, differences were interpreted as due to structure-building styles reflecting factors of individual character. It appears that people who are internally ambivalent or conflicted about choices will not show much stability in living through the consequences of these choices; thus, their structure-building periods will be characterized by less stability than those of subjects who are not so conflicted. (One cannot be certain, however, that this viewpoint accounts for the widespread "splits" in the second stable periods of so many women whose character styles were otherwise quite disparate.)

With regard to the specific sequences of periods in life structure evolution, much of Levinson's description of the four periods of early adulthood seems to be applicable to the lives of these subjects. One major difference is that both the Early Adult Transition and the Age Thirty Transition, recognized by all available criteria present in this study's data, appeared shorter for these women than for Levinson's subjects. This finding might be due to the prevalence in this group of transitional styles that downplay the recognition both of separation from previous relationships with the world, and of preparation for new relationships; such a style makes for hasty rather than prolonged transitions. It might also, of course, be due to differences between the present and Levinson's study in criteria for recognizing the onset and termination of transitions in general.

Another difference in the sequence of periods has to do with the "Settling Down" phenomenon Levinson found for men, a phenomenon which was not evident in the lives of most of these women. Rather than "settle down," women in the second stable period of early adulthood tended to "open out"; they did not focus in on one path, so much as allow themselves to experiment with new paths. This pattern was most pronounced for women who had been family-centered in the first half of early adulthood; those who had pursued careers in Entering the Adult World tended to handle the second stable period more as Levinson's male subjects had -- especially women who did not have children.

The second stable period also differed for these and Levinson's subjects in the occurrence, mentioned above, of major shifts in life structure around 35/36 for a number of the present

subjects. Whether this phenomenon represents a delayed Age Thirty Transition, or a peculiar feature of women's structure-building activities at this time, it was a striking feature of the lives and merits further investigation.

With regard to the components of early adult life structures for these women, there was little difference from those characteristic of Levinson's men, except for the role of friendships in early adult life structures. More than the men Levinson studied, these women valued and depended on same-sex friendships for interpersonal intimacy, sharing, and support. Love for women friends, and mutual involvement in the lives of friends, was for some women at least as central and gratifying as love relationships with men. In addition to their emotional support functions, friendships appeared to be essential sources of practical support on which women could count in childrearing and career pursuits.

The most notable differences that emerged between the early adult lives of Levinson's sample and those of the present sample have to do with the "developmental tasks" proposed for early adulthood: evolving a Dream, forming an occupation, establishing mentor relations, and focusing on a career "ladder." While the Dream for many of Levinson's subjects was a guiding principle for the entire early adult era, for the women in this study Dreams tended to be time-limited, and early adulthood tended to include more than one Dream, whether simultaneously or sequentially. (The exception was for subjects who, like most of Levinson's sample, had an almost exclusive career orientation, and a corresponding Dream whose attainment would require the whole era.) Thus, Dreams did appear in the lives of these subjects, but in a different form from those of

the men Levinson studied.

With regard to the "developmental task" of forming an occupation, these subjects certainly affirmed the need for meaningful work, and their Dreams all included a work-related component; but unlike Levinson's men, many of them chose occupations in the domestic sphere -- either alone or in combination with public-sphere occupations. While Levinson intends the term "occupation" to apply specifically to work in the public sphere involving a career line (Levinson, 1980b), we are forced to broaden this concept to include domestic-sphere work as well, if we are to take into account the patterns of commitment of these women in early adulthood. (It remains to be seen, also, in what sense formation of a career-type occupation is a "developmental task" for all men; if a satisfactory life structure can be evolved without such a commitment, the normative status of this concept is questionable.)

Mentor relations were conspicuously absent from the lives of these subjects, whatever their occupations; "mentoring functions" involving many supportive figures tended to be the pattern, rather than the kind of exclusive dyadic involvement described by Levinson. It may be that these women suffered from the absence of mentor relations, and would have progressed further towards realizing their Dreams if such bonds had been formed. It seems more sensible, however, to conclude that these women's patterns of making use of mentoring functions is simply different from the pattern noted by Levinson for men. First of all, housewives have been taught and guided in domestic skills since childhood, unlike men who enter their workplace in the public sphere for the first time in early adulthood; housewives therefore need less intense guidance once they take up

their role. Second, women in the public sphere seem to experience colleagial relations as friendships, and turn to a number of "friends" at work, peers and superiors, to fulfill mentoring functions. They have, perhaps, a less intense impulse to single out surrogate parents in connection with their work, because all of their relationships (not just the "special relationship" with a mentor) tend to take on overtones of interpersonal connectedness, and because they tend not to have broken away from their actual parents in such a profound way as men typically do, in entering adulthood. (It is also, of course, not yet established that all men want or need the type of mentoring Levinson describes.)

Finally, the "developmental task" of finding and working to ascend a career "ladder" is clearly applicable only to those whose occupation is in the public sphere. There was no indication among housewives that they were preoccupied with a domestic "ladder"; on the other hand, once women did become involved in the public sphere, they showed the same concern with the "ladder" as Levinson's subjects had.

It would seem, in addition, to the extent that "developmental tasks" may be posited at all, that there is one specific to a number of women who attempt to combine family and career as central components in the life structure: the task of managing issues of centrality and integration. More than was reported for Levinson's subjects, the women in this study experienced difficulties related to both psychological and practical aspects of balancing competing central components. This issue was significant enough in the lives of many women to qualify as a "developmental task" in itself, and seems to be one which for social and historical

reasons has been a preoccupation of women more than of men.

In conclusion, certain features of Levinson's model appear to require revision in order to fit with the lives of these seven subjects. Aside from modifications to the original model, the present study suggests the addition of supplemental concepts to account for the data. One addition is the notion of individual styles of negotiating transitions and of building life structures, styles based on aspects of character; this concept would presumably be equally useful in analyzing the lives of men as well. Since interaction with the world may be seen as an object relation like any other in which the individual engages, it makes sense to postulate a link between character style and life structure functioning.

Another addition is the necessity for recognizing a central concern in early adulthood, for many women, with the issues of centrality and integration of the life structure as a whole. This concern, arising from strong involvements in both marriage/family and career, appears more likely to arise for female subjects than for men, at least men of the generation studied by Levinson.

With these additions and the modifications suggested above, Levinson's descriptive model seems to apply to the lives of the women in this study.

Theoretical Considerations. Levinson's theory of adult development consists of his descriptive model plus the notion of "development" as an explanatory principle. It is this notion which continues to pose the most serious questions on a theoretical level, in that the relationship between "development" and such terms as "life structure evolution" and "developmental tasks"

remains to be spelled out in detail.

It is paradoxical that a theory explicitly dealing with evolution of the life structure, rather than of the individual personality (Levinson, 1979), focusses almost exclusively on the individual level of analysis in its discussion of various periods and "tasks" in that evolution. When the life structure is seen as a pattern of person-world interactions, why then is it the individual who is described as responsible for the "building," "evaluating," and "modifying" of component relationships and their integration? In descriptions of "developmental tasks," why is it that "tasks" are posed for individuals, and not also for the social systems which are ostensibly created to support the life structure's evolutionary course? The burden of developing a satisfactory life structure is located in the person, as if the world were a monolithic "given" which can only be responded to autoplastically.

This is not, in fact, the position Levinson intends to espouse: on many occasions he refers to the individual's creative activity in structuring interactions with the world; yet even in his original discussion of the "interpenetration" of person and world (1978, pp. 47-49), there is little recognition that the world might be taken to task for its failure to contribute sufficient opportunities for developing satisfactory life structures. Levinson comments, for instance, that "[o]ut of the possibilities and constraints given in [a person's] environment, he makes his own choices and builds his own world." (p. 48) Yet it is also the person, individually and in concert with others, who confirms and sustains the social world's very existence, and its ability to offer specific "possibilities and constraints."

If we do not specify society's half of the responsibility for the creation of satisfactory life structures, then by default improvement of unsatisfactory life structures can be attempted only at the individual level. The point is not that this approach is politically conservative, but that it is conceptually unbalanced: if a life structure truly is a phenomenon of psychosocial origin, then both psychological and social "tasks" must be defined.

There are some ways in which it is simply accurate to describe the world as a "given," slow to change and at times overwhelming in its impact on individual consciousness. To the extent that characteristics of social systems -- most prominently, for instance, gender differences -- have arisen from biological anlagen (an extent which has yet to be determined), these characteristics will be fairly ineradicable. And to the extent that they form an essential foundation for the entire edifice of social interaction, a profoundly conservative impulse (Marris, 1974) will operate to keep them in place. Yet the latter process, at least, is maintained only with the continued collusion of individual members of the social group; it is not a "given," to be accepted and adapted to, unless the person is made to construe it in that way.

The deep significance of Levinson's notion of the "interpenetration" of person and world lies in the fact that not only has society helped constitute the person, but also the person continues to help constitute society. This significance is buried, however, if our theories accept existing social conditions as normative, rather than as more or less adequate attempts by society to live up to its "developmental tasks." A theory which simultaneously mystifies the impact of social systems on individuals, and holds

individuals responsible for the positive or negative outcome of interactions with the social system, contributes one of the greatest "hidden injuries of class." (Sennett and Cobb, 1972)

Of course it is much easier to insist on the necessity for such an analysis, than it is to provide one. Moreover, there is a great deal more to be learned, even at the individual level of analysis, about the causes or reasons for the evolution of particular life structures. However, one important theoretical consideration that has emerged from reflection upon the present study is that if developmental tasks are specified at all, they must be assigned to both halves of the person-world interaction which forms the life structure. We may accept Levinson's model in many respects, without also accepting the theoretical premise of "development," specified only on the individual level, as sole explanatory principle. The enterprise of enriching the theoretical account remains unfinished.

Alternative Views of the Adult Life Course. To what extent are the findings of this study compatible with conceptual frameworks, other than Levinson's, in the area of adult development? Three alternative views will be briefly considered, to provide some comparison with the thinking that underlies the present study: these will be the work of Neugarten (1968) and Gould (1978), and Vaillant's (1977) version of Erikson's (1963) perspective.

It is important to note, at the outset, that none of these contributions deals explicitly with the evolution of life structures; rather, each of the positions to be described takes personality or ego as its central descriptive component -- and thus, none can be said even to address the full range of data generated by research into life structure evolution. While a

person- or ego-oriented view can certainly provide a wealth of insights into the individual level of functioning, any such view -- however psychosocial its notion of personhood -- will be inevitably limited in its ability to subsume various aspects of person-world interaction, within the conceptual framework. These limitations, as well as the additional insights suggested by each perspective, will become apparent as the alternative theories are considered in turn.

Neugarten's view (1968) explicitly differs from Levinson's in its focus on social processes as the major explanatory principle to account for the adult life course. Thus, whereas Levinson's theory holds to a maturational perspective in understanding change in the patterns of person-world interaction through adulthood, Neugarten's tends to reflect the socialization perspective. Her theoretical stance does not, in itself, throw Levinson's descriptive model of adulthood into question; it simply offers an alternative theory for explaining the data. One might well choose to construe the life-histories of this study's seven subjects as resulting from each woman's attempts to come to terms with the "social clocks" which prescribe the life events that are to be expected at various points in adulthood. If this viewpoint were to be pursued in more detail, with regard to the seven lives discussed here, it would require that we specify the various systems of "clocking" that operate in each person's experience of her adulthood, and the impact of these social norms on the person's self-concept, major life decisions, and other features of adult living.

Two crucial factors, not specifically included in Neugarten's theoretical statements, must be taken into account

if this perspective is to prove useful in the analysis of individual lives. One factor is the wide variation that is possible in individuals' responses to social processes such as the "clock." It is not inevitable that all members of a social group will adhere unambivalently to group norms; therefore the generalized operation of "clocking" is no guarantee that a specific person will structure her life in accordance with the "clock." There will be rebels and deviants: women, for instance, who choose to marry late or not at all, despite society's traditional expectation of marriage in the first decade of early adulthood. We cannot adequately use the "clocking" concept without building in some means of considering the source and impact of such individual differences.

The second factor is, actually, a more general statement of the first: in applying Neugarten's perspective we must also be careful to build in a means of specifying the evolution and transformations of individual motives as they interact with social prescriptions. While some of Neugarten's associates have dealt with motivational changes during adulthood (e.g., Kuhlen, 1968), this work has been on a purely descriptive level, and has also aimed at generalization rather than at supplying a framework within which individual variations may be spelled out. Individual motives have been seen to parallel changing societal expectations, and not as constituting a force in their own right, at least partly non-socialized in nature, with as much impact on the life course as generalized "clocking."

Without the concept of life structure, a theory cannot easily formulate the interplay between individual and social factors in the unfolding of a particular life course. When life

structure is taken as the focus, there is the conceptual space to consider both societal and unique personal contributions to the structure and its evolution. Neugarten's "social clock" is compatible with this overall framework, for her work specifies one social force affecting life structure evolution; but as the sole explanatory concept, the "clock" lacks the complexity necessary for a satisfactory account of adulthood. Thus, while Neugarten's view can be applied to the findings of the present study, it does not seem to drawn in all of the factors that we must consider, to make sense of each individual life.

The second alternative perspective to be discussed is that of Roger Gould (1978), who studied adulthood from the vantage point of a psychoanalytically-oriented clinician. His work deals with stages in the transformation of "childhood consciousness" into a more fully adult grasp of reality and one's place in it. Like Levinson, he holds an "age-stage" view of adulthood (Kimmel, 1980b), but in Gould's work the stages are specified according to the "false assumptions" about the world and oneself which are to be challenged and outgrown in successive periods of adulthood.

There are several difficulties in applying Gould's work to the subjects of the present study. For one thing, while it would be possible -- and clinically quite useful -- to discern the false assumptions that subjects have and have not yet outgrown at the time of interviewing, a great deal of speculation would be required if we were to specify an individual's previous adult history in terms of these concepts. Perhaps extensive contact with a person, in the therapeutic context, would allow us to formulate the evolution of her adult consciousness through the stages Gould delineates; but

such formulation does not seem possible on the basis of retrospective life-history interview data so limited as in the present study. We should note that Gould's work itself is not based on longitudinal or retrospective data, but rather on cross-sectional studies of adults in various age groups. Thus, while his perspective may well have descriptive validity, it does not constitute a particular theory regarding the process of evolution of adult consciousness is specific lives.

Another difficulty in applying Gould's work to the lives of these subjects lies in the fact that links between individual consciousness, and the person's actual patterns of being-in-the-world, are not clearly spelled out. This view, in other words, is almost entirely intrapsychic; while it might be subsumed within Levinson's broader perspective, Gould's work is too narrowly focussed to constitute, by itself, a thorough account of adulthood. Here, as with Neugarten's contribution, we see the limitations built into a theory that does not take life structure as the phenomenon under investigation. We tell an important part of the story when we describe the evolution of adult consciousness, but we leave out other important concerns: how consciousness affects what a person actually does in the world, how the world affects individual consciousness, and how patterns of being-in-the-world are affected by factors in the world that have little to do with individual consciousness at all. It seems, therefore, that to the extent that retrospective life-history data allows us to talk of evolving adult consciousness at all, Gould's perspective is a valuable one in clarifying this facet of adulthood; on the other hand, it would be more satisfactory as an adjunct to the life

structure perspective, than as a substitute for it.

Finally, we may consider Vaillant's (1977) work, based in part on Erikson's (1963) picture of ego development. Like Erikson, Vaillant discerns a series of developmental tasks which constitute the underlying themes of adulthood. His version of Erikson's tasks for early adulthood includes identity formation, intimacy, and career consolidation (the latter not being found in Erikson's original presentation), as preoccupations during this era; and these would seem to have constituted central concerns for the subjects of the present study, during early adulthood. Thus, his work provides one way of talking about some of the factors, on an individual level, which account for the life courses of these subjects.

In addition, Vaillant presents a view of adulthood (again, partly based on Erikson's work) in which failure to resolve the tasks of ego development, in the proper epigenetic sequence and with the proper outcomes, will result in later difficulties of adaptation. Vaillant classified his subjects, in their middle adulthood, as having "outcomes" that ranged from "best" to "worst"; unfortunately, since the subjects of the present study had not yet reached middle adulthood, it would not be possible to assess their "outcomes." Thus there is still an open question as to whether failure in negotiating the tasks of ego development would in fact result in less adequate adaptations, in the lives of these seven women.

There is also the question of how outcomes are to be assessed: Vaillant employed an "Adult Adjustment Scale" which included a number of specific relationships with the world ("life structure components," in Levinson's terms) as criteria for adequate adaptation. This approach is certainly less flexible than

that used in the present study, where adaptation ("life structure satisfaction") is assessed according to the fit between individual needs and motives, and the actual pattern of being-in-the-world, with no specifications of an "ideal" life structure which would signify successful adaptation for all individuals. Vaillant himself cites the case of a subject whose adaptation did not appear successful, based on the Adult Adjustment Scale, yet who impressed the interviewer, in person, as having arrived at a highly satisfactory way of life. This difficulty in conceptualizing the "outcomes" would need to be resolved, in any case, before any criteria could be applied to the middle and late adulthood of the subjects of this study.

An additional feature of Vaillant's work, not based specifically on Erikson's theory, evaluates the "adaptive styles" of his subjects according to the psychological defense mechanisms which are characteristically employed; he describes a defensive hierarchy ranging from "immature" to "neurotic" to "mature" styles. This approach underlies the concept of individual styles of building and changing life structures, used in the present study, although it would seem more useful to link the styles explicitly with existing clinical concepts of "healthy," "neurotic," "borderline," and "psychotic" levels of functioning.

Vaillant's work is more nearly comprehensive than any of the other alternatives to Levinson's view discussed here; one could encompass most details of these seven life histories using his Eriksonian concepts of tasks in ego development, adaptational outcomes, and adaptive styles. There are only two reservations that arise in considering his view. One is the difficulty, mentioned

above, in specifying a single, universal life structure that is adaptive for all individuals; Levinson's notion of "satisfaction," including both viability and suitability, would seem to allow for much more of the variation that actually exists in adaptive patterns. The second reservation is that Vaillant's work does not propose an explicit account of the process by which internal motives are expressed in the individual's way of being-in-the-world, and how the interactions between person and world evolve over time. There is, in other words, no clear linkage made between ego-developmental tasks, adaptive outcomes, and adaptational styles; there is no formulation of a coherent theoretical framework within which these concepts might be related. Levinson's version of life structure evolution can be seen to provide one possible integrative framework; it is likely, in fact, that an integration of these two views would enrich both.

It has appeared that, in all three cases, alternative perspectives on adulthood provide particular insights which deepen our understanding of aspects of adult being-in-the-world; yet all of these viewpoints seem limited by a narrowness of focus. None provides the comprehensive conceptual framework represented by Levinson's notions of life structure evolution, for "life structure" -- the heart of Levinson's descriptive model -- is capable of incorporating formulations from many vantage points (including, most importantly, the individual and the social), whereas "personality" and "ego" are more bounded. This review of alternative positions, therefore, acknowledges the contributions of other perspectives while placing them within the context of the framework used in the present study, an elaboration of Levinson's basic approach.

Application to Clinical Work. Clinicians have a particular interest in the aspects of a theory which may be helpful in conceptualizing an individual's difficulties in living. The following aspects of the present study seem to be especially relevant to clinical concerns: the concepts of life structure and satisfaction; the place of the Dream in life structures; centrality and integration of life structure components; individual styles of negotiating transitional and stable periods; and continuity/discontinuity of life structures in successive periods.

In the first place, as suggested by Newton and Levinson (1977), clinicians may find the concept of "life structure" to be the cornerstone for a systematic account of a person's being-in-the-world. This concept draws attention not only to the particular types of interactions with the world in which a person is engaged, but also to the person's attempts to integrate these interactions into a whole pattern. The holistic view of human functioning implied by "life structure" prevents us from making formulations that are narrowly either intrapsychic or environmental in focus, and encourages us to note the active contributions of both person and world in shaping current adaptations.

The concept of "satisfaction," closely allied with "life structure" in Levinson's model, provides an explicit criterion for assessing a person's current patterns of involvement in the world. Within the broad range of life structures that are viable in the world, a variety of patterns may be suitable for individuals, including some which differ from the clinician's own view of "the good life." Too often our judgments of "normality" or "health" are simply sophisticated expressions of cognitive egocentrism,

reflecting personally or professionally held norms. If we formulate an individual's goal in therapy as the development of a more satisfactory life structure, we are reminded that an important criterion for "satisfaction" is suitability, as defined by the person's unique pattern of motives and needs; this requires a kind of decentration which is essential when working with persons whose gender, socio-economic standing, and/or character style differs from our own.

It is also important to note the ways in which individuals may maintain an illusion of satisfaction through the use of psychological defenses. Such systematic distortions of reality may be expressed, as Wachtel (1980) has noted, as reflecting an inappropriate predominance of assimilatory activity over the kinds of accommodation which might result in a more satisfactory way of being-in-the-world. From one viewpoint, psychotherapy may be seen as the attempt to help a person abandon illusions of suitability and viability, in order to work out a life structure that is in fact more in keeping with internal and external realities.

It appears that the suitability of a particular life structure is closely tied to pursuit of a Dream. If the Dream is taken to be a fantasy embodying the goals and values most meaningful to an individual in a particular season of life, then its function as a central psychic organizer (Spitz, 1959) becomes apparent. One therapeutic task would then become, from this perspective, helping a person to identify a Dream, to assess the adequacy of a particular life structure for actualizing the Dream, and to modify those aspects of the life structure which impede the person from actively pursuing the Dream. In various cases, an individual might also need help in

working through sadness and anger related to a Dream which cannot be attained; a sense of letdown and depression which may result when a Dream has been attained; or mourning for a Dream which has been abandoned. Throughout the course of clinical work, in other words, the Dream can serve a guiding function in its role as a psychic symbol with profound meaning for the person.

Individuals may show difficulty in forming a Dream at all, and that difficulty might well correspond to the level of psychological functioning common to various character types. A neurotic or normal-neurotic person would presumably be capable of sustaining the internal representations of self-in-world which constitute a Dream (even if incapable of effectively pursuing that Dream). A person with borderline or psychotic personality structure would almost by definition be seen to lack this capacity for sustained representations either of self or of world. A possible conclusion to be drawn is that Dream-centered clinical work is most appropriate for the more intact individuals, categorized as neurotic or normal-neurotic, who are seen in clinical practice.

In the course of therapy, guided by concepts of Dream and life structure satisfaction, centrality and integration of life structure components will also be a key concern for some people. It seems most useful to think of various life structure components as representing the person's attempts to attain gratification of a multitude of needs. A given component would not necessarily represent the same kind of gratification for each person: marriage, for instance, could represent attempts to fulfill needs for power, or for intimate contact, or for social conformity; occupation could be linked with needs for achievement, or for approval, or

for effectance. Thus, meaning of life structure components must be understood uniquely for each individual, and from this understanding a number of directions for clinical work become apparent.

In the first place, it is possible to note and examine difficulties in living which arise when a particular life structure component is being used to seek a kind of gratification for which it is inappropriate. An obvious example would be the parent who invests the type of libidinal meaning in parent-child relations which more appropriately would be invested in the marriage or other love relationships. Another example would be the person who seeks gratification of achievement needs through spouse and/or children rather than within an occupation; or a worker who inappropriately seeks gratification of interpersonal needs through occupation rather than through friendships or other love relationships. In all of these instances, "inappropriateness" is manifested in the cost to others (spouse, children, co-workers) and to the individual, who will almost certainly find that these needs cannot fully be met when so pursued; thus, the life structure would be neither viable nor suitable.

In the second place, even where life structure components are invested with appropriate need-related meanings, difficulties may still arise when two sets of needs, embodied in two life structure components, seem to be equally salient at the same time. This occurs when two components are simultaneously central, and raises problems of integration which are both experiential and practical. It is clearly within the therapist's domain to work on the experiential issues posed by (and perhaps reflected in) such motivational conflicts. It might also then seem appropriate to some clinicians

to help the individual, whether through active intervention or referral to outside sources, to work out the practical aspects of integrating two life structure components which compete for investment of time and energy. This problem is especially pressing for women, or men, who seek the gratifications of marriage/family and career simultaneously, in a society which has not yet evolved the social structures necessary to facilitate that attempt.

All of the considerations discussed up to this point have related to the content of early adult life structures. With respect to the process of life structure evolution, we may note that the various periods in life structure evolution carry with them some suggestion as to the kind of clinical focus that becomes appropriate at particular times. Therapeutic work will probably at least reflect the themes and issues thought to be characteristic of each period, and may also focus on remedying the deficits arising from individual styles of negotiating transitional and stable periods. In fact, one clinician (Howenstine, 1978) has suggested that an important outcome of successful psychotherapy is the individual's heightened ability to manage the process of life structure evolution in a satisfactory manner.

Certain skills seem to be useful for individuals in negotiating a transitional period. These range from the ability to tolerate anxiety and ambiguity, to the ability to consider and evaluate alternative possibilities, to the ability to make choices and renounce alternatives. It is apparent that particular transitional styles may reflect weaknesses in one or more of these areas: an abrupt transitional style, for instance, short-circuits the processes of separation from the past and considering alternatives

for the future, while a pronounced experience of transition may be accompanied by an inability to let go of the past or settle on even provisional choices for the future. Once we have noted a person's style of dealing with past or current transitions, it is possible to help develop whatever skills have been weak or missing, and this effort will be of use to the person also in transitional periods which will occur after therapy is terminated.

Similarly, there are particular skills which appear to be useful for individuals in negotiating a structure-building period, especially the ability to take responsibility for choices and the renunciation they involve, the ability to persevere in attempts to live out decisions despite setbacks and doubts, and the ability to remain open to experiences which may point towards some modification of initial choices. Difficulties in these areas are reflected in the various structure-building styles, especially the "split-sequential" and "split-simultaneous" patterns, and may become central therapeutic concerns as a person enters a stable period.

Finally, there is the question of degree of continuity/discontinuity between life structures in successive periods. This becomes clinically relevant when the discontinuity is great, for in such cases there is an intense need for working through separation from previous patterns, and for preparation to enter new relations with the world. It might also become necessary, in other cases, to focus on difficulties which prevent a person from attaining enough discontinuity from a previous, unsatisfactory life structure. No particular degree of continuity or discontinuity can be seen as normative for all individuals; yet a specific case may pose problems of too little or too much discontinuity of successive life structure

configurations, either of which would be an important therapeutic focus.

In concluding this review of the present study, it is appropriate to provide an overall evaluation of this attempt to apply Levinson's model of life structure evolution to the early adulthoods of seven women. Although some question has been raised here as to the present state of Levinson's theoretical account of adulthood, it is clear that the model itself has proved to be fruitful in generating questions for investigation, and that it promises to become the basis for clinical application as well. Further refinements of the model will no doubt emerge in the course of studying new populations, yet there is little doubt that Levinson's view lays a substantial groundwork for systematic research in this area. We may say, then, that the present study has borne out the foundations of Levinson's work, while at the same time suggesting some modifications to the details of that work. Thus, this research project has met its aims, and now points towards specific directions for future research into the seasons of a person's life.

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