Getting There:
Generations X and Y on Changing Ages, Stages and Processes of
Social Maturation in Postmodern Times

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Abstract

Ages, stages and processes of social maturity were examined as the generation and age specific concept of the 'Quarterlife Crisis,' as it is presented in popular culture, was called into question. This research was inductive and used grounded theory methodology to explore and analyze social maturity, individualization and personal life. A literature review of statistical articles provided a demographic backdrop for the discussion of emerging and inventing adulthood(s). Through a discussion of generations and a re-tracing of sociological developmental models of the family and psychological models of individual psycho-social development I have re-contextualized and re-framed the concept of the QLC. The data consisted of: 1) newsprint media; 2) popular literature and self-help books; and 3) twenty-seven qualitative, face-to-face interviews; and 4) autoethnographic field notes of the author's personal experience.

The participants presented as the social hosts of two sets of generationally specific cultural norms and expectations. These often conflicting generational discourses can be detected in their narratives between their descriptions of their expectations for their twenties and the everyday, lived reality of those years. Changing the order and timing of social development on the individual level has an impact on the taken for granted 'common sense' concept of 'growing-up.' I am suggesting that the meaning of growing-up is shifting, being transformed, in large part because women have had to adapt to unexpected roles and/or to playing well-established and expected gender roles in new ways. My ability to generalize is limited because of the homogeneity of the women interviewed. However, it was 'found' that in the absence of and/or altering of the anticipated 'adult' role(s), they worked to redefining the meanings and/or markers for 'growing-up' for themselves such that an emphasis on age-related stages begins to give way to flexible processes of social maturity.

As women told their 'coming of age' stories, it became increasingly clear that they were often talking about 'getting there,' and about adulthood as a journey and a process rather than simply a destination with a series of set stages. Some of the processes that women engaged in were: 1) questioning and re-defining of the meaning and markers of 'growing-up' for themselves; 2) taking responsibility for and care of themselves and/or others; 3) making decisions autonomously; 4) actively re-constructing their identity; and 5) coordinating their 'personal life.' I see this as reflective of the process of individualization and the impact of neoliberal discourses. Difficult emotional feelings seemed to persist where residual traditions were present and when women held onto romanticized notions of motherhood, family life and a lockstep order of the way personal life was 'expected' to unfold. Further, as a sociological extension to Oliver Robinson's psychological model for the QLC, I have argued that social barriers can also create quarterlife challenges where people, women in particular, experience standing on the outside of expected and desired roles because of actual social, political, and economic barriers rather than being trapped by the individual's psychological 'illusion' of being 'stuck' in an unwanted relationship or work role, as Robinson suggests.

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Table of Contents	
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments:	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Preface and Outline of Chapters:	viii
Chapter 1 <i>Defining Generations and The Research Question:</i>	1
<i>The Contribution to Scholarship:</i>	1
<i>Defining a Generation:</i>	3
Conceptualizing Inventing and Emerging Adulthood:	11
<i>Demographically Defining a Generation:</i>	15
<i>Marriage Family and Household, Education, and Employment</i>	15
Chapter 2 Critical Discussion.....	20
<i>Re/Defining The QLC:</i>	20
<i>Differentiating the argument from Self-Help Literature:</i>	27
<i>Social Change and Socialization:</i>	29
<i>Basic Trust Risk Assessment:</i>	32
<i>Personal Life:</i>	37
Chapter 3 Social Location:.....	38
Introduction:	38
Socially Locating My Response:.....	38
My 'Trouble with Normal'.....	40
Chapter 4 Methodology	47
Introduction	47
Auto-Ethnography	52
Qualitative Face-to-Face Interviews:	56
Chapter 5 Retracing Theories of Families and Psychosocial Development	71
Introduction:	71
The Questions:	72
Developmental Models: Introduction to the Theoretical Models Being Examined	73
Carter and McGoldrick Six Stages of the Family Life Cycle	76

Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Development:	78
Duvall and Miller's Family Life Cycle Model as it Relates To Erikson's 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development.....	80
Carter and McGoldrick's developmental model of the family	85
Jeffery Arnett's Emerging Adulthood and Stage Theories	88
Canadian Demographics, Family Life Cycles, and Life Courses	90
Chapter 6 Re-Thinking Developmental Models of Family and Psychosocial Development.....	99
How Might Emerging Adulthood Impact Duvall and Miller's Model of Family Life Course?	99
Delays in Launching and Boomerang Children.....	99
Older Parents and Aging Grandparents and Changes to Informal Family Support Networks:	101
Delays in Retirement loop back to delays in launching.....	101
How Emerging Adulthood might impact the experience of Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development:.....	102
Identity Status	102
Changes to Intimacy vs. Isolation Stage.....	106
Generativity vs. Stagnation	109
Integrity vs. Despair and Risk Society:	112
Return to the Stage vs. Process Debate:	113
Stage or Process for Psychological models:	113
Stage or process for Family Models?	115
Emerging Adulthood Stage or process: Links between Self and Family.....	115
Generations X and Y and the Stage Vs. Process Debate:	118
Chapter 7 Theoretical Framework Revisited	122
Individualization, Personal Life and the QLC	122
Individualization, Personal life and the Post-Secondary Education of Young Women	125
Individualization, Personal Life and Social Bonds Amidst Uneven Societal Change	132
The Transformation of Intimacy and the Re-conceptualization of 'Social Maturity'	138
Chapter 8 A Discussion of the Newsprint Data:	146
Chapter 9 Discussion of Popular Literature and Self-Help Books.....	153
Chapter 10 - An Engagement with the Interview Data:	172
Introduction:	172
Growing Up Is....?	173
The Processes Related to Growing-Up:	176
Responsibilities:.....	176

Autonomy, Independence and Exercising Agency:.....	181
Status Rolls, Identity and The Project of Becoming:.....	183
Growing Up Early and Quickly	186
Growing-Up Out of Synchronicity	187
Growing Up Slowly and Not Feeling Fully Grown-Up:	188
Feeling Young at Heart:	189
Difficult Feelings About Growing-Up and Emerging as an Adult	190
Questioning and Re-Defining:	195
Re-Ordering and Coordinating Personal Life.....	198
Chapter 11 - Neoliberalism and the Commodification of Adulthood:.....	200
Contextualizing Robinson's 4 Stage Model:.....	200
Critiquing a psychological assessment of a social problem: Challenging the 'illusion' of being stuck	207
Divorce as 'Progress' and 'Social Maturation:'......	212
Disruption: Confluent Love, Employment, Education Disrupt the Compartmentalized Continuum of Social Life.....	214
Temporal Culture Shock and Resilient Thinking	217
Chapter 12 Concluding Summary	219
Chapter 13 Preface to the Autoethnographic Chapter	227
Chapter 13 Bird's Eye View An Autoethnographic Reflection	229
<i>She is Home</i>	253
Appendices	259
Appendix 1 Individual Interview Schedule	260
Appendix 2 Focus Group Interview Schedule.....	263
Excerpt on interpreting data taken from the methodological section of my Master's Thesis:	265
<i>How will I go about analyzing my data more specifically?</i>	265
Appendix 3 Poster	268
Appendix 4 Informed Consent Form (Individual)	269
Appendix 5 Letter of Information	272
Appendix 6 News Articles Reviewed	275
Appendix #7 Interview Data: Case Studies 1-27.....	277
Case Study #1 Lisa - Married, Mother, Investments Banking.....	277
Case Study #2 Suzie - Married, Mother, Esthetician and Waitress	282
Case Study # 3 Lucie - Manager and Mother.....	285

Case Study #4 Sandra - RN, Manager, Married, Mother	288
Case Study # 5 Mary - Teacher, Re-Married.....	290
Case Study # 6 - Carrie (Self-Employed Massage Therapist, Mother, Divorced and Now Common Law Partner.....	293
Case Study #7 Cassandra - Divorced, Mother, Retail Worker on Long Term Disability	296
Case Study #8 Chantal - Police Officer, Divorced	304
Case Study # 9 Shelley - Divorced, educational assistant & real estate agent.....	311
Case Study #10 Sky - Single, Native Woman, Librarian	313
Case Study # 11 Shannon - Mother, E. C. E., Hat-maker and Common Law Wife	317
Case Study #12 Carly - Stay-at-Home Mom and Wife, Does Clerical Work for Husband	321
Case Study # 13 Laurie - Married, Nurse and Mother.....	326
Case Study #14 Julie - Divorced, Small Business Owner	333
Case Study #15 - Michelle - Pharmacist and Wife, Wants to be a Mother.....	337
Case Study #16 Meaghan - Single, History Ph.D. Student.....	343
Case Study #17 Jennifer - Married, Teacher and Performing Artist.....	346
Case Study # 18 Emily - Single, Teacher, Landscape Designer	352
Case Study #19 Angie - Educational Assist, Common Law Wife and Mother	361
Case Study #20: Mireille - Married, University Graduate, Working.....	365
Case Study #21 Crystal - Single, Part-time Educational Assistant.....	370
Case Study #22 Sarah -Divorced, Archeologist	375
Case Study # 23 Stephanie - Wife and Student	382
Case Study #24 Rachelle - Divorced, pregnant, financial planner	388
Case Study #25 Rebecca Common Law Partner and Recently Unemployed and Re-Directing Her Life .	396
Case Study #26 Cindy - Common Law Wife and Clerk.....	401
Case Study #27 Tanya Married, Self-Employed	406
References	411

Preface and Outline of Chapters:

This present study brings to the forefront the social construction of ages, stages, and processes of social maturity in postmodern times. There is a particular focus on women and the corporeality of aging and maturing within a society where women are now offered new opportunities and challenges. When we hear expressions such as '30 is the new 20' and '40 is the new 30,' what exactly is being expressed, redefined, signified, by these age and stage related categories? With this study, we will discuss several aspects of the everyday lives of emerging adults including: education, friendships, family ties and intimate relationships, work life. Here, we examine the impact of anticipatory socialization and the everyday lived experiences of women throughout their twenties and into their thirties. We will discuss the changing signifiers for social maturity for women and the recent shift to understanding social maturity with an emphasis on the development of social maturity as a process, in addition to the residual stage-like notions of social maturity.

This project grew as I read two different types of books, from two different genres. These were Beck and Beck Gernsheim's (2001) *Individualization* and Robbins and Wilner's (2001) *QLC: The Unique Challenges of Life in Your Twenties*. Having juxtaposed these two books that were discursively discontinuous from one another, I had the seeds of a dissertation. It seemed to me that both books were discussing the same phenomenon from two different angles, with very different takes on what was happening to twenty-somethings. These books reminded me of certain popular culture 'artifacts'¹ that I had previously encountered in the popular media. At the same time as reading these books, I was working through my own sociological questions regarding anticipatory socialization, identity and the project of becoming. I was asking myself:

¹ An example of this might be Renton's monologue about life choices featured in Irvine Welsh's (1994) novel *Trainspotting* or the lyrics to the theme song for the popular situation comedy *Friends*: 'I'll be There For You' by the *Rembrandts*.

What do people do when the roles that they were socialized to fill are unavailable to them at the time that they expected to fill them. And this was on a personal level my quarter life challenge: What to do with the educational degrees I had attained? What to do in place of marriage and motherhood as I approached my mid-to-late twenties?

A few years later, I came upon Jeffrey Arnett's work regarding 'emerging adulthood' and this became important because I now had a new language to work with. Rather than referring merely to the 'extension of adolescence,' I could now discuss the experiences of those in their twenties from the perspective of becoming rather than mere developmental stagnation. This project has evolved over time and has held several titles including: *It's About Time*, *In The Meantime*, *Are We There Yet?* and finally *Getting There*. These titles each in their own way reflect a journey across time but it is in this final title that the essence of the findings are most accurately captured. I have used the words 'getting there' to describe the retrospective reflective accounts of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, so I would say they told me their stories of *getting there*. This phrasing captures the on-going trajectory of emerging adulthood, at the same time as recognizing, the concept of the postmodern project of the self and the process of continually becoming oneself. While a discussion of the 'QLC,' might bring to the surface the psychological difficulties that some have encountered during their emerging adulthood, the words 'getting there' are meant to describe the resilient and optimistic attitudes that I encountered as respondents described social and structural barriers that they encountered. 'Getting there,' emphasizes the sense of agency that was conveyed as the respondents spoke about their process of becoming adult. Finally, I would say that getting there illustrates for us the contradictory nature of growing up today. It allows us to talk about arriving at certain milestones and it also allows us to talk about the less tangible ongoing journey of learning the process of maintaining social maturity within postmodern societies. Thus, growing up was described as both meeting markers but a second version of growing up involved abandoning these markers in favor of

processes of becoming and maintaining individualized versions of adulthood. Both, the influence of residual traditions and developmental schools of thought, as well as, the more active, on-going processual versions of becoming a mature social being are encapsulated in the phrase 'getting there.' It is not quite correct to say that this is the analysis of a collection of "coming of age" stories. Rather, I would suggest what I am about to present is a collection of individualized 'disruption'² of age stories and extended stories of becoming. Through living and recounting these life histories, I note examples of how traditional ages and stages become dislodged from each other in individual ongoing stories of becoming. It is through my account of these stories that I will articulate social structures encountered by the participants. I will describe the participant's active sense of agency and their uses of reflexivity and resistance in face of the social hurdles they faced. In their words, I heard an optimism and resilience, that the expression "Are we there yet?" could never capture. Whether they had described their story of 'getting there' or they described how they continued their journey of 'getting there' they told me about what it was like to be in the driver's seat of their own life. Some seemed to clearly feel like 'adults' and 'grown-ups,' while others described 'not being there yet,' or that they were in some ways but not in others. Still, other women seemed to know very well that they may never arrive and a few others suspected or even hoped that there would always be more 'becoming' in store for them.

In the first chapter, I will begin by setting the current analysis within a generational context. Here, we will examine more specifically the works of Mannheim (1972) and Eyerman and Turner (1998) and Edmunds and Turner (2005) to discuss and define the terms "generation." Further, theoretical terms such as Giddens' concepts of 'recursivity,' 'reflexivity' (1990, 1991, 1997) and Bourdieu's '*habitus*' (1990) are defined and discussed. Also, the research questions

² Cross reference to footnote #14 for a definition and description of the use of the word 'disruption.'

are articulated along with the working hypothesis. Beyond this, Beck (2005) and Beck and Gernsheim's (2001) *Individualization* thesis and to Carole Smart's *Personal Life* are introduced.

In the second chapter, the substantive and theoretical aspects of this project will intersect in discussing the participant's feelings towards the timing of life events. I also have included a substantive literature review where I offer a more detailed literature review concerning the extension of adolescence. The substantive foci of the literature will be: 1) family, intimate relationships, and households; 2) educational pathways; and 3) employment and labour force entry.

I have reviewed an extensive list of statistical trends as presented in analytical studies published by Statistics Canada and other academics such as Arnett (2007); Thomson et. al. (2004); Bynner (2005) etc. in order to draw comparisons between the lifestyle trends of the Babyboomer, Late Generation X and Generation Y cohorts. Some of these studies have been discussed in the above early review of literature. These studies draw from the National Graduate Surveys, the Youth in Transition Surveys, Labour Force Surveys, General Social Surveys and Census data. Specifically I will draw on the works of Beaupre, et. al (2006 a; 2006b); Stobert and Kemeny (2003); Compton (2005); Milan (2000); Uscalas (2005); Uscalas and Bowlby (2006); Allen and Vaillancourt (2004; 2006); Clark (1999); Allen et al. (2003); Bowlby and McMullen (2002) Bussiere et. al. (2004; 2006). Also to be drawn from is the *Profile of Canadian families and households document: diversification continues*. The specific trends to be analyzed and discussed will be: 1) post secondary school registration and graduation; 2) marriage, co-habitation and separation; 3) employment rates; 4) fertility rates

The first purpose of this chapter is to describe the socio-economic backdrop for the Late Generation X and Generation Y Cohorts as they were growing-up because these may have fueled their expectations for their future as young adults. The second purpose is to outline and compare the actual socio-economic trends lived out by those of Late Generation X and Generation Y

during their twenties. Third, it is important to have an understanding of the generation who socialized Generations X and Y (most likely to be Baby Boomers but it might be difficult to predict from which wave) as some of their attitudes would be transmitted across the generations. Finally, the information set forth in this chapter will be used as the background to which the personal narratives, the foreground study, will be linked. In Chapter 3 my social location vis-a-vis the project and the research question is outlined.

In Chapter 4 the methodological context is outlined. Grounded Theory Methodology is used to guide this project. Epistemological positioning and an outline of specific techniques of analysis are outlined. Twenty-seven women were interviewed using open ended face-to-face interviews. Also surveyed were newspaper articles and several books from self-help and popular literature. Documents utilized in the collection of data such as the letter of information, consent forms, and interview schedule are included in the appendices.

The fifth chapter is a detailed literature review and genealogy of developmental theories of families. Here, I have outlined how the theories of family and psychological theories of social development have been dislodged from one another and no longer correspond with the same predictable synchronicity. I have utilized this chapter to position myself between the stage and process debates keeping in mind the impact of residual tradition and the need to retain stage theories in order to understand people who rely on both stage-like understandings of social development, as well as, living through social maturation as a process. The works of Erikson, Arnett, Carter and McGoldrick, and Duvall and Miller are discussed.

The sixth chapter begins the analytic discussion. First, I have retraced my steps across the theoretical context in light of the interview data. Throughout chapter six I discuss the impact of emerging adulthood on sociological developmental models of the family and psycho-social models of development.

In chapter seven I revisit the initial theoretical frameworks. Here I have included how Carol Smart's concept of 'personal life' became more useful to me than first anticipated. I have also re-positioned myself amidst the 'individualization' theses of Beck and Beck Gernsheim, and Anthony Giddens and the 'personal life' thesis of Carol Smart. In this chapter, I will discuss neoliberal economic theories in relation to the commodification of adulthood and the onset of emerging adulthood. Here shifts in the economic, consumptive and productive roles of children and parents are discussed as they have shifted across history.

In chapter 8, the newsprint media articles highlight the variable age categories that have been utilized to define popularized understandings of 'emerging adults' and the timeframes during which a QLC might be thought to occur within. Also, noted were some shifts in attitude leaning towards a more sympathetic take on 'emerging adulthood' and 'the QLC,' as time passed.

In examining popular literature and self-help books in Chapter 9, I will discuss discursive discontinuities across the perspectives set forth by the authors' books. There is a return to the 'stage versus process' debate discussion as some authors provide advice for how to meet certain milestones within a time frame and others suggest to let go milestones in favor of less tangible versions of maturity. Again, these are discussed in relation to the individualization thesis and neoliberal discourses.

Chapter 10 represents the interview data findings. Here the various themes such as: Responsibility, Autonomy, and Becoming; and Re-Defining and Coordinating are explored. Further, the possible connection to resilient thinking is noted.

Chapter 11 includes an analytic discussion of the interviews, the newspaper articles reviewed, and the popular and self-help literature reviewed. The lifestyle choices of the women interviewed are discussed with reference to the concepts of: structure, agency, residual traditions,

recursivity and reflexivity³. A significant point raised in this analysis is the extension I provide to Oliver Robinson's work on the 'QLC.' Under the current sociological analysis, it is noted that quarter life challenges and dilemmas also seem to occur when people feel excluded from certain social categories, for example wife or mother or higher level jobs. It is not only a matter of feeling stuck within a position but the reality of structural barriers that make it difficult to enter such positions that can create feelings of ill ease. The particular focus on class and gender in this study highlighted this finding.

A concluding summary (Chapter 12) is provided outlining the major finding that came from the analysis of the interviews, newspaper articles, and popular and self-help literature. An outline of the implication of the current research is provided along with some suggestions for future research. For instance, cross-cultural comparative analyses of social maturity processes are suggested. Also, it is suggested that the relationship between emerging adulthood and moral development might be further explored because the themes of care and responsibility were so emphasized by the respondents but sometimes directed toward themselves rather than towards others as had been noted by Gilligan (1982).

The final chapter is an auto ethnographic epilogue where I recount my academic learning journey as well as my experience of emerging adulthood. Here, I discuss how it was not so much meeting the milestones such as a graduation, a wedding, a first baby, that brought about the feelings of being 'grown-up,' rather it was the experience of loss, not knowing, and letting go of the idea of adulthood being a final destination as it seemed to be driving my maturation process at the time. Here I have attempted to answer the same questions that I asked the participants of the study. It could be considered an elaborate case study of my own life.

In the appendices, I have included individual case studies and excerpts from each interview. I chose this approach so that the I could also take a careful holistic approach to

³ These terms are defined in Chapter 1

examining each case. This allowed me to look at the order of life events, as well as, how they came about and meshed together within one life. While statistical type information and analysis will tell us a lot about the overall social backdrop of Canadians, it is this holistic life history approach that allows for an analysis of how everyday life is negotiated as the order of milestones change. In answering the questions relating to feelings about social maturity, the meanings of ages, stages and meeting milestones and the order of these, we really need both a statistical backdrop, as well as, a detailed holistic case study of retrospective and concurrent life histories. Thus, participants were asked to reflect retrospectively, examine their current lives, and also talk about their future directions and these individual live histories are examined against the macro-level shifts in society.

Chapter 1⁴ *Defining Generations and The Research Question:*

Karl Mannheim hypothesized that:

The quicker the tempo of social and cultural change is, then, the greater are the chances that particular generation location groups will react to changed situations by producing their own entelechy. On the other hand, it is conceivable that too greatly accelerated a tempo might lead to mutual destruction of the embryo entelechies (Mannheim, 1972, 310).

‘Individualization’ itself might be interpreted as the ‘mutual destruction of the embryo

entelechies.’ Individualization is:

“To give a simple definition -- Individualization means disembedding without reembedding” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:xxii). “Your own life -- Your own failure. Consequently, social crisis phenomena such as structural unemployment can be shifted as a burden of risk onto the shoulders of individuals. Social problems can be directly turned into psychological dispositions: into guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts and neuroses. Paradoxically, enough, a new immediacy develops in the relationship between the individual and society, an immediacy of disorder such that social crises appear as individual and are no longer -- or only very indirectly -- perceived in their social dimension” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:24).

The central research question is: Given the current rapid tempo of social change, how did a generation emerge as adults with or without entelechy, an ‘inner-aim?’ What was, if any, their inner-aim? What were the individual and generational experiences of emerging as an adult during the rise of individualization? Were ‘generation groups’ of recent past conscious of the need to produce their own entelechy or destroy the embryo entelechies?

The Contribution to Scholarship:

In terms of the contribution to scholarship, I attempt to enhance our understanding of the experiences of the process by which some members of Generation X have emerged into adulthood, negotiating work, family and education within the context of: 1) Heightened Modernity (Giddens, 1991); 2) Risk Society (1999); and 3) ‘Individualization’ (2005).

Theoretically, I want to propose that the aged self, similarly to the ‘racialized’ and ‘ethnic’ self is

⁴ This chapter is based on an edited version of the proposal for the current project

potentially, faceted, and fractured. Further, I discuss the transitional and contextual concept of emergent adulthood in terms of a journey towards citizenship. I want to rethink the concept of the “QLC” more sociologically and question whether anxieties relating to becoming an adult within the current historical period may be better thought of as lived experiences of “future shock.” This project seeks to question whether social role expectations sewn in primary socialization did not necessarily match the lived realities of everyday lives of emergent adult of Generation X. In reframing anxieties relating to the transition between adolescence and adulthood as a type of ‘culture shock’ or ‘future shock,’ we may render a sociological account of these anxieties. Also, I examine in what ways these potential anxieties hinge, for women, on their corporeality. Further, treating these anxieties as a form of ‘culture shock’ or to use Toffler’s (1970) concept of ‘future shock’ may give us, not a map, but a set of tools with which we may negotiate alternative and positive methods for re-negotiating adulthood with the idea of full citizenship in mind. Toffler describes “future shock” as a disease, not of just one but of also of a generation and society at large. He parallels the term with the term culture shock but insists that the experience of future shock is far worse. Future shock creates disorientation relating on a mass level and the disorientation pervades all areas of social life in a way is likely to be permanent. He further defines and describes the concept here:

Future shock is a time phenomenon, a product of the greatly accelerated rate of change in society. It arises from the superimposition of new culture on an old one. It is culture shock in one's own society. But its impact is far worse. For most Peace Corps men, in fact most travelers, have the comforting knowledge that the culture they left behind will be there to return to. The victim of future shock does not.

Take an individual out of his own culture and set him down suddenly in an environment sharply different from his own, with a different set of cues to react to--different conceptions of time, space, work, love, religion, sex, and everything else -- then cut him off of any hope of a retreat to a more familiar social landscape and the dislocation he suffers is doubly severe. Moreover, if this new culture is itself in constant turmoil, and if -- worse yet--its values are incessantly changing, the sense of disorientation will be still

further intensified. Given few clues as to what behavior is rational under the radically new circumstances, the victim may well become a hazard to himself or others.

Now imagine not merely an individual but an entire society, an entire generation -- including its weakest, least intelligent, and most irrational members -- suddenly transported into this world. The result is mass disorientation, future shock on a grand scale.

This is the prospect that man now faces. Change is avalanching upon our heads and most people are grotesquely unprepared to cope with it (Toffler, 1975:11-12).

Defining a Generation:

Beginning with Mannheim's (1972) classic essay "The Sociological Problem of Generations," I will discuss the social significance of the concept of 'generations.' Mannheim first outlines two approaches to the study of generations: 1) the 'Positivist' approach; and 2) the 'Romantic-Historical' approach. An aim of the Positivist approach is to find a general law to express the rhythm of historical development based on biological laws such as limited lifespan and the overlapping of generations. Some difficulties arise with this approach since the number of years between generations may vary between 15, 30 or more years. The tempo between generations is considered important as it relates to the successive pattern of replacement generations. "Hume thus translates the principle of political continuity into terms of biological continuity of generations" (1972:276-277). For Hume, human generations exist as simultaneous successions, as is the case with caterpillars and butterflies. Comte also explored the relationship between lifespan and the tempo of generations and wanted set forth a hypothesis concerning the average length of generations. A longer lifespan would yield a slower tempo. However, a shortened lifespan would accelerate the tempo. "An excessively retarded pace was harmful, but there was also danger that too great an acceleration might result in shallowness, the potentialities

of life never being really exhausted.” According to Comte the generational period of 30 years was optimal in terms of providing both conservative and reformatory influences on the society.

The rational positivist perspective, formulations of the problem of generation were:

...all anxious to find a general law to express the rhythm of historical development, based on the biological law of limited life-span of man and the overlap of new and old generations. The aim was to understand the changing patterns of intellectual and social currents directly in biological terms, to construct the curve of the progress of the human species in terms of its vital substructure. In the process, everything, so far as possible, was simplified: a schematic psychology provided that the parents should always be a conservative force (1972:279).

Mannheim discusses Mantre’s work suggesting that:

A rhythm in the sequence of generations is far more apparent in the realm of the ‘*series*’ – free human groupings such as salons and literary circles than in the realm of the institutions which for the most part lay down a lasting pattern of behaviour, either by prescription or by the organization of collective undertakings, thus preventing the new generation from showing its originality. An essential part of his work is concerned with the history (for example, politics, science, law, art economics etc.) which determines all others. He comes to the conclusion that there is no such dominant sphere imposing its own rhythm of development on the others, since all alike are embedded in the general stream of history...” (1972:279).

Mannheim continues to discuss Mantre’s survey of the concept of generation offering a description of the backdrop between the theoretical works produced in France (Positivist) and Germany (Romantic-Historical). In France, the concept ‘exterior time’ meaning the succession of generation, reaffirmed the unilinear quality of time. Dilthey’s work however challenged this thesis by making a distinction between the qualitative and quantitative concept of time. From Dilthey’s perspective “the time-interval separating generations becomes subjectively experienceable time; and contemporaneity becomes a subjective condition of having been submitted to the same determining influences” (Mannheim, 1972:282). Pinder advances the notion of ‘*The non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous*,’ the idea that the thinking of each epoch is ‘polyphonous’ meaning that events are experienced by many generations at the same

time as they are each at their own stage of maturation. Further, Pinder discusses the important notion of 'entelechy' which is "the expression of the unity of its 'inner-aim' – of its inborn way of experiencing life and the world" (Mannheim, 1972:283).

Generations, for Mannheim, are thus important because they help us understand social structures and intellectual movements. A generational unit exists more as a common social location than a concrete group and can be related to 'class' positions within the social. A generation is a location based on the biological rhythms of human existence; that is a common location based on birth year. This, however, is not to say that generations can be reduced to biology rather it means that they are based on biology. Modes of experiencing, behaviour, thought, and feelings are limited within the range of inclusion or exclusion of the generation. The relevance of 'generations' becomes especially significant as we discuss the rapid pace of social change. I would argue this is even more the case today as social change is more rapid today than it would have been as Mannheim was writing this essay.

Mannheim advances the fundamental facts in relation to generations:

- a) new participants in the cultural process are emerging, whilst
- b) former participants in that process are continually disappearing;
- c) members of any one generation can participate only in a temporally limited section of the historical process, and
- d) it is therefore necessary continually to transmit the accumulated cultural heritage;
- e) the transition from generation to generation is a continuous process (1972:292).

Mannheim goes on to further define the term 'generation' by outlining the difference between 'actual generations' and 'generational units.' "An 'actual generation' exists when there is a concrete bond created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic de-stabilization" (1972:304). 'Generation units' are, on the other hand, much more concrete as they arise from various groups of people relating in differentiated ways to the common experience of the 'actual generation.' Of particular interest

for the current study, is the experience of ‘generation units’ as they produce their own ‘entelechy’ in the face of extremely rapid social and cultural change. This is a generational study of the experience of the ‘mutual destruction of the embryo entelechies.’

Corsten (1999) and Vincent (2005) provide useful and comprehensive overviews of the development of the sociological concept of ‘generation.’ Of particular importance to the current study is Vincent’s discussion related to generations and rapid social change. “...Rapid change in society means that people with quite close dates of birth may well have distinct sets of experience; the social distance represented by the ‘generational gap’ needs to be examined and established in specific contexts” (Vincent 2005:584). In the case of the current project, the specific context to be examined is the gap between ideas transferred during early socialization and the lived experience of the early stages of emerging adulthood. To bring us back to defining the term ‘generation’ I borrow from Eyerman and Turner:

In conceptual terms, generation can provide a useful dimension for the analysis of changing life cycles in modern society, especially in terms of inter-generational conflicts over scarce resources. As youth unemployment increases with technological change, and as compulsory retirement has been made questionable by legislation relating to ageism, there are significant political conflicts around the generational dimensions of ageing, the life course and resource allocation...A sociological understanding of the 20th century requires a better understanding of the distinctive generational movements which have shaped its history, politics and culture (Eyerman and Turner, 1998:104).

Eyerman and Turner serve to highlight the importance of ‘generation’ as a concept relative to the changing lifecourse cycles. Given this study is about the experiences of a generation, it is important to outline what is meant by ‘generation.’ There are various ways of defining a generation. Generations can be readily understood as birth cohorts or groups historically bound by dates. There exist also more complex definitions that combine the socio-economic, cultural, historical and geographic aspects of generations.

Let us first begin with an example of a definition of a generation as a birth cohort or a group bound by historical dates. As defined in the *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* a generation can be outlined in the following way:

In its most narrow sense, a generation is a group of people who occupy the same position in a kinship system...Demographers use this approach in defining a generation as the number of years between the birth of one group of people and the birth of their children. This is known more technically as the *mean length of generation*, calculated by when they give birth to their first daughter. Numerical values for mean length of generation vary in fairly narrow range around 29 years (Johnson, 1995:119)... In a broader and less precise sense a generation is a collection of people born at roughly the same time... The problem with this usage is the 'roughly' used in the preceding sentence, for the definition of where a generation begins and leaves off is completely arbitrary...One common way out of this is to define generations in terms of significant events and historical periods (Johnson, 1995:120).

As entities bound by historical dates demographic researchers such as Beaupre et. al., (2006) have grouped the generations being studied here in the following way:

- Generation Y – Born between 1977 and 1996
- Generation X – Born between 1967 to 1976
- Wave 2 Boomers – Born 1957 to 1966
- Wave 1 Boomers – Born 1947 to 1956
- War/Depression Generation - Born 1932 to 1946

While it would likely be most efficient to define the generations as does (Beaupre et.al., 2006) using five neat generational groupings bound dates as outlined above, I think that at this point in history the concept of 'generation' needs to be further problematized as do Foster (2012) and Eyerman and Turner (1998). Foster focuses on generational experiences and relations to work whereby she sees 'generation-as-discourse and also develops the idea of generational discourses.' Eyerman and Turner initially define generation as a:

...a cohort of persons passing through time who come to share a common habitus, hexis and culture, a function of which is to provide them with a collective memory that serves to integrate the cohort over a finite period of time (1998:93).

Here, Eyerman and Turner are emphasizing generations as a “collective cultural field.” This is the definition of generation that will be used throughout this research project as its emphasis is on the cultural aspects of generations. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1993) and David Wyatt (1993), they refine a cultural concept of ‘generations.’ They advance the concepts of ‘generational *habitus*’ and ‘generational identity.’ From Wyatt’s work they explain more fully *how* generations as cultural entities come into being: Wyatt provides six contributing factors (as cited by Eyerman and Turner, 1998:96):

1. a ‘traumatic event’ (such as a civil war, natural catastrophe or assassination of a political leader);
2. a set of cultural or political mentors which stand in an adversarial relation to the dominant culture and which gives articulation to the traumatic event;
3. a dramatic shift in demography which influences the distribution of resources in a society;
4. a ‘privileged interval’ which connects a generation into a cycle of success and failure (for example from the Progressive Era to the Depression);
5. the creation of sacred space wherein sacred places (Greenwich Village, Paris, or Woodstock) sustain a collective memory of utopia; and
6. the notion of the “Happy Few” who provide mutual support for individuals who are accepted as bona fide members of the cohort.

Wyatt’s approach emphasizes the way that historical events, and socio-economic and socio-demographic factors sociologically impact the collective conscience of a generation. Drawing on Wyatt’s approach and adding to Bourdieu’s concepts, Eyerman and Turner (1998:96) “wish to draw attention to the modes through which a generation embodies its collective identity in response to traumatic or formative events.” They further explain how building and maintaining a generational identity may be facilitated by improved technology for information storage and dispersal. The main conclusion advanced by Eyerman and Turner (1998:103) is the following: “...generational consciousness, when it is forged by a major traumatic event such as mass

warfare, can overcome and transcend the barriers of social class to produce a powerful solidaristic force in social relationships.” Making the case for a concept of ‘global generations’ Edmunds and Turner explain that although Karl Mannheim (1997) had originally suggested that generational identity is formed out of “direct experience,” others have since explored the concept of “mediated” experience. They argue that:

The 1960’s generation could be described as the first global generation because it had a common (either direct or indirect) experience of and orientation toward traumatic political events, consumerism, global music and communication systems...the globalization of culture itself is the product of the 1960’s generation and that the globalization of culture produced the 1960’s generation (2005:566).

Advances in technology after the 1960’s have enabled generations to become increasingly global. Beyond being increasingly a global generation they also describe Generation X as being shaped not only by “events” but also by global concerns such as environmentalism, the global spread of HIV/AIDS, food shortages. Key to the present study is their suggestion that: “These new sources of insecurity provided an incentive for protest but also sapped the resources for protest – young people were less willing to take risks precisely because their world appeared to have less opportunities and more dangers” (Edmunds and Turner, 2005:568). This brings us back to Vincent’s suggestion to examine specific contexts for generation gaps. Late GenXers’ socialization backdrop calls for caution yet by the time they enter “adulthood” the social scene seems to call for risk taking, and throwing caution and the social road map to the wind. A major contribution of this work will be to outline the impact of rapid social change on generational experience and identity.

It will also be necessary to define Generation X in terms of its relationship to consumerism and technology. The Sony Walkman provides an interesting case study for the influence of technology on the generations within a society. The Sony Walkman was said to be

consumed most by those between the ages of 15 and 34 when it first was marketed. The Walkman provided the technology to block out the outside public world in favour of private listening in a public place. The Walkman created a space for blurring the boundaries between the public and the private. Not only was this invention used to block out or enhance the experience of the public sphere, it was also marketed as an accessory to the fast-paced, on-the-go, type of society that was being created (du Gay, et. al. 1997:35-39, 91). The case of the Sony Walkman among other technological inventions will be further discussed for its defining influence on Generation X and the society at large.

Conceptualizing Inventing and Emerging Adulthood:

Significant demographic shifts with respect to family, education, and employment have recreated the transition to and experience of “adulthood” as we have known it. Beginning with the concepts of youth and adulthood, let us situate ourselves in the academic literature outlining the specific demographic shifts and life course variations experienced by those of Generation X. This project seeks to call into question the “QLC” and re-conceive it as a form of ‘culture shock’ and ‘trauma of nonbeing’ experienced by some of the pioneers of ‘individualization’ within ‘risk society.’ Risk society used here in this way:

In circumstances of modernity, traditional notions of fate may still exist, but for the most part these are inconsistent with an outlook in which risk becomes a fundamental element. In this sense, it is quite accurate to characterize modernity, as Ulrich Beck does, as a ‘risk society.’ Living in a ‘risk society’ means living with a calculative attitude to the open possibilities of action, positive and negative, with which, as individuals and globally, we are confronted in a continuous way in our contemporary social existence (Giddens, 1991:228).

Moreover, this project seeks to reframe the QLC as not simply an aggregate of individual frustration but a sociological problem involving the reflexive nature of structure and agency that manifests itself, in this case, most readily at the individual level thus obscuring the sociological aspects of the problem.

There are several important points to make regarding age and aging as it relates to the “QLC.” Valentine (2003) makes an important argument about adolescence being variable both historically and geographically. Valentine draws on James (1986) and Sibley (1995) to discuss how variable the category of “youth” may be in terms of biological age. Valentine goes on to explain how the category of youth becomes further blurry when we try define it as a performative or processual identity. He states that “the transitions from childhood to adulthood can be complex and fluid.” Further, this transition may not be a one way process. Thus, more

like a 'pathway' than a 'transition.' Presently, the category of youth is being extended as a result of the emphasis that is being placed on training and education. Important to the current study is the suggestion that one consequence of the extension of dependency is that it keeps youth as 'semi-citizens.' "If young people are to gain any sense of the obligations of citizenship in our society, they must be treated as citizens and granted rights as citizens" (Valentine, 2003:40).

Arnett's work will be of particular importance as he coins and makes a case for the term "emerging adulthood" in place of extended adolescence, young adulthood, or youth. Arnett (2000:268) defines the term as:

Emerging adulthood is conceptualized as beginning with the end of secondary education, usually age 18 in American society, and ending in mid-to late 20s for most people as the experimentation of the period is succeeded by more enduring life choices.

Arnett (2004) continues to argue for emerging adulthood as a new phase of the life course.

Emerging adulthood has 5 main features:

1. It is the age of identity explorations, of trying out various possibilities, especially in love and work.
2. It is the age of instability.
3. It is the most self-focused age of life.
4. It is the age of feeling in-between, in transition, neither adolescent nor adult.
5. It is the age of possibilities, when hopes flourish, when people have unparalleled opportunity to transform their lives (2004:8).

Arnett argues that delayed marriage and parenthood give rise to emerging adulthood as a culturally and historically specific change to the social life course. Socio-economic conditions within postindustrial societies of the West along with Japan and South Korea give rise to the possibility of emerging adulthood. The social conditions contributing to the delays in marriage and parenthood are "less stringent standards of sexual morality following the sexual revolution," changed gender roles, access to birth control, prolonged education and job instability (2004:21). Moreover, he argues that the transition to adulthood is conceptualized by emerging adults as

“intangible, gradual, psychological and individualistic terms” (Arnett, 1997:3). John Bynner’s (2005) work regarding youth, citizenship, social change and the sequencing of developmental transitions will also be discussed below.

With the *Inventing Adulthoods* project, Thomson et. al. (2004) suggest that adulthood is varied and being re-invented both in lived and conceptual terms. They outline two understandings of adulthood:

The first of these is what we have called a ‘relational’ understanding of adulthood which was associated with taking care of and responsibility for others....This contrasts with what we called an ‘individualized’ notion of adulthood. Here adulthood is associated with a process of increasing choices and autonomy and decreasing dependence (2004:224).

Using a biographical approach they elaborate on the emotional aspects and meanings associated with becoming an adult in affluent post-industrial Western societies. An important aspect of the current project is to explore how the process of adulthood may be variable among women and also between women and men. Aronson (2008) has studied how those “growing up in the shadow of the women’s movement” have renegotiated and re-conceptualized the “markers and meanings of growing up.” She affirms the following:

Studies of the transition to adulthood typically focus on the timing and sequencing of five transitions that have together been considered to be “markers” of an adult status: Completing schooling, beginning full-time work, financial independence, getting married and becoming a parent. Yet these markers do not capture the complexity of the present era (p.60). While interviewees saw becoming a parent and becoming financially independent as reflecting an adult orientation, completing schooling was tied to class-differentiated views of growing up. In addition, respondents did not see beginning full-time work and getting married as associated with growing up (p56). Three key subjective themes emerged as these young women discussed the objective markers typically studied by life course research: independence/self-reliance, self-development, and uncertainty (Aronson, 2008:77).

In negotiating the social changes associated with becoming an adult, Wyn and White (2000) outline the paradox of youth today. They argue:

There is a paradoxical relationship between perceived choice and agency among young people at an individual level and the structural conditions of young people's lives, which for many precludes the attainment of adult social goals. Such a paradox is not specific to young people. Many people of an older age are in similar circumstances. Accordingly, youth studies is significant because it can offer an understanding of social change at a wider macro level of analysis in which large segments of the population are implicated (2000:166).

Before posing the research question and arguing in line with Wyn and White's understanding of the paradox of youth today, I will begin by painting a demographic portrait of the lifestyle 'choices' and structural conditions experienced by the post-1970's generation.

Important changes to an aging society have occurred with respect to education, employment and family formation. Fuzzell, (2002:36) offers the following statement concerning these shifts:

The relationship between changes in the early adult life course and population aging are clear. More time spent in school and early, often unstable or apprenticeship-like labor force experiences cause young adults to delay entering into marriage and childbearing. Employers today demand more human capital and more flexibility from their employees, especially those just entering the labor market and with the least employment experience. This may be seen as the increasing individualization of the life course, something that many of us value. But it can also be seen as greater economic instability, which either causes young people to delay family formation or causes them economic distress when they do form families. In either case, by delaying or forgoing childbearing, young adults contribute to the aging of the population.

In addition to the aging of the population, Giddens discusses the "youthing" rather than the aging of post-industrial societies:

In post-industrial society the relationship between the generations shifts. The 'ageing society' is not the best way to describe these issues. We could just as well be talking about the 'youthing society' (and I shall do so, even if the phrase sounds somewhat odd). The old are getting younger. One of the distinctive features of our society is that increasing diversity in lifestyle goes along with a 'flattening' of the life course (2007:139).

This poses an interesting question for those who are entering adulthood. What does it mean to be 20, 30, 40, 50, something today? How young do the 'older' generation want to be? What role will the 'younger' generations of society play as the older generation get 'younger?' Certain

ages are considered 'milestone' ages. Arnett confirms that 30 is an important marker for emerging adults:

Although there may be no 'right' age to marry for emerging adults, age 30 come up a lot as the age by which they would like to be married...So in theory they can get married whenever they want...but in practice age 30 is for many people a deadline age, (Arnett, 2004:102-103).

This "calculation" of lifestyle is discussed further in the next section. Arnett suggests that, "It may be this instability and uncertainty in work that gives many emerging adults a sense of experiencing a QLC" (2004:151). This brings me to Epstein's (1998) work on adolescence. Through the application of Epstein's work, I understand anxiety in the form of the "QLC" to stem from an inversion of the problem. Epstein suggests we often invert the problems of adolescence and adolescents, by suggesting adolescence and adolescents are the problem rather than seeing the institutions and cultural backdrop within which adolescents exist as being problematic (1998:1).

Demographically Defining a Generation:

Marriage Family and Household, Education, and Employment

Research indicates that young people today are leaving home later and also that they return to live in their parental home throughout their twenties, sometimes more than once. "Between 1981 and 2001 the proportion (of those who were still living at home) had doubled from 12% to 24% for those aged 25 to 29"... (Beaupre et. al., 2006:9). Moreover, many GenXers returned to live in the parental home after having moved out. This is described by Beaupre et. al. (2006b) as the *boomerang phenomenon* and it comes with a set of conflicts related to the re-division of labour within the household.

Arnett begins his argument concerning emerging adulthood by stating that the median age for marriage in the US has been rising since the 1950s. By the year 2000, the median age for

marriage was 25 for women and 27 for men (Arnett 2004:5). In Canada, in 2002, average age at first marriage was 28 for women and 30 for men (Crompton 2005:2). Milan suggests this close gap between age at first marriage for men and women may suggest closer parity in social status. “In 1996, 67% of men aged 25 to 29 had never been married compared to 35% in 1951 and 55% in 1911. The corresponding figures for women are 51% 21% and 32%...” (Milan, 2000:6).

The later age at first marriage can be related to higher levels of education (Milan, 2000:6). Based on information from the National Centre for Education Statistics and the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Arnett reports “By age 25, nearly 70% of emerging adults have obtained at least some college education.” He continues to affirm, “Figures in Canada and Japan are similar to the United States, but in most countries in Europe and Asia the availability of higher education is more restricted.” Drawing on Finnish data, Kivinen et.al. (2007:237) report the following:

The number of participants (in university education) by the age of 24 has risen clearly; moreover, the share of participants out of the entire age group doubled between 1970 (those born in 1946) and 2000 (those born in 1976). The odd ratios concerning participation in university education by family background – our indicator of inequality of opportunity – have also undergone a notable decrease from the day when elite university baby boomers were young (19.1) to the mass higher education era when the 1976 generation had their turn (8.2).

There is an increase in post secondary education following high school and also an increase in people returning to school for post-secondary education after entering the labour market. Several researchers (Allen and Vaillancourt, 2004a; 2004b; Mortimer et. al. 2008; Wolbers, 2007, Bradley and Devadeson, 2008) have described a lengthy and fragmented school to work-transition for those of Generation X. However, Vickerstaff (2003) has cautioned against nostalgic notions of past school-to-work transitions (1945-1975) as smooth, seamless and generally easy. She mounts an argument suggesting that transitions may have been more

fragmented. Still, the overwhelming majority of researchers in the school-to-work transition report change, fragmentation, and variation in this transition. Bradley and Devadason (2008:127; Figure1 Summary of Pathways) present a typology of pathways taken by ‘emerging adults’ These are the following:

Table 1
Summary of Pathways Bradley and Devadason (2008):

Pathway	Characterized by
Shifting:	No chosen career, but a number of between employment statuses and jobs
Sticking	Pursuit of a single type of employment or career
Switching	After some time in a particular occupation, making a conscious choice of a major change of direction
Settling	After a period of shifting, making a conscious choice to pursue a single occupation or career

Beyond this typology, they have also advanced the following analysis:

Secondly, we have shown that among our sample many face negative economic conditions; many experience spells of unemployment; more than half the respondents fall into the categories of shifters or switchers, involving movement in and out of the labour market and between jobs, many of which are temporary low-paid and low status. This shifting may be *voluntary*, indicative of young adults’ desire for change and excitement, or *involuntary*, the results of employers’ desire for flexibility, but it certainly leads to young adults being low earners.

Finally, we considered whether young adults were downcast by these manifestations of labour market change. We suggest that an important shift in mentality is occurring among this generation. Most faced their futures with equanimity and resourcefulness; conditions that cause concern to their elders leave them undaunted. Whether or not there has actually been a decrease in the availability of jobs for life, these young adults have accepted and internalized the rhetoric of adaptability and life-long learning.....Thus we coin the term ‘*the adaptable generation*’ (Bradley and Devadason 2008:133)

A most important statement is made in a Statistics Canada publication based on Allen and Vaillancourt’s (2004a) work:

The image of the young graduate who finishes high school, goes straight to university or college, finishes in the standard time and goes straight into the labour market is not the

norm for the majority of college or bachelor graduates (Statistics Canada, 2004; 81-004-XIE).

Moreover, 41% of bachelor graduates from the Class of 2000 returned to university or college following graduation and 15% had earned a further degree or diploma by the year 2002, (Allen Vaillancourt, 2004a:9). In a literature review tracing the timing of career acquisition for contemporary American youth, Mortimer et. al. (2008) examined patterns of schooling and working during adolescence and the transition to adulthood. Through their review of literature they document that the school to work transition can be lengthy and unpredictable as working is often combined with or alternated with schooling (Mortimer et. al.2008:46 drawing on Kerchoff, 2002). They identify “time-varying” predictors such as job characteristics and parenthood (2008:44). They offer the following conclusion:

What does this study tell us about how youth move toward careers in the highly unstructured school-to-work transition regime characteristic of the contemporary United States? One route involves less intensive employment during high school, followed by post secondary educational investment, most likely in 4-year colleges. This pathway, favored by more advantaged youth, tends to delay the identification of one’s job as a “career.” A second route involves early intensive work experience during high school that renders the youth well positioned for the acquisition of employment that is acknowledged to have career potential. Human capital investment through on-the-job training after high school and receipt of an associates’ degree also have positive payoff with respect to acquiring a career-like employment (2008:77).

Further, Mortimer et. al. (2008:77) conclude that there is an increasing convergent character between career acquisition transitions of men and women.

The debt load incurred by students during the lengthy transition from school to work, particularly when they participate in postsecondary education can be large in many cases. It is reported that “For the class of 2000, one in five graduates paid off their loans owing to the government two years after graduation....One in seven bachelor graduates owed \$25,000.00 or more in government student loans upon graduating” (Allen and Vaillancourt, 2004a:20). In a

subsequent report they stated, “Almost one in five college bachelor’s graduates, however, borrowed from other sources to finance their education,” (Allen and Vaillancourt, 2004:18).

Allen et. al. (2003:18) suggest for the graduating class of 1995:

College graduates tend to make the transition to the labour market more quickly than bachelor graduates....Two years after graduation, community college graduates of the class of 1990 and 1995 were more likely to have a permanent job than were bachelor graduates. For all cohorts, the proportion of graduates with permanent jobs was higher five years after graduation than it was two years after graduation. In the most extreme case, only 68% of bachelor graduates from the class of 1995 had a permanent job in 1997 but this had jumped to 87% by 2000. While cyclical factors no doubt contributed, transition into the labour market may also be more tortuous than in the past, with a more drawn out job matching process.

Generation Xers have entered into steady full time employment later than previous generations.

This extension of formal education and delay in labour force entry for permanent full time jobs impacts household and familial relationships. Wolbers (2007:500) studied three important youth-to-adulthood events based on data from a large-scale European graduate survey carried out in 1998. These events were: 1) the transition to independence; 2) the transition to marriage; and 3) the transition to parenthood.

First of all, the findings showed that at the individual level employment insecurity at labour market entry does indeed have a negative impact on leaving the parental home and starting a nuclear household and family. In general, it was found that graduates with an insecure labour market position (i.e. those who are unemployed, working part-time or working full-time in a temporary job just after graduation) less often enter into independence and marriage than graduates with stable employment (i.e. those who are working full-time in a permanent job). The greatest effect was reported for those who are unemployed just after graduation. With respect to the transition into parenthood, only unemployed graduates are less likely to become a parent.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the negative impact of employment insecurity at labour market entry on the likelihood of getting married and the likelihood of becoming a parent is, in general, greater for higher educated young men than for higher educated young women. However, it should be emphasized that part-time employment has a different meaning for women than men when it comes to family formation. The results demonstrated that for young women a part-time job does not indicate employment insecurity, but it offers them the opportunity of setting up a family, where are tasks at home can be combined with labour market participation.

In addition, the results pointed out that employment insecurity has a negative impact at the macro-level as well. It was found that in countries in which unemployment among young people with tertiary education is high, the likelihood of entering independence, marriage and parenthood is smaller than in countries where such unemployment is low. The negative effect of this youth unemployment measure proved to be equally strong for male and female graduates (2007:502-503).

Many of this cohort lived with friends and roommates particularly throughout college and university days. Many opted to cohabitate rather than marry. This generation is also having children later or not having children at all. Stobert and Kemeny (2003:7 drawing on Belanger , 2002) report “the total fertility rate per woman dropped from 3.5 in 1921 to 1.5 in 1999.” Further, they affirm “Nearly one in 10 singles expects to have no children” (2003:8).

Mitchell and Gray (2007:41) note that “fertility decisions made at the individual level are done so in the context of the wider society and societal expectations.” Three factors impact if and when people chose to have children. These were: “heightened perception of risk and the desire for employment and material security; the status of parenthood; and changing roles and aspirations of women” (2007). They offer an important interpretation:

In interpreting these results, it is noticeable that there is a mismatch between the importance of economic security and valuing career over motherhood. This result is consistent with the current delay in fertility. Couples are having children at later ages, and it is often cited that this is due to ‘setting themselves up’ (Mitchell and Gray 2007:42).

While some, as reported by Stobert and Kemeny (2003), are choosing to remain “childfree” others, as discussed in Mitchell and Gray’s (2007) interpretation are putting a great deal of thought and planning into creating specifically desirable socio-economic setting for children.

Chapter 2 Critical Discussion

Re/Defining The QLC:

Let us start by calling into question the phenomena of the “QLC” as outlined by Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner in their self-help book:

...the QLC occurs precisely because there is none of that predictable stability that drives middle-aged people to do unpredictable things. It can throw someone's life into chaotic disarray or paralyze it completely. It may be the single most concentrated period during which individuals relentlessly question their future and how it will follow the events of the past. It covers the interval that encompasses the transition from the academic world to the "real" world—an age group that can range from late adolescence to mid-thirties but is usually most intense in twentysomethings. It is what we called the QLC and it is a real phenomenon. After about twenty years in a sheltered school setting—or more if a person has gone on to graduate or professional school—many graduates undergo some sort of culture shock. In the academic environment, goals were clear-cut and the ways to achieve them were mapped out distinctly...but after graduation, the pathways blur...there is no definitive way to get from point A to point B, regardless of whether the points are related to a career, financial situation, home, or social life...So while the midlife crisis revolves around a doomed sense of stagnancy of a life set on pause while the rest of the world rattles on, the QLC is a response to overwhelming instability, constant change and too many choices, and a panicked sense of helplessness (2001:2-3).

I agree with Robbins and Wilner, the phenomena of the QLC does exist in some form and in fact I had made reference to the term myself in my own writing (Landon 2000). I agree that it is related to the multitude of choices and lack of direction with regard to the transition period from adolescence to adulthood, but I want to take this argument further. While the self-help books seem to provide us with descriptions about what the QLC looks like or feels like, these books do not contextualize or explain the problem fully. These books often propose "how to" type solutions without first fully address the "what is going on" or "why is this happening" type questions. With this work, I have to filled in the gaps that relate to the "What" and "Why" type questions.

Further, Oliver Robinson offers a psychological model for the QLC. His model includes the following stages:

The model comprises four phases: (1) Locked-in, (2) Separation/Time-out, (3) Exploration and (4) Rebuilding, which in turn have characteristic features at four levels—person-in-environment, identity, motivation and affect-cognition. A crisis starts out with

a commitment at work or home that has been made but is no longer desired, and this is followed by an emotionally volatile period of change as that commitment is terminated.

Below I have outlined how my interview data suggests that sometimes women may experience quarter-life dilemmas or challenges. They seem to begin from a stand-point of being 'locked-out' rather than locked-in. For example, being locked-out of education because of time constraints due to the demands of parenting.

I offered the following hypotheses related to the QLC:

First, I hypothesized that while many may have reacted to individualization (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2005), risk society (Beck 2005), emerging adulthood (Arnett 2004) and the challenge of inventing adulthood (Thomson et. al. 2004) with “anxiety” and “crisis,” this may not be the case for all. For some, individualization may not have created a QLC at all. Rather, this social revolution has offered new and welcomed liberties not afforded to past generations. In explaining cases where individuals experience ‘anxiety’ or ‘crisis,’ I offered some legitimacy to the notion of a ‘QLC.’ However, I thought there are some sociological factors that might explain why some experience more anxiety than others. These are related to socialization. Further, in their attempt to offer advice and solutions, I think several authors from the self-help literature fail to acknowledge important socio-economic and structural factors associated with the ‘quarterlife-crisis.’

Second, I hypothesized that the QLC is to some degree historically specific and temporally rooted. Thus, we begin to note the QLC in members of Generation X. We see the QLC emerge at this point in history following revolutionary social change. The QLC follows the women's liberation movements and technological revolution. It takes the stage at a time when gender relations are significantly altered and social reality is characterized by what Giddens calls

‘embedding,’ ‘disembedding,’ and ‘re-embedding.’ Based on Giddens' (1990) description of embedding, disembedding and re-embedding I understand social relations are in pre-modern or traditional societies *embedded* within a local context. Disembedding refers to "the lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" (Giddens, 1990:21). I understand re-embedding to be somewhat synonymous with the term re-contextualizing whereby social relations, ideas, artifacts, and/or people themselves might be once again embedded within a new context after they have been disembedded.

Third, I continue to prefer to think of the QLC as a form of culture shock related to rapid social change. Alvin Toffler (1970) expected that rapid social change and technological advancements would bring about what he had termed *future shock*. I think the anxieties experienced in relation to emergent adulthood, are related to this concept. I hypothesized that the ‘shock’ occurs from having to adjust to shifting between modes of being during emerging adulthood as one constructs a self that is itself embedded, disembedded, re-embedded. This may be the case with someone who lives across several social spheres at one time. For example, a university student who alternates her existence between the realms of school, a hometown, a family, a workplace, facebook, real-time friends, and a backpacking community in Asia for argument sake has a self that has been constructed, embedded, disembedded and re-embedded across many social circles several times. While the individual might hold a certain collective selfhood and core *habitus*, the self becomes increasingly faceted to reflect their positions within various social groups as this faceted self will relate slightly different to each given the variable composition and social histories of each social group. While this need not be problematic, it potentially could be for someone who believed the lifestyle of their early twenties was a

temporary phase or transition to a more permanent, stable, concrete adulthood as opposed to a new way of existing within a changed world. The more individualized becomes *the social*, the more difficult it becomes to re-embed oneself in a modern world that seems to exist less and less. Thus, I qualify this form of culture shock as transtemporal and transmodal and even transepistemic. To clarify these terms I offer the following definitions:

Transmodal: refers to crossing ontological modes of social being. For example, crossing between different modes of being when communicating. In one instance an interaction may be occurring in the present moment during a face-to-face interaction. In the next instance, the same person may be communicating via social media whereby the of social interaction is disembedded from immediate interaction where both parties are interacting within the same time and space. In postmodern times and spaces we are required to quickly adjust to different modes of being throughout day-to-day life. Culture shock that is transmodal has to do with difficulties adjusting to shifting quickly between different modes of being.

Transtemporal: refers to cross time, historically speaking. Culture shock that is transtemporal has to do with the rapid rate of social change.

Transepistemic: refers to crossing knowledge sets or frameworks. Culture shock that is trans-epistemic refers to difficulties in shifting between different ways of knowing and producing knowledge.

Further, I think the type of culture shock I am describing has been experienced by several of a generation whose collective *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990) has been interrupted and disrupted. I think it is plausible to conceptualize this type of culture shock because social change is occurring at an increasingly rapid rate whereas generations are reproducing themselves at slower rates thereby maximizing intragenerational social change while the culture being transmitted is left lagging.

Tying all three arguments together, I advance the following: anxieties related to either emerging adulthood, re-inventing adulthood, QLC or the culture shock described above are more likely to occur when 'residual'⁵ traditional attitudes regarding traditional social life remain as one

⁵ See Gross (2005) Concept of residual traditions.

creates one's own pathway from adolescence in modern society to adulthood in risk society. To further elaborate, anxiety is heightened when:

- Experiencing culture shock and disrupted *habitus* based on rapid, revolutionary social change related to the non-ecological functioning of multiple institutions within second modernity that are in turn related to non-linear, non-traditional pathways to adulthood.
- Attempting to 'risk' individualization while at the same time retaining residual traditional attitudes related to marriage, family and work i.e. trying to 'have it all' by the age of 30.
- Not attaining full citizenship as an adult because full adulthood and citizenship are blocked because of structural barriers or because of conscious deferral, assuming alternative lifestyle choices. These are anxieties based on not being able to become an adult or anxieties based on being labeled by self or others as "immature/unproductive"

Thus, I used the working hypothesis that anxiety and even culture shock may be experienced when the roles one had anticipated to fill are unavailable to take on at the time one expects to. Further, I explored the possibility of this anxiety being understood as a sort of 'trauma of nonbeing' (Tillich, 1952; Freud 1990) of second modernity. Although, I had wanted to address the work of Aaron Beck (2005) regarding anxiety as well as the *Beck Anxiety Inventory* in helping me to assess levels of anxiety that were experienced by participants, I decided that it would be difficult to assess an anxiety level based on a retrospective account. Hunt (1999:510) offers the following definition of anxiety:

Anxiety is a psychic condition of heightened sensitivity to some perceived threat, risk, peril or danger. A distinction between anxiety and fear seems both possible and attractive, but is not ultimately sustainable. One possibility is to define fear as a realistic anxiety, an immediate response to risk or danger, and anxiety as generalized non-immediate apprehension.

Throughout this project I have attempted to be mindful of the following point made by Hunt (1999:524):

The problems associated with social explanation couched in terms of anxiety do not take forms that allow a prescriptive 'solution.' There is, I suggest, no 'better' version of anxiety theory which overcomes these difficulties. The best that can be achieved is to

enter an injunction against any form of analysis which having identified the existence of some anxiety proceeds directly to assert that it is the 'cause' of some social manifestation. I have sought to make the way we go about handling anxiety as a socio-historical causal factor more self-conscious by problematizing the relation between 'anxiety' and 'cause.'

Beyond the difficulties encountered by a culture shock, I would also like to highlight that some theorists have pointed to the positive aspects of experiencing a 'culture shock' (Adler, 1975, 1987; Milseim 2005). Peter Adler, (1975:14) provides an alternative view to the transitional experience. He explains the positive aspects of culture shock in the following way:

In one sense, then, culture shock is a form of alienation. In another sense, however, it suggests the attempt to comprehend, survive in and grow through immersion in a second culture. Although culture shock is most often associated with negative consequences, it can be an important aspect of cultural learning, self-development and personal growth. It is the contention of this article that the problems and frustrations encountered in the culture shock process are important to an understanding of change and movement experiences, and that such transitional experiences can be the source of higher levels of personality development. Implicitly in the conflict and tension posed by the transitional experience, lies the potential for authentic growth and development, "the transcendence from environmental to self-support [Peris, 1969].

Similarly, Oliver Robinson et.al. (2013) explained that there are positive benefits to living through a QLC. For example, by the last stage, one's life choices begin to fall more in line with one's current value system. It creates a consistency in one's life.

Differentiating the argument from Self-Help Literature:

As defined by most self-help books, the “quarter-life crisis” is a difficult period that an individual faces when they are twentysomething. The issue is addressed on an individual level. For example, Damian Barr’s (2004) book is called *Get it Together: A Guide to Surviving Your QLC*. I would like to argue that in several cases, many of my generation could not or still cannot “get it together” because the “crisis” is not an individual problem. His title begs the question “Get what together?” This is a much greater social phenomenon presenting itself via individual manifestations. The problem has been inverted with its manifestations and some are capitalizing on the inversion as it compounds the problem. The very fact that we call this a “crisis” adds to the angst we feel. Someday, what is now referred to as the ‘quarterlife-crisis’ may not even be a problem.

Someday, this “problem” may simply be a new way of life we’ve yet to learn how to live at this point in history. Individualization is in the process of being invented and institutionalized. In the meantime, some argue family is being re-invented and maybe even de-institutionalized (Stacey, 1990) or individualized as ‘post-familial families’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2005). I would say the education system is being “hyper-institutionalized.” For now, I think we are still looking at a social ‘problem.’ The ‘quarterlife-crisis’ is an issue that plays on the tension between the sociological and the individual. My definition is as follows:

The “Quarterlife-Crisis” is a historically and geographically specific social phenomenon that has manifested itself in the late Generation X and early Generation Y cohorts of postindustrial societies whereby angst is experienced by those in extended adolescence due to rapid revolutionary intragenerational social change, thus impressing upon the generations virtually inapplicable primary and anticipatory socialization given the world at hand.

To further explain, I think people are not experiencing angst just because they have so many choices; it is because many are offered the illusion of choice: a labyrinth of choices that

lead to more choices but never to a destination. People are not experiencing angst only because they lack direction, they are experiencing angst because they have an outdated direction that no longer applies and can be very difficult to deviate from. People are not just scared to become adults, they aren't always offered adulthood as an option.

Individualization has not yet replaced family, religion and education. It is very difficult, if not impossible to erase or ignore early primary socialization. Yet, as Christine Hassler (2005) suggests, this is exactly what we should attempt to do. She says we are trapped in a "should epidemic."

Beginning in childhood, we take in endless information about the way we *should* be, pictures of how life *should* look, and ideas about what we *should* want. Our belief systems continue to welcome such expectations as we grow up, and thus the "should" epidemic continues to spread throughout our twenties. A great deal of confusion arises when we try to differentiate among parental ideals, relationship ideals, societal ideals, and personal ideals. A lot of us, no matter how smart and educated we might be, are not even aware of the difference between our own ideals and those of others. This is why uncovering our hidden belief systems belief system is integral to our growth. The sooner we're able to uncover them, the sooner we will be able to create success on our own terms not someone else's. If we peel away, one by one, our illusionary ideals, which are disguised as shoulds, we can find the root of what we really want (Hassler 2005:53).

It's a convenient solution. Extrapolate the *shoulds* and replace them with the *wants*. My question is this: Where do the *wants* come from? If you keep peeling back the layers of your belief system as she suggests, I think you'll find the wants come from an external source as well.

Hassler goes on to write:

Beliefs that don't belong to you have drained so much of your energy that you might feel a little empty without them. Don't worry. This is an extremely common emotion when we start to deconstruct our belief systems (Hassler 2005:57).

Although Hassler acknowledges socialization, the concept is too simply applied to the "QLC." She is still treating the "QLC" as an individual problem with an individualized solution that allows wants to pass uncritically examined. She is suggesting an uncritical "free will." I would

suggest that we are much more constrained by our socialization. This is not to say that we are without agency. I am simply saying that constructing an identity, at this point in history, is still a social effort. Further, given certain social structures in place, one might have to ask a much different question. Rather than “What do I want to do?” or “What should I do?” the question may be “How am I going to do what I want to do?” or “How am I going to do what I should do?”

Social Change and Socialization:

I will first discuss the manner in which the “QLC” is historically specific and a problem rooted in time as a social construction. Whether we call this time period high modernity or postmodernity is perhaps important but not entirely the point. Things and ideas seem to have changed significantly since 1975. Crafts, (2000:403) draws on Freeman (1987) to describe the industrial revolution as “technological revolution.” Three technological revolutions are noted:

These would typically include the famous inventions of the period 1750-1850 based on steam power, the so-called second industrial revolution of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries involving new chemicals, electricity and automobiles and the information technology revolution of the years after 1970.

Those who were born in the 1970’s have lived through the bulk of two very rapid revolutions: 1) being women’s movements taking hold to the point of revolution and 2) technological advancements leading to the information technology revolution. The point is that those born during the mid to later 1970’s, during the grey area between Generation X and Generation Y are dealing with something greater than a typical generation gap or a bit of cultural lag. This is a cohort who is experiencing and has experienced a societal transition from modernity to high modernity if not postmodernity within a relatively short period of time, that is, between their childhood and the time at which they expected to enter into society as adults. I am working with the following definitions for these terms:

Modernity:

"Modernity can be understood as roughly equivalent to 'the industrial world', so long as it be recognized that industrialism is not its only dimension," (Giddens, 1991:15).

"Modernity has three main characteristics: 1) the separation of time and space; 2) The development of disembedding mechanisms; and 3) the reflexive appropriation of knowledge" (Giddens, 1990:53).

Heightened modernity

"High modernity is characterized by widespread scepticism about providential reason, coupled with the recognition that science and technology are double-edged, creating new parameters of risk and danger as well as offering beneficial possibilities for human kind," (Giddens, 1991:27-28).

Post-modernity:

"The term post-modernity usually refers to a fully developed modernity which emerged in the affluent societies of Western Europe and of European descent in the 1970s...The post-modern condition is characterized by the 'death' of the autonomous subject and the emergence of new moral ideals and free-floating emotions; the fragmentation of codes and discursive heterogeneity without a clear norm; a nostalgic perception of history which legitimizes pastiche as an aesthetic form; and a conception of reality as the reproduction of simulacra through the visual power of computers and media, which abolishes any sense of alternative collective projects for dominated groups, (Archetti, E. in Kuper and Kuper, 1996:654-655).

The mainstream developmental model with which many of us were socialized seems nearly impossible for us to act out as adults for the institutions, at this point in history seem out of sync.

Given Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, we can understand that we favour our earliest socialization and that socialization works as a matrix whereby subsequent experiences and information are factored in. The *habitus* is explained this way

The *habitus* which, at every moment, structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, which are modified by new experiences within the limits defined by the power of selection, brings about a unique integration dominated by earliest experiences, of the experiences statistically common to members of the same class (Bourdieu 1990:60).

Throughout emerging adulthood, it is plausible that some people would come to view themselves as 'off-course' if the *habitus* is favouring a developmental lifecourse map. Because of rapid change, the new life experiences of those in their twenties could be factored in as 'misguided'

based on earlier experiences of the generations. *Culture shock* (Schafer and Smith, 2004:611) has been defined as: “The feeling of surprise and disorientation that is experienced when people witness cultural practices different from their own.” Typically, it has been assumed that culture shock would have some sort of spatial component to it. Technology and travel have likely accustomed people to the process of cross-cultural experiences. What is so unexpected about “transmodal culture shock” is the bewildering degree of change experienced across the modes of being within the institutions of one’s own culture. This is culture shock that occurs when one experiences different modes of living across a short period of time rather than space. Transmodal shock occurs when a generation experiences an extreme cultural lag as a direct result of revolutionary intragenerational change. This involves social change across several or all major social institutions between the primary socialization and their expected entry into society as adult citizens.

Unlike our typical notion of culture shock, one need not experience a new society. In essence, our own society has changed so drastically between our primary socialization and their attempted entry into the workforce that they experience it as a culture shock whereby familiar institutions have either changed, or are dissolving or becoming “hyper-institutionalization.” For example, one who leaves the education system, specifically the university after a bachelor degree is leaving an institution which I would qualify as “hyper-institutional” in that education is more formalized and bureaucratic at this point in time. Attempting to enter the world of work which has changed such that people will likely hold several jobs within their lifetime may offer a different experience than expected as it becomes difficult to secure a master status through work as one may have seen their parents do. Further, if this person had planned to shift into a family form as specified through a developmental model, they may find themselves searching for a

social structure that is increasingly rare or perhaps will not exist as they had expected it to. The definitions and discourses around family have changed such that the concept of family is not necessarily dissolved but I would argue it is being deinstitutionalized in relation to individualization. While the modes of being and living within various institutions still influence each other, I would argue that they do not function ecologically together as those of Generation X may have been taught in their primary socialization.

I would like to further contextualize this phenomenon historically and theoretically. The QLC, as I see it, has specific historical and generational and institutional roots. While Arnett (2004) claims that emerging adulthood is here to stay, I think the experience of the QLC may dissipate as future generations become more accustomed to the notions of emerging adulthood and individualization and adulthood pathways have been established as variable.

Basic Trust Risk Assessment:

By placing the QLC within the framework of risk assessment and basic trust we can understand the angst experienced by some members of a generation who found themselves without the traditional roles they thought they could or would have to fill in their mid-twenties to late twenties. As stated by Giddens, (1991:182) “Awareness of high consequence risk is probably for most people a source of unspecific anxieties. Basic trust is again a determinant of whether or not an individual is actively or currently plagued with such anxieties.”

Not having the lifestyle one expected in one’s twenties can break one’s basic trust in the life maps handed down at home and in schools. The perceived threat of not “getting it together” or “having it all” by the age of thirty could produce a looming unspecific anxiety that “it” is not going to work out. What is the “it” in “getting *it* together” or “*it’s* not going to work out.” We are taught through the media and popular discourses to read this “it” as “get your life

together,” “get your 'self' together” or “your life is not going to work out.” However, when I look at these phrases under a social theory lens, I read the “it” differently. Plug in the word “institutions” or “society.”

This is the difficult part. The messages across the institutions are mismatched. They do not “add up” and we expect them to because we were socialized within the framework of scientific discourse that teaches us to calculate risk. It is plausible that if we feel we cannot calculate risk and act accordingly, then we may feel anxiety. Within the framework of heightened modernity or postmodernity things are increasingly technologically scientific yet it would seem that socially “things do not add up” in that the lifecourse doesn’t necessarily unfold in the following order: graduation from education, employment, marriage, and children.

We are charged to “risk” in order to form and maintain pure relationships (Giddens, 1992), and individualize our lives (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001) yet paradoxically consumption and conformity continue to backdrop the social. To consume the illusion of individuality as mediated by capitalist enterprises is merely to play it safe rather than to risk and it is to conform rather than to individuate. In other words, individualization means much more than picking out your favourite shampoo from the myriad of shampoos on the shelves.

As understood within the context of “risk assessment” and “basic trust,” the phenomenon of the “QLC” might be explained in the following way. I think extended and late adolescence, as a transitory (Valentine 2003) social endeavor rather than a temporal stage, produced angst for some women of the generation X and Y cohorts, particularly those on the “XY cusp”. Yet, a tension is created because biologically, bodies do exist in time. It is my understanding that the five simultaneous processes related to second modernity outlined by Beck (1991:2) backdrop the ‘QLC.’ These are: globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment and

global risks. Second modernity is distinguished from first modernity and it is thought to occur when "the very idea of controllability, certainty or security - which is so fundamental in the first modernity - collapses" (1999:2) This is a reflexive modernity characterized by risk.

Earlier, we addressed demographic data highlighting a generation grappling with the re-invention of adulthood. To say, as do Thomson et al. (2004), that we are a generation hard at work "inventing adulthood" or re-inventing allows for an alternative to discourse that Generation X is lost in an adolescent crisis. Further, the concept of "inventing adulthood," allows us to understand that this social phenomenon could be historically specific and not necessarily generalizable to all generations past and future. We can ask the question, "Why at this point in history is adulthood being re-formulated?" I re-frame the "quarterlife-crisis" as a generational experience of "re-inventing adulthoods" during the time when the social is in the midst of second modernity (Beck 1999) whereby institutions and everyday-lives are changing reflexively. As discussed above, individual trajectories across school-to-work-to-family-life are becoming less linear and re-ordered reflexively in relation to the changes occurring in established institutions. Naming this "the QLC" or the "invention of adulthoods" does paint two different pictures. Having the term "invention of adulthoods" lends itself well to imagery of a collective project that may present us with some challenges. Understanding this problem as the invention or re-inventions helps us to understand why this phase would be difficult but also weakens the thesis that this is a necessary "crisis" full of "panic." Nonetheless, the phenomenon has been characterized as such through the media and by popular literature such as "The QLC," perhaps adding to the anxiety difficulties of some. I expect that many have experienced a great deal of anxiety as they attempted to become adults. I see emerging adulthood as potentially having produced anxiety at various levels.

The first is with the violation of the “basic trust” (Giddens, 1991:243) of many members of a generation due to the discontinuity between modern anticipatory socialization and the experience of living one’s adult life within second modernity. While it can be said that all generations must adjust to change, Generation X in particular has had to deal with revolutionary intragenerational change during a transitory social stage. Late Generation Xers have had to adjust to the information revolution and shifts within the feminist movements that have changed all social institutions *at the time when they are ‘supposed’ to take on adulthood*. It is ontologically unsettling to find that the social world you were taught to know and expect does not exist in actuality. Social, political and economic shifts in the institutions we thought we knew, and epistemological shifts in what we know as well as ontological shifts in what and how we can be have altered and multiplied the social playing fields. Even if people don’t know the words “ontology” or “epistemology” they still appear to me to be unsettled, perhaps more so because they do not have the words to talk about it. I think they seem unsettled because the social backdrop of our own society/societies have become unfamiliar. I am considering a concept of a ‘trauma of nonbeing’ here because, I think people who experience anxieties relating to lifestyles in their twenties were socialized to expect that they would be adults in their twenties based on established life course norms of modern times. Because adulthood changed with second modernity, I think some people experienced a sort of ‘trauma of nonbeing’ or at least disorientation based on nonbeing. How many times are children asked “what are you going to be when you grow up?” Not growing up means not becoming an adult and not becoming an adult in turn means not being an adult and not being an adult means not attaining full citizenship. I think it is conceivable that this would incite negative feelings that range from failure to frustration and anxiety to trauma.

Second, the level of anxiety experience by recontextualizing the “QLC” within the framework of Ulrich Beck’s risk society and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s individualization process. Many of the women from Generations X and Y found themselves without the maternal roles they expected or were expected to fill at the time they may have expected to become mothers. Further, many women today have the ‘opportunity’ to ‘choose’ a lifestyle and create their ‘best self’ from what is supposed to be a multitude of choices. The second level of anxiety, the level that moves the individual from anxiety to angst, and from challenge to crisis is produced by either not knowing how to navigate oneself through choices or by being very skilled at risk assessment and any choice will come with some risks. I think this is related to trying to ‘have it all’ and to ‘getting it together’ by the age of 30 or earlier. Anxiety is likely to be experienced by women in particular who attempt to create a life plan that includes both residual traditional lifestyle choices with individualization. Today women who attend postsecondary education are not simply juggling family and work as they become adults. Today’s educated women are navigating their way through any or all of the following as they invent their own version of adulthood and emerge as adults: extended education, returning to school, alternative families with an unclear gendered division of labour, delayed entry into permanent work, underemployment and/or acting as the primary breadwinner, and managing educational debts within a consumer culture.

At this level, the anxiety is produced not simply from the task of having to re-invent one’s adulthood but also from having to re-invent how to become an adult and further from having to realize that this is not a destination but an unstable category that emerges with variable meanings and markers. Beck (1992) tells us we are ambivalent because we cannot see what the future holds for us. I agree but I think the problem is not simply that we cannot see the future but

that we've been taught to look ahead, calculate, and act accordingly. Moreover, feelings of 'nonbeing' make it difficult to estimate one's present position within the outdated lifecourse map many of us still carry in our minds. I understand feelings of 'non-being,' to be related to what Giddens (1991:55) calls "the *continuity of self-identity*: the persistence of feelings of personhood in a continuous self and body." This is potentially the case with some women who expected to have children but who do not.

Personal Life:

Carole Smart (2007:28-30) provides an alternative to the works of Giddens and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim. She advances the concept of *personal life* as a new field of study. The term 'personal' is used in order to connote a less atomized, individual version of life than is presented by the above theorists. It is noted that the notion of personal life as embedded into the social, is itself an analytical statement meaning that personal lives can be discussed in relation to the social. Life projects can still be discussed through the lens of 'personal life' without implying that they are created by 'free-floating' agents. 'Personal life,' as a concept, remains neutral in terms of the politics of difference in terms of family type. 'Personal life' implies an active state rather than a past 'stationary' concept of the family. Binary distinctions between the public and private may be disengaged by use of the term 'personal life' and brings to light aspects of social life that are often overlooked such as: sexuality, bodies, and intimacy. Although I see value in the concept of 'personal life,' I think concepts set forth by Giddens, and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim remain important because I am in agreement that the social is quite fragmented and personal lives have become more individualized. Further, by my reading, the works of Giddens, and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, do not present agents as 'free-floating' entities.

Chapter 3 Social Location:

Introduction:

In the current chapter, I will outline my present social location vis-a-vis the theories of family, gender and sexuality that I will be examining in chapters below. I feel it is important to clarify my social location before I provide the analysis current practices of personal life and life style choices concerning education, work, family and intimate relationships. By articulating my position within the literature, I will be allowing the reader to more fully locate and assess the analysis provided below. In doing this, I will review and discuss the debate between Judith Stacey and David Popanoe debate, the discussion surrounding the Mary Adams' (1997) book *The Trouble with Normal* and my use of psycho-social models of maturity and sociological developmental models of family life. Further, I elaborate how my socialization within a Francophone and Catholic primary and secondary school setting and later within university-level women's studies program shapes my take on these.

Socially Locating My Response:

Judith Stacey's book *Unhitched* begins with a reference to the song 'Love and Marriage' 'love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage' and a skipping song 'first comes love, then comes marriage, then comes [Judy] with a baby carriage.' Although, I may not have grown up in the 1950's I can relate to the song. I was raised by married parents who were raised by married parents and I followed this same path. I attended Catholic school where this order was clearly prescribed. My parents were married before I was born and they have remained married. I married before my children were born and I have remained married for nearly 10 years now to the same partner whom I met and dated in high school. I am quite familiar with the order Stacey is referring to. However, I knew very early on that often times family life does not occur in this

order because many of my high school friends had their children during their mid-teens. Essentially, I had to find a new circle of friends because my friends were busy being mothers, studying and working and I continued my studies at a new high school where I started over. Having grown apart from a handful of friends who became young single mothers, left an impression upon me that would lead me to favour ordering and planning my own personal life. This is not to say that I suggest that everyone should plan and order their lives in the way I did mine nor is it to say that I cannot imagine the benefits of family forms that do not resemble my own.

During my secondary socialization, I completed a university degree where I studied family life at first from a Marxist feminist standpoint and then from a postmodern perspective. I have learned a thorough academic 'over-ride' for my early socialization, but it is just that, an 'over-ride.' It is a body of literature with which I over-write upon a very specific value system. I learned to see the 'unequal' division of labour within family lives and home economics with Marilyn Waring's documentary *Who's Counting?* and Arlie Hochschild's (1989) 'double day.' I was taught to call into question a long history of 'normative' and 'patriarchal' practices of family life using Margaret Eichler's *Social Responsibility Model* of the family. Ever so carefully, I read the Judith Stacey vs. David Popanoe debate featured in the 1993 Issue of *Journal of Marriage and Family*. I examined the Popanoe's suggested "decline" in the family and wondered with him, how would the functions of 'The Family' be fulfilled in the absence of the nuclear family? I was introduced to postmodern analyses of family life (Stacey 1993, 1996) and the variable and relative nature of family life across time and space. I was taught to respect and celebrate racial and ethnic differences in approaches to family life with Duffy and Mandel's work on families. This formal, secondary socialization, stands in direct opposition to the formal and informal

primary socialization about family life. Then came *The Trouble With Normal*. Both Mary Adams (1997) and Michael Warner's (1999) books pushed my thinking about hegemonic discourses of normative heterosexuality. Adams' book took me through the journey of 'calling into question' normative heterosexuality and it was an interesting exercise in inverted logic. My thinking about gay rights movements, gay marriage rights movements and how these can work to challenge or re-inscribe the normative practices of marriage and family life for gay and straight people was pushed with Warner's (1999) *The Trouble with Normal*.

My 'Trouble with Normal'

From my perspective, the 'trouble with normal' is that it remains unclear to me what should happen with normative discourses surrounding heterosexuality beyond questioning them and acknowledging that there are and have always been several practices of sexualities. It always leads me to the question: What, then, is the place of the normative heterosexual practices of sexuality within postmodern society? What should I, a critical thinker, say of myself and my life choices, knowing that I have chosen lifestyle options that have served to re-inscribe the normative heterosexuality? I don't think I tried to adhere to it out of some coerced identification with a statistical average that was nothing more than a social construct. I adhered as closely to the normative model as I could based on my corporeality of life as an adolescent woman. That is, partly because 1) not only was it the personal norm that I lived growing-up, it did actually seem to 'function' fairly well and work to my advantage from my perspective as a child/adolescent/young adult; 2) I watched people live very real and difficult consequences when they lived their lives 'out of order;' and 3) in part because it just happened to work out that way: I met a boy when we were both adolescents, we fell in love at a very early age, had a very long and sometimes long distance courtship, married in our late twenties and then had children.

On a personal level, I have always seen merit to marriage, motherhood, and remaining married given certain circumstances. I suppose this is why, even 20 years later, I am always a bit disheartened to re-read Judith Stacey's article 'Good riddance to 'The Family.' Although I agree with her analysis of family life within postmodern societies, I would prefer if she could leave some room for those who want to continue living in families that resemble 'The Family.' The one thing that keeps bringing me back to Popanoe's article is that I have yet to answer the following question: 'How could I practice parenting the way I do today, if I did not see my children every day to continually and immediately weave life lessons and their everyday experiences?' Parenting and raising a child is somewhat like painting a masterpiece, writing a love story, patching an intricate quilt where little by little you hand over the paintbrush, the pen, the needle. The strength that 'The Family' held was that it offered parents time with and proximity to their children in order to conduct parenting on a consistent and daily basis; time to iron out their own inevitable parenting mistakes. It is this timepiece that I would hold onto dearly. I know that my masterpieces will be 'picassoed,' the love stories' conclusions are not mine to write, and the quilt may be re-designed and re-patched, but I will have been there to hand down the one 'secret ingredient' to socialization that has never been kept secret in my family: Time.

Ultimately, the point I am trying to making is much less about governing adult sexuality and much more about recognizing the imperative need for a commitment to adult presence and everyday quality time in parenting for those who chose to be parents. After reading Stacey's strong arguments there is no denying the variations in adult sexuality and family structures, that have occurred all over the world and at various points in history and that some of these have positive impacts for adult partners and their children. However, I do not want my position to be

watered down to suggest that I think people should marry and remain married at all cost for the sole benefit of their children. What I am doing is highlighting the value of time with regards to the socialization of children and acknowledging that some family forms such as the nuclear family, or the extended multi-generational family make time with children more possible on an *everyday* basis. Of course, there will always be exceptions, this is not necessarily possible depending on factors such as the parent's employment. For example, military parents are away for long periods of time and this is, at times, unavoidable.

My challenges is, thus, to live this life that many may consider "conventional," "traditional" or "normative" (although some actually may see it as unconventional), to live this life that in large part re-inscribes the 'normative' while at the same time being able to write thoughtfully and critically about patriarchal, oppressive, hegemonic forces within an inclusive framework that strives not to overlook or misunderstand those who live experiences that may be considered 'marginal.' I suppose it always feels a bit like I am cutting into the problem and writing critically with my 'left' hand, so to speak. The danger, for me in particular, with utilizing developmental models is that it feels like writing with my right hand, all too comfortable. Alternatives to the model could easily become defined as just that, an alternative to the marriage and family norm that I live, rather than being examined within their own light.

This is precisely where I draw on my reflexive thinking and secondary knowledge drawing on other frameworks such as systems theory and/or conflict theory and Stacey's postmodern family to help me. I am, therefore, reflexively considering that my family life, the family lives of my parents and grandparents could fit fairly neatly into this developmental model and therefore I identify with the model on a personal level. It goes without saying that education within a francophone Catholic school system presented me with a given order by which life is to

be morally lived. At the same time, I recall being taught that it was not my place to preach, judge, and to remember that love is patient and love is kind... I cannot imagine a discussion of family life that does not include a discussion of the developmental model because it is so nestled within *my* selfhood and *my* primary socialization regarding how family *should* be lived. Even Judith Stacey begins her book referring to the order as it appears in 1950's popular culture as she notes the overarching model with which many were, including herself, were socialized with.

A great deal of academic literature has both supported and challenged the discourses that were included during my primary socialization notions of how family life *should* be lived. For example, when I read the opinion piece on Delayed Child Bearing by Johnson and Tough (2011), I feel that it confirms for me that it was 'better' to have my children earlier rather than any later than I have. When I read Judith Wallerstein's work concerning children of divorced parents and the difficulties they encounter when they attempt to form committed couple relationships as adults, I am additionally glad I am married and happy. Ravanara et al. (2003:327) echo this position with their literature review:

That family disruption has negative impact on youth outcome has been documented in studies done in the United States, Great Britain, and Canada. For instance, compared to children from intact families, children of divorced or separated parents are more likely to marry at younger age, to cohabit, to have pre-marital births, and to end their own marriage in divorce (Cherlin, Kiernan, and Chase-Lansdale, 1995; Kiernan and Cherlin, 1998; McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Le Bourdais and Marcil-Gratton, 1998).

Does this mean that I want to advance a paper that says we should utilize developmental models prescriptively such that : Women and men who want to have children *should* marry by their mid-twenties, at the latest, to ensure that they have their children before the age of 32 when a woman's fertility starts declining and that they should remain married at all cost because it will likely be 'better' both biologically and socially for their children and further that all this also falls in line with what the Roman Catholic Church suggests so I can feel free to say it? On the

contrary, I want to refrain from utilizing the developmental life cycle models based on strict versions of the nuclear family, or even postmodern conceptions of family life in a *prescriptive* sense. However, with my years of experience as a mother, an infant and child development worker, and the years I have spent studying literature on families and child development, I feel entirely confident suggesting that consistent, predictable, quality time spent by parents with their children is key to socialization. Further, for any limitations on adult sexuality that marriage and the nuclear family might impose, in theory and given adequate economic resources, it does offer parents time with their children. Even stronger for the purposes of time and resources are extended family households and multi-generational households. Moreover, having lived within a multi-generational household for a short time, I would tend to agree with Popanoe's speculation that "most young children, other things equal, would probably prefer to live in the large complex families of old" (Popanoe, 1993a: 540).

How will I utilize developmental models given my social location vis-vis the model? How do developmental models remain useful to me as a sociologist? The use of developmental models here is: 1) to track and explain the experiences of some groups of people within our society; and 2) to show how epistemologically speaking psychological models of psychosocial development and developmental models of family life cycles have become somewhat dislocated from each other at least in a linear sense. At the same time, I want to recognize that many of us *were* prescribed and socialized with developmental models and the nuclear family and yet we live within postmodern families.

Advancing theories and advice on how people *should* choose to live their lives is not my concern here, nor is it my concern in my personal life. It is not my intention as I bring forward older, 'out-dated' sociological models of family life. My concern is to examine the current order

of personal lives and the agency with which people have to live their life in the order in which they want to live it. Further, I am concerned with how people personally feel about the timing of their psychosocial and family life cycle progressions in relation to their expectations and desires. I know from my research that some women carried forward with them developmental models of family life with them into their twenties as they attempted to organize and act out their family lives in practice. It is not that I want to define their family life in-line with or as alternatives to a norm, it is that I recognize that the participants themselves engaged in this practice and it made a difference in the way they related to their transition to adulthood and their sense of becoming as a woman. Thus, my concern is the relationship women hold to various developmental models of family life and the ways in which they apply, re-inscribe, transcend, prescribe, question, dismantle, remain caught in, and live contentedly within etc. these types of models, and that women may, at times, do so inconsistently across the various facets of their postmodern self, across their social worlds and at different ages. *This* is my concern as I think women's relationships to developmental models of family life act as one hinge upon which swings a woman's experience of 'emerging' adulthood as liberating, difficult, or a 'QLC'⁶.

This brings me to a second concern regarding feelings, expectations and ordering one's personal life. There is recent scientific evidence relating to optimal times in a woman's life, biologically speaking, to have children (Johnson and Tough 2012:81). In light of this evidence, I am curious about women's sentiments towards the social timing of biological reproduction as it relates to the corporeality of living reproductive life as a woman. Without necessarily essentializing or normalizing these models I want to shed light on them because I think some of the notions regarding timing markers for adulthood such as coupling, securing one's first full

⁶ Please see Robbins and Wilner (2001) and Robbins, (2004) for a popularized mainstream definition of the QLC. Please see Robinson, O.C & Write (2013) for an academic psychological engagement with the concept of the QLC.

time job, are tied to these models whether we consider them outdated sociological tools or not. Moreover, the timing of social aspects of family planning alongside the biological realities of reproduction has important implications for emerging adulthood and the family life-cycle. I think we cannot forget developmental models of family life because these are linked to the biology of becoming a birth parent and at present time becoming a biological parent continues to be constrained by age even with the assistance of assistive reproductive technologies. Thus, my insistence for keeping stage-like family models is first as a sociological reference point with which we can track where the psychological models become 'unhitched' (to borrow Stacey's term and apply it to these theories) from the family life cycle models. Second, to discuss the reality of some families living within Canada. Developmental models are worth revisiting in relation to medical discourses regarding the biology of reproduction. Again, not for the purpose of prescribing how to live but in terms of giving men and women knowledge about their bodies and therefore greater agency with which to construct the life they may want.

Chapter 4 Methodology

Introduction

In order to complete this project I used Grounded Theory Methodology. To begin, I will provide a brief overview of Grounded Theory Methodology that was first introduced by Glaser (1967). Grounded Theory is a rigorous yet flexible methodology for the inductive collection and analysis of data. Although it can be used to generate both statistical and qualitative analysis, it is most often used by qualitative researchers. Bryman and Teevan (2005:284) provide a short definition based on Corbin and Strauss (1998) conception of Grounded Theory. They write:

...grounded theory is defined as 'theory derived from systematically gathered data, arising through the research process' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:12). Its two central features are its development of theory out of data *and* an *iterative* approach, *recursive* as it is sometimes called, meaning that data collection and analysis proceed in tandem repeatedly referring back to each other (Byman and Teavan, 2005:284).

It is important to understand the particular orientation that the researcher must take on in order to produce a theory that is grounded in data. The researcher begins with a rough research question and refrains from the elaboration of a strict hypothesis to test applying pre-established theories. Rather, it is through the use of specific analytic tools with which to treat data that rough working hypotheses are re-worked and categories and theories emerge from the data more directly. As a researcher uses a grounded theory approach to data analysis, he or she may find herself returning to the data and/or theoretical sampling and engaging in constant comparison several times before the theoretical saturation within and across the categories generated might occur. For an illustration of the research process refer to Bryman and Teavan (2005:284) who provide a figure to trace the researcher's steps as they engage in the lengthy process of generating a grounded theory. To further describe these steps, I will borrow from the figure and descriptive list they provide. Please see below:

Processes and outcomes in grounded theory

(Figure 13.1 Reproduced from Bryman and Teevan (2005:286))

Descriptive list of 12 Steps for Grounded Theory Methodology

(Reproduced from Bryman and Teevan (2008:286))

- The researcher begins with a general research question (step 1).
- Relevant people and/or incidents are theoretically sampled (step 2).
- Relevant data are collected (step 3).
- Data are coded (step 4), which may at the level of open coding, generate concepts (step 4a).
- There is a constant movement backwards and forwards among the first four steps, so that early coding suggests a need for new data, which results in a need to theoretically sample, and so on.
- Through a constant comparison of indicators and concept (step 5) categories are generated (Step 5a). It is crucial to ensure a fit between indicators and concepts.
- Categories are saturated during the coding process (step 6).

- Relationships between categories are explored (step 7) in such a way that hypotheses about connections between categories emerge (step 7a).
- Further data are collected via theoretical sampling (steps 8 and 9).
- The collection of data is likely to be governed by the theoretical saturation principle (step 10) and by testing of the emerging hypotheses (step 11) which lead to a specification of substantive theory (Step 11a).
- The substantive theory is explored using grounded theory processes in a different setting from that in which it was generated (step 12), so that formal theory can be generated (Step 12a). A formal theory related to more abstract categories not specifically concerned with the research area in question.

There are three main tools used in the production of a grounded theory. These are: 1) Coding; 2) the method of Constant Comparison; and 3) Theoretical Saturation. The codes are derived from the data. They come from the very language of the data itself. In this way, as Charmaz (2006) suggests, the researcher begins with data rather than preconceived set of labels for similar cases to be analyzed. There are different types of coding. Typically, open coding will begin the analytic phase where data are broken down very systematically, sometimes line-by-line, and then re-organized under each code for the purposes of beginning the work of constant comparison. Constant comparison refers to a process whereby instances that are coded are grouped and explained for their thematic similarities but also for their differences. This process is continued until theoretical saturation occurs. Theoretical saturation occurs when nothing new emerges from old data and when new data no longer generate new codes and categories. A core category will emerge from the data and sub-categories can be organized. Their relationship to each other will be elaborated and explained. It is from this process that theory is both generated from and grounded in data. There are two levels of grounded theory. These are substantive theory and formal theory. Substantive theory is particularly concerned with subject matter of the data. Whereas, formal theory extrapolates the categories and applies them in other contexts to generate a theory that is capable of explaining the social phenomenon more generally and abstractly.

The specific methods used were: interviews, analysis of popular and self help literature, and subjective analysis of artifacts of popular culture. An autoethnographic postscript will follow this dissertation. The Carleton University Research Ethics Board reviewed and gave ethical clearance to the current project.

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) suggest outlining the ontological and epistemological underpinnings as well as the specific analytic methods employed when outlining any given methodology. I temporarily bracketed my constructivist thoughts regarding “data” so as to collect it in an organized fashion using several methods from Grounded Theory Methodology. While my study of Grounded Theory Methodology has included the works of Strauss and Glaser (1967); Corbin and Strauss (1998) and Charmaz, (2006), I share Charmaz (2006) ontological understanding of 'data' as being co-constructed between researchers and participants. I stretch myself between the interpretive and the constructive as I treat data with Bloom's concept of a strong read. I suppose we could say there are moments where I temporarily, deliberately think of data as 'real.' In my treatment of data I like the organization of cutting and coding and I find it most useful because it allows me to learn the interviews by rote so that I, as a human, can do what no computer program will ever be able to do on its own - draw the nuances, ask why, ask how, move forward on a 'hunch.' Still, I like to retain the whole and the essence of the participant's voice, personality, and lived experience by maintaining a holistic, albeit a de-constructed, re-constructed and co-constructed 'whole' story complete with direct quotes. The part is only interesting in relation to its 'whole.' In this sense, my take on studying the social is hermeneutic and interpretive.

By aligning this work theoretically, epistemologically and ontologically with that of Beck (2005:2), I chose now to state that I understand this particular project as occurring within the context of heightened second modernity that has taken hold unevenly across the social rather than attempting a return to modernity, postmodernity or even post-postmodernity. I am locating myself alongside Beck (1999:2) as he suggests we are in the midst of a second modernity, a time characterized by embedding, disembedding, re-embedding, individualization, and ghost institutions. Beck discusses zombie categories in an interview: "Because of individualization we are living with a lot of zombie categories which are both dead and still alive" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:202-203). Beck suggests in an interview, that family, class and neighbourhood are zombie categories. He thinks,

"people are more aware of the new realities than the institutions are. But at the same time, if you look at the findings of empirical research, family is still extremely valued in a classical sense. Sure there are huge problems in family life, but each person thinks that he or she will solve all those problems, that their parents didn't get it right, (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2001:202-203).

This theoretical stance lends itself to the philosophical underpinnings present in the methodological approach to this study. I have included a section below to indicate my concern for and grappling with these issues. However, Kathy Charmaz (2006) provides a consistent analytical framework for qualitative analysis from a Constructivist Grounded Theory perspective.

I question the 'real' or 'grounded' 'nature' of 'data' that is collected within a context that is continually embedded, dis-embedded, re-embedded. However, for all practical purposes, I will 'bracket' (Gubrium and Holstein 1997: 40-44) my ontological and epistemological understandings for the data collection phases that will be guided by a methodology that is rooted within a modernist tradition.

I have adopted the stance that all can be considered 'data.' Several types of 'data' were collected and analyzed. I have examined theory not only for the sake of theorizing but also in the sense that I have retraced the progression of a theoretical take on social development. In essence, I have treated developmental theories of the family and of psychosocial development as 'data.' Thus, I have engaged with theories of family development and theories of individual psycho-social development, newspaper articles, popular literature, face-to-face interviews, autoethnographic research. Each of these were analyzed using specific methods.

Grounded Theory lends itself well to collecting data in an organized systematic fashion to generating "categories of analysis." While specific methods were used for each data type, I wrote many memos to draw links or highlight discontinuities between data types. I mapped out my thoughts and kept diagrams and 'thought trees.' I have kept these. I have saved countless versions of this thesis so as to be able to re-trace my steps and thought process should I want to do so. I also wrote a book of short poems entitled: "Something Else: I Wrote in the Meantime" to help me capture my thoughts and feelings regarding my experiences during emerging adulthood. I kept track of articles and books and noted commercials and songs that seemed to address the topic. As I transcribed the interviews, I kept running notes about my initial impressions of the data. A lot was kept digitally but there are many 'scraps of paper' and journal entries, old magazines, government publications and even the marriage course booklets that I saved from our engagement. I have kept these alongside the raw data. I think of grounded theory as somewhat of a cumulative snowballing of diverse information regarding a related topic. A snowball that later becomes an onion that I may 'unpeel' deconstruct, and re-construct.

Auto-Ethnography

An autoethnographic penultimate chapter will be included relating my experience to the literature review, statistical review, theoretical discussion, and interviews. Throughout this chapter, I will intertwine and relate a meta-narrative to the academic literature and data collected in order to produce an autoethnographic account. The following sources will guide my writing of this chapter: Ellis (2008); W.-M. Roth (2005); Ellis (2004); Reed-Danahay (1997); Fear (2006); Ellis and Bochner (1996);

From its earliest conception this project was rooted in experience and cultural artifacts. It began as 'dots' that were not yet connected, and yet my sense and gut feeling was that they were related but because I was in the midst of the experience I was not as able to connect and articulate the concern as clearly as I can now. The unexpected experience of extending my education to include undergraduate and postgraduate university life rather than college and marriage during my early twenties began this research project before I formally realized. 'University' was a place, idea, culture that I had very limited experience with and knowledge of. I learned how to email and on Thursdays we (friends who today I still call my extended family) sat together watching the sitcom *Friends* with The Rembrandts (1995) 'I'll Be There For You' intro:

So no one told you life was gonna be this way
Your job's a joke - You're broke - Your lovelife's D.O.A.
It's like you're always stuck in second gear
When it hasn't been you day, your week, your month or even your year '

It didn't occur to me at the time that these friends were becoming a family that I cherished to this day. It was the beginning of a departure from the life course that I had expected.

At the beginning of my Ph.D. degree I stumbled upon a book that was being discussed on a television talk show: *The Quarterlife Crisis*, a popularized self-help book written by two young journalists. They were talking about the overwhelming number of 'choices' young

women were being presented with in terms of their life course. Around the same time, I had watched a film called *Trainspotting* with some friends and I listened to Renton's soliloquy in the introduction of the film (found also in the novel by Welsh (1993:237) and it stayed with me:

Choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; Choose washing machines; Choose sitting oan a couch watching mind-numbing and spirit-crushing game shows, stuffing fuckin junk food intae yir mooth. Choose rotting away, pishing and shiteing Yerself in a home, a total fuckin embarrassment tae the selfish, fucked -up brats ye've produced. Choose life. Well, ae chose no tae choose life.

Somewhere between the cultural imperative of 'choices' that are often 'illusory' and the feeling of always 'being stuck in second gear' exists the phenomenon that I examine here. This project will include discussion and analysis of artifacts from popular culture. Please see the list of newspaper articles reviewed. This list follows below. Using the example of the analysis of the Sony Walkman as an example and framework for doing cultural studies, I will analyze artifacts that may include advertisements, opinion pieces from newspapers, songs, art, and literature; for example, the slogan 'TELUS The future is friendly' can be "misread" or interpreted so as to re-construct a new meaning. Read instead: "Tell us: the future is friendly." It looked and sounded to me like, with cell phones in hand a generation was begging to be told exactly the same message that was conveyed with the *Friends* theme song. Yet another example is: "The computer is personal again." I read these slogans as marketers' awareness that people want to get "it" together again. Again, I read the "it" in this case to be the social. I see advertisements as particularly relevant as typically marketers attempt to sell the tangible via the discursive.

I did review discussions as posted on <http://quarterlifecrisis.com/>. However, it was decided that there was already sufficient data to discuss directly without incorporating this information into the Dissertation. The list of newspaper articles utilized is located in the

appendices: Appendix 6 News Articles Reviewed. These articles were located by searching the terms "Quarterlife Crisis" "Quarter Life Crisis" and "Emerging Adulthood" via the Carleton University online catalogue. All articles that were located via this method were utilized if so long as they proved to truly be concerning the same topic. Many times the same article appeared in several newspapers. The search was limited to the newspaper articles by selecting this criteria on the search engine. These articles were read specifically for the ages and stages that they indicated in relation to the QLC and Emerging Adulthood. These ages were recorded in memos. Further, a subjective reading of the overall tone and mood of the article was made paying close attention to the wording utilized in the articles.

I have reviewed popular and self-help literature concentrating or relating to the QLC. I have examined some sources from the self-help literature including: Robbins and Wilner (2001); Robbins (2004); Wellman (2006); Bronson (2002); Macko and Rubin (2004); Hewlett (2002); Kamen (2000); Barr (2004); Wolf (2001). These were found by using search engines to find books relating to the QLC and emerging adulthood but also less formally if I came across them in the bookstore. It is by no means a comprehensive list but it is a good starting point that was utilized to highlight divergent perspectives concerning life choices for people, women more specifically during their twenties and thirties. I used memos and the method of constant comparison to record and re-cover competing discourses and repetitive themes across these books. These books were more specifically read for 1) their definitions of the QLC and emerging adulthood; 2) explanations for the QLC and Emerging Adulthood; and 3) their advice on *how to* handle the QLC and Emerging Adulthood.

Qualitative Face-to-Face Interviews:

I set out to conduct 40 audio-taped interviews with women who are part of the Late Generation X and Y cohorts. More specifically the sample was intended to be comprised of:

- 10 women who have graduated from a post-secondary educational who identify themselves as members of late Generation X.
- 10 women who identify themselves with Generation Y and who have graduated from a bachelor degree.
- 10 women who have not graduated from a post-secondary program and who identify themselves with Late Generation X.
- 10 women who identify themselves with Generation Y and who have not graduated from a post secondary program.

I was able to recruit 27 participants and most had attempted to go to college or university at some point during their twenties. The participants ranged between their early 40s and their early 20's. They either identified with Generation X or Y. There were 11 from Generation X and 16 from Generation Y, based on Beaupré's definition discussed earlier. Culturally speaking, there can be some overlap between generations and sometimes we hear of the XY cusp. Several participants were born during the late 1970s and early 1980s which potentially could define them as being born within the XY Cusp. The dates are for the XY Cusp are quite debatable. Thus, the X and Y distinction has been maintained here. The participants were women who identified themselves as being part of Generations X and Y. The study included participants who have completed a postsecondary degree and those who have not. Most women seemed to be from working class backgrounds with married parents where their fathers worked outside the home in semi-skilled labour jobs and their mothers were stay at home mothers. There were some parents who had divorced or separated and there were some mothers who held either part time jobs or they were teachers or nurses but most were home as their children were young. One common link was that most of the participants attempted to gain post secondary education and gainful employment outside of the home.

I have chosen to study women for this project because I think the corporeality of living within a female body creates a frame upon which choices surrounding fertility hinge whether a woman chooses to have a child or not. Further, I interviewed women who have and who have not graduated from a post-secondary program. I hypothesized there would likely be a difference in the life-course trajectory between these two groups of women. For example, not attending post secondary education may bring one to 'adulthood' more quickly and may influence the way one thinks about their life choices and status. This may be also the case cross-culturally. A cross-cultural analysis would be interesting, however, it may not be representative given the sample set. The Late Generation X respondents will be asked to provide retrospective accounts of their expectations for and experiences of their 20s; The Generation Y Cohort were asked about their experience of their 20s. During a follow-up study at a later date they will be asked to give retrospective accounts. Please see the outline of interview questions set forth below. The women were recruited via postings at local libraries and a trade show. Given the open ended nature of the questions, it was decided that one in-depth, semi-structured interview with each participant was sufficient to complete a comprehensive case study for each participant.

The schedule of interview questions was very carefully constructed. It allowed for the brief oral histories I collected to be co-constructed in an organized fashion, analyzed and re-constructed by not only myself as the researcher but by the participants, on the spot in the interview itself. I did not initially ask the participants to tell me the story of their twenties. I was very precise about the way I collected this information keeping it in three neat discrete 'silos.' They were asked to discuss each category of personal life: 1) their educational life, 2) their work-life, and 3) Their family-life and personal relationships. I would ask them to reflect on their experiences with a temporal angle experiences what their expectations were, what was the lived

reality, and what would they expect the future to look like. This would help to collect similar information for each respondent and helped me not to miss any area. The participants were always given an open ended opportunity to then add anything that they considered pertinent to our discussion. Collecting the information this way began to 'cut' the information at the level of the raw data. It made it very easy to transfer to a table systematically. However, it made it more difficult to re-construct into a chronological case study. Because of this, I can say that the chronological case studies are co-constructed and re-constructed, re-constructions. Of course, the case studies can be seen as 'data' but they are by no means raw 'data.'

The ordering of the questions was important. The interview began almost the way a job interview would because I asked them to tell me about their education and their job. This seemed usually to be the least emotional part of the interview. Then I would ask not about relationships but about household and the type of household they expected throughout their twenties. From there, I eased into personal relationships asking about marriage, children and family life. Here, I asked about households and relationship status but I did not ask directly about sexuality which, as one of my respondents pointed out, is about adulthood and adult life. This point was well-taken but at the same time, I did not want to be overly intrusive with my questions. This progression of questions set up a comparative between their experiences and those of their parents. In a sense, it was perhaps easier to answer this question having spent a few moments reflecting on what exactly their experience actually had been.

Now came a transition phase in the interview where I asked the more emotionally challenging questions. These questions allowed the participants to re-construct their own experience during the interview itself. These questions were about listing the order they met milestone markers for adulthood. I asked them to write down the order they expected to meet

these milestones in and at what ages and I asked them to tell me about their actual, lived life course and at what ages they met the milestones. It was strategic that I asked them to write it down. The intention was not so much to record on paper their life-course as it was to allow both the participant and myself a short pause to think. You can hear this pause on the audio recordings of the interviews. The pause often lasts minutes on the recording because they are reflecting very carefully - re-ordering and *coordinating* their past as things did not necessarily happen step-by-step but simultaneously. The participants would look down at the paper and order their lives in the ways they had expected, maybe hoped it would turn out and then they would write down what actually happened.

Then I asked them the sometimes difficult question of: How did you feel about the order and timing with which you met (or didn't) meet these milestones. I offered them an opportunity to highlight significant formative moments by asking them to describe a moment or set of moments that made them feel more 'grown up' than other moments. This gave them the opportunity to story-tell, give emphasis and meaning to moments that they felt were formative and transformative. I asked them to complete the sentence "Growing up is...." and then I would ask them to reflect each time in conducted and transcribed each audio-recorded interview. Finally, I would ask them, 'Are you there yet?' This gave them each, in an overarching way an opportunity to reflect on what they had just said and come to their own conclusion as to whether or not they had socially matured to the status of 'grown-up.'

The interview instrument itself is strong in that it was clear to the participant and they understood the question and were able to respond to and relate to the questions. The intensity of the questions build as they build the history of their twenties and their own story of 'growing-up.' The women had positive comments to give to me after the interview telling me the questions

themselves were interesting and that the interview was well-done. I think this is because it gave them an opportunity to think about their lives in a very systematic and focused way where they were not only reflecting on the past but also envisioning the future. I did not really draw as much on the questions that related to the future. However, these were again strategic because they offered the participants an opportunity and agency to engage in their own becoming especially if they were missing something they had wanted. The data from these future questions would be particularly interesting for a future study with the same participants. They could be given the opportunity to compare once again their expectations to the reality of their lived experience of the next ten years for example.

There was one question concerning popular culture and the impact of the media on their socialization that I would re-write or remove because it seemed to confuse participants and it sort of disrupted the flow of the questions. I think I tried to ask them about their secondary socialization too directly.

I utilized the Nvivo software package so as to be able to map and draw links between the participants' comments. Initially, I found that it did not provide enough context for the information queried. Nvivo was useful in that it allowed for word searches and word counts for most frequent words utilized. However, I chose instead to transcribe the interviews and write them as case studies. Between writing the case studies I would write a memo and bring forward codes to be examined cumulatively. I also created a large *Excel* table of variables and notes for each participant so as to be able to draw similarities and differences between the responses of the participants to given questions. I used the initial codes that I had generated during the memos that I wrote between my re-construction of the case studies.

I used the analytical methods of theoretical sampling, saturation and sorting to help build the categories of analysis (Charmaz, 2006:96-122). By this I mean that I would generate initial and open codes based on my reading of the transcribed interview as I re-constructed it into a case study. Similarly to the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 2015) and the voice centered relational approach suggested by Doucet and Mauthner (1998), I read the transcribed interviews several times before I re-constructed them as case studies. I worked with each case study one by one, listening, transcribing, then writing the case study and making notes then I would move on to the next interview. The first 'reading' was actually 'listening' because I listened to the interview and it was an emotional topic and I would listen for pauses, for laughter, for crying, for sighs of relief, for shaky voices, for loud intonation and voices that would trail off. When I transcribed the interviews I was careful, to make note of these pauses and emotions. As I wrote the case studies, I would try to identify a statement that would stand out from the interview that would convey something that I saw as most significant to the what was now a case study rather than a transcribed interview. These statements were often like keys that unlocked theories from data. For example, Chantal who said "This path has been a very crooked road...and it's about discovering the Truth of that...It's really not about getting there." This was an over-arching statement that she made that re-constructed her biography and also said something insightful about maturity as a process rather than a stage. Moreover, I related to it and pulled it out from her narrative and gave it emphasis. Still, this statement came from Chantal as she questioned me and so in that sense it is very much both 'grounded' and 're-framing.' In this sense, the statement precedes and frames her narrative because I have positioned it to do so. Structure and agency are staple concepts in sociological study and to me figuring out sites of agency amidst social structures is the main point of doing sociology feminist sociology. I would read the interview for

the participant's sense of how their world(s) work(s) and their position within it. Again, this was a very subjective selection. For example, a quote that will forever be etched in mind is Carly's response to my asking her to complete the question 'Growing up is....'

Hard! (Laughing) My daughter and I were talking about that yesterday. 'Cause well she is 17 now and well she stays here and she stays at her boyfriend's, but the more we are together the more we don't get along because we are a lot alike. So yesterday we're talking and I said so when I get her baby bonus I give it to her and I said 'well you'll manage. You know you need your groceries your...you manage what you need to do with it.' She was like, 'I didn't think growing up was going to be this hard.' I said, 'Yep! I told you it was not going to be that easy. You don't depend on everybody else to do everything for you anymore. You've gotta do it all yourself. Yeah you can't depend on mommy and daddy. It's you.'

Here the striking irony of something that is being called a 'baby bonus,' an amount of money that is given to a parent to use as a supplemental income to support her adolescent child, 'a bonus' is being re-directed by the parent and given to a 17 year old minor as her basic economic means. Carly is also the participant who said, "I guess I could have been thinking about going to school, you could say, but I wasn't" I pulled these two statements out of her narrative because I see embedded within them strongly rooted class structural barriers. Again the irony is striking, an education is needed to survive economically, yet it's not what she is thinking about nor is it what she is suggesting to her daughter. Still, as she makes the comment about 'school' I think she was aware that there was a possibility that I might disagree or that she may be judged for the statement because she said 'you could say,' I think "you" meaning me as an educated woman who did not share her class background. It was not so much that I felt judgmental about her use of her 'baby bonus' as it was that I was so disheartened that her 'child' was learning to survive on it and that this was just understood, taken for granted and taught as what 'growing up' is all about. 'Hard' is right. Carly is economically dependent on her husband and her daughter, without an

education and employment will possibly replicate that gendered cycle of poverty. The above quote highlights just how constrained choices can be and how agency is limited.

I read for contradictions and discontinuities both within and across the case studies and this was facilitated by the use of the Excel table. Specifically, I organized the table to highlight the ordered patterns of life course. I looked for intergenerational continuities and discontinuities as they described their parent's lives. Based on transcripts, an Excel table using several pages so that I could track and open code every response that one single person gave for each of their questions. If I wanted to get a sense of how many similar or differing instances there were all I had to do was look down the list. Reading across the spread sheet gave me a quick view of the case. This allows for analysis within the case. Reading down the columns of the table gave me the ability to systematically compare recurring themes across the cases. For example, based on the transcripts, I recorded clear yes or no answers like this: Expected to graduate high school, expected to go to college, expected to go to university. Went to college directly after high school, went to university directly after high school.

The transcribed interviews were cut into small thoughts and categorized and organized into this table by participant (row) and by each response question (column). From this table I generated categories for example from the above excerpt I can see the themes of: responsibilities, agency, process, stages, dreams - (hopes/expectations), and reality (what gets thrown at you). This way I had a handle on which question prompted the thought I was being categorized. Creating this table allowed a visual and specific analysis of the answers to give questions but allowed me to make quick references between participants' answers. I personally found it more visual and flexible for coding an entire 'instance' rather than a word or a line. Plus, it helped me to 'learn' the contents of the data. Further, I did return to the Nvivo program to

help me read for the 'I' and if they were using the word 'Mom' and 'mother' to describe themselves or their mother. I noticed a word frequency for the words 'going,' 'want,' and 'think' so these words were further queried.

Analytically, I drew comparatives; for example between Lisa and Mary there is a different orientation towards agency and its meaning to social maturity. Lisa is saying that you are responsible for your own path (and from other parts of her interview - responsible to make every effort towards creating your path and happiness) whereas Mary is saying you need to deal with disappointment, be realistic. If I wanted to I could do a quick check for consistency with the other responses from Mary...recall Mary did divorce and said this had her feeling like she was 'growing-up' because that was one of the first decisions that she made that went against her upbringing (growing-up was also about exercising agency for her).

I think that between doing the interviews, transcribing them, turning them into case studies, I gained an overall understanding of each individual story. Knowing the life history for each let me draw links between participants' individual questions and their life histories but if I needed to, I could do a quick reference check across the 'row' in the excel sheet let me confirm this. It also gave me a better sense of the collective story. Generating, the Excel table let me draw themes, moods and categories across the participants stories and individual responses to questions. It allowed for constant comparisons to be made until I was able to generate themes and theory. For example: With the last three questions on 'growing up:' I highlighted the following themes: 1) Responsibility, 2) Autonomy and 3) Becoming. Then it became clear to me that there were two others: 4) Questioning and redefining the social order and one's place within it and 5) Ordering and coordinating one's 'personal life.' The words autonomy and independence are closely related after re-reading I realized that in actuality the word

independence was used much more frequently than autonomy. However, because they were often referring to 'self-directing' in a way that was also independent, 'free of outside control or support,' I kept the word autonomy which was my initial understanding of what they were trying to convey. Responsibility can be divided into two further the categories: Responsibility for oneself and responsibility for others. These responsibilities can be further divided to include: Economic responsibilities for oneself and for others and care for oneself and care for others.

Concepts closely related to 'Growing-Up' within the framework of 'Individualization'

- Responsibility
 - responsibility for oneself
 - economic responsibility for oneself
 - responsibility to take care of oneself
 - Responsibility for others
 - economic responsibility for others
 - Responsibility to take care of others
- Autonomy
 - Forming your own 'ideas'
 - Making decisions for oneself
 - Choosing to spend your time as you chose to
 - Individuating from one's family of origin
- Identity
 - Fitting oneself to a pre-set given role
 - Adjusting a role to fit one's self.
 - Exercising agency to be becoming who you chose to become
 - Engaging Continual process of becoming
- Questioning and Redefining
- Re-Ordering and Coordinating one's personal life
 - Planning life
 - Taking life as it comes
 - Coordinating all aspects of personal life

These are based on some earlier codes: care for others; care for self; coming into one's own, and identity. I was able to draw links between my review of theory and the 'emerging' data. I found that themes relating to Neoliberalism began to emerge as the participants described a focus on

the self during emerging adulthood: autonomy, care for self, financial independence, refining identity, becoming oneself. Again, with constant comparatives, this 'new' type of adulthood is strikingly different the words they were using to describe their mothers as adults: financially dependent; Responsible for others and identity of wife and mother. Not only is intimacy transformed so is the social maturity.

Charmaz, (2006:124-150) provides a useful overview of constructing 'constructivist' and 'interpretivist' theory from a Grounded Theory perspective. This chapter was used as a guide. She writes: "Constructivist grounded theory is part of the interpretivist tradition and objectivist theory derives from positivism...A constructivist approach places emphasis on the and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants."

Each interview was written into the form of a detailed case study complete with significant quotes so as to give the reader as much context as possible where quotes were pulled from the interviews to support claims made in this Dissertation. There is value in taking a holistic approach to this study as it is not simply the ordering of social life but the coordinating of it that is being examined. It allows us to analyze not just what women chose to do with their lives during their twenties but *how* they went about 'maturing' and 'becoming' themselves across and within the domains of one personal life. This is something that often escapes macro-level statistical data. One of the interesting aspects that shines through their stories is really that their personal lives are not just ordered but coordinated across the various aspects of their personal life so we need the story-line to understand that growing up was a co-ordinated process not just a series of markers that were met. Really, to answer this question properly, an analysis at all levels of the social are required. Statistical trends that were presented on the Statistics Canada website

regarding changes in women's fertility and the timing of the birth of their first child, were analyzed and taken into consideration.

The participants' responses were analyzed using techniques from both interpretive and constructive frameworks. During the analytic phases and theory building phase of this research I plan to highlight and discuss continuities and discontinuities presented in the 'data.' It is at this point that I will remove the ontological and epistemological brackets donned in the collection and organizational phase of this project. Analytically, I will *draw on experience*. To *draw on experience* means to allow knowledge built from experience and research to inform each other in tandem. It means to draw from and on experience, to continually palimpsest one's knowledge.

Consider my use of Grounded Theory as a residual modern anchor that grounds the data, at least temporarily. In line with my current understanding that I am researching within a society in a state of heightened modernity, several analytic techniques will be borrowed from post-structural paradigms. Trends were established from writing field notes, transcribing the interviews and turning them into case studies and making a detailed table of responses given by each participant for each question. This allowed the 'categories of analysis' to emerge from the participants words. Other categories surfaced from secondary research, or artifacts such as self-help books and newspaper articles.

Theory as 'Data'

After having lived through my twenties, completing the readings and conducting the interviews, I began to engage in the 'stage' vs. 'process' debate. It was at that time that I thought it was necessary to turn the analytic lens back on itself and retrace my steps through social theory. I looked at the psychological theories of psychosocial development as well as developmental models of the family. I think the re-examining of developmental models is

necessary both for analysis of families and the development of social maturity. The relevance for the developmental models to be discussed throughout this study is that most of the women came from working class families where their fathers were the primary breadwinners (factory workers, mill workers, manual labourers) and their mothers were more typically stay at home mothers or they worked once their children were a bit older. These families would have followed a normative pre-script that fit with the accepted developmental models of family life at the time. When they described their childhood and their parent's relationships a lot of the women described a normative 1950s family lifestyle (although this may not have existed for others elsewhere, it did seem to exist for these women at least on the surface, to their knowledge, and by what they described). This, however, was not exactly what they described for themselves. They had present a myriad of life courses ranging from: Having children as adolescents, giving their children up for adoption, having their children apprehended by CAS, having children during their early twenties, marrying after having their children, divorcing, not having children, considering adoption, marrying late and then having children, marrying not being able to conceive, living in a series of monogamous relationships, returning to live with their parents, having their parent sometimes live with them. This is the common thread: the disruption of the timing and order of their social lives in comparison to their parents' lives. The common thread is individualization of their personal lives and new meanings that are ascribed to old markers such as marriage. I didn't at first set out to interrogate developmental models which is why it is not originally in my introductory chapter that was largely based on my proposal but it seems to me imperative to question a model that was really not represented in my data (the transcribed interviews) yet still very much taken for granted. Further, I think that model and the practical everyday application of it is what fuels negative feelings about 'not being on track' or not

emerging as a married adult, with a job, a car, a house and children by the age of 30 without also having been divorced or separated. I saw this model challenged in newsprint, self help and popular literature and my interviews.

It is difficult to talk about emerging adulthood without also talking about developmental models of psychosocial development. Further, it is difficult to talk about individual life course without also talking about family life course. With noted increases in divorce and serial monogamy and increases in the numbers of couples who don't have children, wait to have children or only have one child, a discussion of the model is in order.

Working inductively and re-adjusting to the trends that I was recognizing in the life histories of the women that I interviewed, I engaged in a retracing of the models and envisioning future directions that would accommodate and explain the lives they actually lived. In fact, I would say it is my way of addressing my initial question which was: What do women do when the roles they were occupied to fill/play do not exist for them fill/play at the time they expected to. My 'questioning and redefining' 'my own trouble with normal,' was done in this way. Those expectations and the anticipatory socialization the women (and I) received would have existed in tandem with the developmental models. I think the varied order of their lives, as they have described them, works to question the continued and widespread acceptance and use of the developmental models in practice. When they discuss their feelings towards the order and timing of their social lives, I hear evidence that many of the participants at one time thought or even continue to think that the way family life *should* unfold is according to notions that are very similar to the developmental model. However, they recognized that 'things have changed and that's okay.' (example: Mireille). Thus, the next chapter retraces a genealogy of these theories.

Chapter 5 Retracing Theories of Families and Psychosocial Development

Emerging Adulthood, Changing Canadian Families and Developmental Models of Family Life Cycles⁷

Introduction:

In this chapter, we will begin by reviewing sociological developmental models of life course for the purpose of discussing them in relation to Erik Erikson's stages of psychological development and Arnett's (2004) concept of 'emerging adulthood.' Erikson's work is chosen as a starting point here as it expands on Freud's work and more fully explains these transitions. It is used rather than Piaget's work because it focuses on the psychosocial rather than cognitive development and it coincides neatly with Duvall and Miller's (1985) Family Life Cycle Model. Although Duvall and Miller's work may be established as an outdated model at this time (Laszloffy: 2002), it illustrates the once normalized notions of family life that many were socialized with whether they lived within a nuclear family or not. We will outline Erik Erikson's stages of development and discuss the tasks associated with each. After listing the current trends of emerging adults, we will discuss the ways in which we might use Arnett's Emerging Adulthood concept as a backdrop upon which to apply Carter and McGoldrick's and Erikson's model to help us further explain individual psychological transitions and family life cycle transitions. Finally, we will come back to the 'stage vs. process' debate to discuss how systems theory may be used to explain emerging adults within a familial context. Ultimately, I advance the argument that a thorough discussion of adolescence and adulthood includes addressing the multigenerational processes that

⁷ Material from this chapter was presented to the Canadian Population Society's conference at the 2014 Congress at Brock University

occur through the life course stages for both individuals and their families. Thus, I will draw from both stage and process models when discussing emerging adulthood between the 1990's to present. I think it may be most useful to utilize both developmental models Duvall and Miller, (1985); Carter and McGoldrick's (1988, 1999, 2005) expanded life-cycle model and systems framework and a pathways approach as does Aldous (1996, as cited in Ward 2006) in order to discuss the variations we see across life course stages and multi-generational experiences of these while still recognizing that there are some typical stage-like patterns associated with given pathways. That is to say, I think there are negotiated processes that are more typically associated with specific stages and I think we continue to need to remember that many still hold 'The Nuclear Family' and versions close to Duvall and Miller's model or Carter and McGoldrick's models within their minds as a point of reference for the evaluation of their own familial life. Later in this chapter, we will discuss these theories in light of some statistical trends relating to households, marriage and fertility. We will engage in the stage vs. process debate set forth by Arnett et al. (2011).

The Questions:

If we recognize emerging adulthood and the longer transition between adolescence and adulthood described by Arnett (2004), how then must we re-adjust our individual and family theories to accommodate for and explain everyday life? How do changes in psychological models of individual human development impact on sociological developmental models of the family? In what ways do developmental models of the family remain useful? Following the lead set forth by Arnett et al. (2011), Tanner and Arnett, (2011), Hendry and Kloep (2011), and Kloep and Hendry (2011), I engage below in the stage vs. process debate regarding explanations of emerging adulthood as it relates to family life.

Developmental Models: Introduction to the Theoretical Models Being Examined

Let us begin by discussing the relationship between individual psychological models of human development and sociological theoretical models of family life course. As suggested by Margaret Ward (2006: 19), theories such as Duvall and Miller's family life stages and Erik Erikson's developmental model correspond well together. Initially, models like Duvall and Miller's were quite useful in explaining both individual psychological development and progression within an ideal version of the nuclear family. However, the model was soon critiqued as all too linear and not flexible enough to make sense of real families over time. Interestingly, it is suggested that when early developmental models were written based on families during the forties that did not necessarily follow the pattern of the nuclear family (Aldous 1996, as cited by Ward 2006: 18).

Then with social changes to families, came adaptations to family life cycle theories. Carter and McGoldrick (1988) adapted the model to include some variation with the recognition of a single period. Peck and Manócheirian (1988) adapted the model to account for divorce and remarriage. The family life cycle theories have been adjusted to make sense of developments within immigrant and migrating families, Corneil and Brotherington, (1993). Slater and Mencher (1991) and Slater (1995) address the implications of life course theories for gay, lesbian and bisexual partners. Goldberg (2003) discusses certain legal steps such as now possible legal marriages and adoptions for composition and processes for families headed by gay and lesbian parents. The family life cycle has been re-examined to account for variations when people have disabilities (Markshaw et. al. 1999) Over time, however, these theories will require some further reflection in order to accommodate for Arnett's (2004) recently-presented life stage: "Emerging Adulthood."

For a current and elaborate review of family life course theories and family systems theories, please refer to Laszloffy (2002). For an in-depth examination of identity formation in emerging adulthood drawing on Eriksonian psychosocial developmental theories, please refer to Schwartz et al. (2013). The current chapter will draw heavily from these two articles. Notice below a list of the various stages associated with Duvall and Miller's 8 stage life course theory, Carter and McGoldrick Six Stage Life Course Theory, and Erik Erikson's 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development:

Figure 1 Examples of Developmental Theories

Duvall and Miller's Eight-Stage Family Life Cycle	Carter and McGoldrick's Six-Stage Family Life Cycle	Erikson's Psycho-social Stages of Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Married couple without children •Childbearing families (oldest child birth to 30 months) •Families with preschool children (oldest child 2.5-6 years) •Families with school children (6-13 years) •Families with adolescents (oldest child 13-20 years old) •Families launching young adults(first child gone to last child leaving the home) •Middle age parents (empty nest to retirement) •Aging family members (retirement to death of both spouses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Leaving Home Single Young Adults •The Joining of families through marriage: The new couple •Families with young children •Families with adolescents •Launching children and moving on •Families in later life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Trust vs. Mistrust (0 to 1 yrs) •Autonomy vs. Shame (1-3 yrs) •Initiative vs. Guilt (3-5 yrs) •Industry vs. Inferiority (6-11yrs) •Identity vs. Role Confusion (12-18 yrs) •Intimacy vs. Isolation (18-35) •Generativity vs. self-absorption (35-55) •Integrity vs. Despair (maturity and old age)

I will now provide a description of each of these models. From a developmental perspective of family life, each stage occurring through the family life course is associated with specific developmental tasks for the family to work through together. It is important to

understand that from this developmental perspective the stage of the family is decided by the age and stage of their eldest child. I have described these below based on the works of Duvall and Miller (1985), Ward (2006:16-18), Arnold and Boggs, (2011:252).

In the beginning, *the married couple without children (Stage 1)* is working to create a marriage that will fulfill the needs of both partners. Each partner must then re-establish their new role within the extended kinship. They may plan for parenthood and experience pregnancy for their first child. With Stage 2 *Childbearing families (oldest child birth to 30 months)* the couple becomes accustomed to their new role as parents. They will need to be focused on fostering a family environment conducive to infant and child development. They need to work to find balancing the needs of their infant and their own needs as a couple. The development of young children remains a focus. Throughout Stage 3 *Families with pre-school children ages 2.5 to 6 years)* need to be highly engaged in the everyday demands of childrearing. When children are young, the parents will be required to focus their energy on helping their children through tasks such as toilet training, language development and entry into school. They must cope with two factors: 1) the energy demands of parenting children and 2) a decrease in privacy and private life within the family household. Stage 4 *Families with school children (6-13 years)* represents a very social time for the family. As children form friendships the parents must help foster social ties in the community of families within their community through extra-curricular activities. Parents need to help motivate and support their children's educational successes at school. During, Stage 5 - *Families with adolescents (oldest child 13-20 years old)*, teenagers will need their parents to help them become more autonomous but at the same time encourage them to take on more responsibilities. Parents may begin to focus on their careers or return their focus to personal interests beyond parenting. Stage 6 is marked by an important life change as the first

child leaves home. We call this stage: *Families launching young adults (first child gone to last child leaving the home)*. As their children become young adults, they are launched out into the world of post-secondary education, work, relationships, marriage and perhaps become parents themselves. Parents will have the task of continuing to provide emotional support and sometimes financial assistance as adult children establish their own place in the world. Still, parents may keep a sort of 'home base' that continues to provide a sense of security to adult children. Once children are launched, the couple enters *Stage 7 Middle age parents (empty nest to retirement)*. At this time, the couple has more time to devote to their couple relationship and they can re-work their marriage returning to each other as the focus, given the additional time and privacy they have. They continue to serve as a bridge between generations at this stage and bear the task of maintaining kinship ties. During the last stage, *Stage 8 The aging family members (retirement to death of both spouses)*, the couple may enjoy retirement. They may need to move homes because they no longer require the same space as they once did with young children. They may need to make adaptations to their home so they can continue to live within it (for example: ramps). They may need to cope with illness in themselves or their spouse. They may face death or living alone.

Carter and McGoldrick Six Stages of the Family Life Cycle

The following description of Carter and McGoldrick's Six Stages of the Family life Cycle is based on Carter and McGoldrick's (1988) model and Randy Gerson's (1995) description and analysis of this model.

1. *The unattached adult:* At this stage the adulthood has the task of pursuing and creating financial independence for themselves. Sometimes, this expectation has varied by gender.

During this stage the young adult should develop a strong sense of self and differentiate themselves from their family of origin. "Failure to grow up." is listed as potential crisis (Gerson, 1995:96)

2. *Family Formation Through Coupling:* At this stage the couple may be getting married and they are trying to establish themselves financially. The couple is working to create strong bonds and to negotiate their roles within the couple. They teeter between ties and alliances between their couple relationship and their family of origin. To not find a partner may cause crisis.

3. *Families with Young Children:* During this stage there is an increase in financial obligations for the parents as new children are welcomed into the family. Also the family must adjust to each new child who enters the family. During this stage extra effort needs to be made to maintain stronger marital bonds because marital satisfaction is typically lower because of time and energy constraints. Crises associated with this face include divorce for parents and also behavioural problems of children in schools.

4. *Families with Adolescents:* Life during this stage is not predictable and parents and adolescents schedules vary. One task that is necessary is the negotiation of boundaries for adolescents and coping with elderly grandparents' 'frailties.' An example of crisis during this stage might be adolescent rebellion.

5. *Launching children and moving on :* The major task at hand: accepting several entries and exists from the family of origin. Children returning home can create a financial strain and cause stress. The couple relationship is refocused upon as children leave. The empty nest can leave a void that was once filled.

6. *Family in later life.* A major developmental task at this stage is that everyone in the families has to work through shifts in generational roles. There exists potential for 'crisis' for families in

later life. They may have to deal with illness, decline in support systems and death of spouse and/or extended family members. There may also be a decline in financial resources and changes in housing and household composition.

Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Development:

Erik Erikson (1968) developed a series of 8 stages of psychosocial development. It is important to understand that these stages are thought to occur in order and that a problem at the level of one stage will create difficulties as a person attempts to engage in future crises. I have described each stage below drawing on Kendal et al. (2000:113-115).

1. *Trust vs. mistrust (birth to age 1)* Infants will need to have their basic needs met. They will need to feel secure emotionally and will need predictable comforting parenting in order to develop a sense of trust towards others. When infants do not receive loving attention and care from their parents, they may become anxious in a more immediate sense, and this may persist as they learn to distrust others.

2. *Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (ages 1 to 3)* As toddlers, children start to develop certain competencies such as language, toilet training, dressing themselves and eating on their own. Children who are encouraged to explore their potential they begin to gain the confidence to become autonomous. Children who are discouraged from exploration sometimes become more doubtful and unsure of their abilities.

3. *Initiative vs. guilt (age 3 to 5)* Once children gain some competencies and sense of autonomy they may be more likely to take initiative. If these attempts at initiative are supported, the child will further develop their sense of initiative. If not, and the parent discourages their attempts perhaps because of lack of time, or because of potential failures, then the child could develop a sense of guilt.

4. *Industry vs. inferiority (ages 6 to 11)* This is a very 'hands-on' stage of learning. Children enjoy helping, practicing roles, learning how the world works. When children's efforts are encouraged during this stage, they respond with feelings of industry. When their efforts to help, learn, and create are not fostered or if they are discouraged the child may develop a sense of inferiority instead.

5. *Identity vs. role confusion (ages 12 to 18)* Adolescence during this stage may 'try on' several different personalities as they develop a more clear sense of themselves and their identity. As they take on new roles, they must mesh together different aspects of their identity. Without developing an identity consistent with appropriate roles, role confusion may occur.

6. *Intimacy vs. Isolation (18 to 35)* At this stage, the young adult takes part in courtships and forms intimate relationship that are close and meaningful. As young adults form close bonds with another they create reciprocal intimacy for each other. In instances where very close interpersonal bonds do not occur, they may find themselves isolated from the social sphere and family life in particular.

7. *Generativity vs. self-absorption (ages 35-55)* To become generative, means that your contribution extends beyond yourself and your time, historically speaking. Generativity may be in the form of work, or creative projects or childrearing but it is generally thought to be a contribution that is not self-centered. Concern for oneself to a state of stagnation rather than a contribution and a sense of generativity. Self-absorption is mal-adaptive as it leads to a breakdown in interpersonal relationships.

8. *Integrity vs. despair (maturity and old age):* A sense of integrity is established when a person reflects on their life and is satisfied with their contribution and feels a sense of consistency across their life course. For this comfortable sense of integrity to occur the person

must have worked through the previous seven psychosocial crises; otherwise, they may feel a sense of despair. They will feel the discomfort of un-resolved troubles of the past.

Duvall and Miller's Family Life Cycle Model as it Relates To Erikson's 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development

For the moment, however, I would like to go back in time to discuss Duvall's initial work and move forward from the version of the Family Life Cycle presented in the late 1950s. The reason being that even amidst all the variations in families, the trend remains that Canadians form and reform versions of the nuclear family as suggested by Edmonston and Fong (2011:237):

The nuclear family form remains the predominant family structure within Canada though Table 12.2 (in the original text) indicates a decline of married-couple families over the past two decades. In 1981 married couples accounted for 94 percent of all couple families, whereas common law couples accounted for the other 6 percent. By 2001 - married couples' share had declined to 84 percent, while common law couples' share increased to 16 percent. The number of lone parent families also grew during this period, increasing from 11 percent of all family households to 16 percent in 2001. As Table 12.2 suggests, the proportion of male-headed single-parent households increased somewhat during this period, and the proportion of female-headed single-parent households decreased. However, the proportion of male-parent single-parent households remain comparatively small, as lone mothers have accounted for more than 80 percent of single-parent households since 1981.

Table 2

Census Family Structure: Canada, 1981-2001

Source: Edmonston and Fong (2011:238) from original source Canadian Census 1981-2001

Table #1 Census Family Structure: Canada, 1981-2001					
Family Type	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Total Couple Families	88.7%	87.3%	87.0%	85.5%	84.3%
Married Couples	93.7%	91.8%	88.8%	86.3%	83.6%
Common-law couples	6.3%	8.2%	11.2%	13.7%	16.4%
Total lone-parent families	11.3%	12.7%	13.0%	14.5%	15.7%

Female parent	82.6%	82.2%	82.7%	83.1%	81.3%
Male parent	17.4%	17.8%	17.3%	16.9%	18.7%

Source: Edmonston and Fong (2011:238) from original source Canadian Census 1981-2001

As reported by Edmonston and Fong (2011:237) and according to the 2001 Census, couple households with children represent 30.5% and couple households without children represent 28.0% of family household types measured in the Census data. As elaborated in the table below, beyond continuing to see the overall coupling of Canadian adults in marriage or in common law couples, we also see a continued trend in two-parent families. Of course, we must note delays and declines in establishing couple families and two parent families with children. These family forms seem to remain and be common. Still, it would seem based on the figures presented in the following table that most children tend to start out life within two-parent families despite a decline in the numbers. We should also take note that Census data regarding two-parent families remains limited in terms of measuring the number of remarried or blended families are comprised within these figures.

Table 3
Living arrangements of children (0-14) and youth (15-24) by Family Type, Canada (1981-2001)

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
	<i>Children 0-14</i>				
With two parents	87.1	85.7	84.0	81.5	81.4
Husband-wife			77.0	71.3	68.6
Common-law			7.0	10.2	12.8
With a lone parent	10.7	12.3	13.6	16.5	17.8
With neither parent	14.6	14.4	14.7	13.2	12.4

	<i>Youth 15-24</i>				
With two parents	53.6	56.1	57.5	59.7	59.8
Husband-wife			55.2	56.5	55.6
Common Law			2.3	3.2	4.2
With a lone parent	10.3	12.0	12.3	13.9	15.4
With neither parents	36.0	31.9	30.2	26.3	24.8

Note: Husband-wife and common law could not be distinguished in 1981 and 1986 censuses.
Source: Reproduced from Edmonston and Fong (2011:259) Based on Census Canada, 1981-2001, Public Use Micro data file.

One of the reasons that I think it remains important to consider developmental models of the family life cycle is because many single people in Canada continue to form couple families together (whether through marriage or common law) within households and then embark on the pathway of parenting together. There is no denying that sometimes the baby comes before the marriage or before the couples lives within the same household or that the couple may separate and one or each parent may or may not form a new couple. For this reason, the adaptations to the life cycle model as set forth by theorists such as the theorists outlined above, are of course important in order to make sense of the alternative pathways and variations to these that do occur within the family life cycle of real families. For the purpose of a reference point, and because it would seem that based on Census data discussed above, people do still tend to follow a version of the family life course model while they live out family life, I want to take an epistemological look back at the progression of family-life cycle models starting with Duvall and Miller's model even though it has been classified by some as outdated.

Duvall and Miller's and Erikson's models can actually be neatly lined up next to one another as shown in the following table to show how they coincide well with one another.

Duvall and Miller's Eight Stage Family Life Cycle as it may have originally corresponded to Erik Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development. Notice how it is possible, at least theoretically, that the stages that the couple and family progress through temporally and sequentially correspond to the psychosocial stages that their child pass through.

Duval and Miller's family life cycle stages are as follows:

Figure 2 Duvall and Miller's and Erikson's Developmental Theories

Duvall and Miller's 8 Stages of the Family Life Cycle

Erikson's 8 Stages of Development

For example, as one reaches the stage of intimacy vs. isolation, marries and becomes a couple their development can be tracked and explained along both the individual level and the familial level using these two models. It is at this stage, that we can see the two theories do coincide with one another. In theory, we could repeat this pattern with these ordered models of the individual and family developments across generations by lining up the individual and family models at the stages of *The Couple Without Children* and *Intimacy vs. Isolation* as shown in appendix A. In practice, with applications to real life families, this becomes more complex and again even more complex as move through the decades after these models were written.

The difficulty arises with reality of widespread diversity within and across individuals and their families. The point that neither families nor individuals progress in necessarily linear ways as presented in nuclear families, is once again highlighted with the rise of a newly defined stage, 'emerging adulthood' as proposed by Jeffrey Arnett. With emerging adulthood, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is described as winding or zigzagging by Arnett (2004). It is also a much longer transition continuing from adolescence to approximately the age of 30. Even before Arnett's assertion that something has changed with the transition between adolescence and adulthood, Carter and McGoldrick (1989) adapt Duvall's model to include stages with the first being, *Between Families: The Unattached Adult*. This adaptation acknowledges the shifts in individual life course and the impact these shifts have upon family life.

Carter and McGoldrick's Developmental Model of the Family

By attempting to realign Carter and McGoldrick's work and Erikson's models in the way we first did with Duvall and Erikson's models we can readily see that a shift takes place between family and the unattached adult child. The adult child is no longer necessarily assumed to

transition directly from one family to a newly-wed couple formation. As the category states, they are between families. When we apply Arnett's concept of Emerging Adulthood to further inform our thoughts on the unattached adult we can quickly imagine many pathways for his or her life. A disjuncture then can occur between the family life cycle and individual psychological stage progressions as depicted in Appendix C. Notice the progression in thinking about the transition that occurs for both the individual and the family level between the works of Duvall, Duvall and Miller, Carter and McGoldrick, and Arnett. First, during the late 50's Duvall does not include a 'singles' option in her model. Next, during the late 1980's Carter and McGoldrick note that there is a time period where young adults are likely to live as single people and adapted the model to include this time. Now, Arnett is claiming that this individualized time period can be quite lengthy, up until the age of about 30. Arnett has not set his emerging adulthood within a family life cycle model. I would suggest not reading this to mean that emerging adults are without families. Rather, I would suggest that we need to look again at the issue from a systems stand point to see how they do relate to members of their families while they are in this "between families" stages. We will come back to the various versions for family life for emerging adults. Let us now question and outline more fully the theoretical models.

Figure 3 McGoldrick's and Erikson's Developmental Theories

Jeffery Arnett's Emerging Adulthood and Stage Theories

- (1) What do the family and fertility demographic trends mean in terms of generations and family life cycles and how are they related to 'emerging adulthood?'

I think it is important to understand that as we lengthen the time between the legal age of majority and the 'traditional' markers for adulthood in Canada and the United States, delaying launching and leaving a large time gap between launching and coupling, or forgoing coupling altogether, we see shifts across the family lifecycle pattern. In addition to these shifts, we also see changes in the processes that take place within the stages and interactions between members who are simultaneously living within different life course stages. There can be several social factors at play with regard to the lengthening of time between leaving one's family of origin and starting a family of one's own. I suppose we could try to trace the origins of these changes but the more important point is that the changing demographic trends we note within family, education and work are shifting reflexively with respect to 'personal life.' That is to say that de-institutionalization of family life is occurring reflexively with the 'institutionalization' of personal life. The question then becomes: How are postmodern projects of the self negotiated *vis-a-vis* family life cycle models? Below, I have sketched some ways that the family life cycle model may be impacted by emerging adulthood and the generation gaps that exists between boomers, generation X and Y and their children. I will then discuss how the stages of Erikson's development could also be experienced differently. Notice in Figure 4 below how emerging adulthood impacts the once easy relationship between a developmental family life-cycle model

and a Erikson's psychosocial model of personality development.

Figure 4

Canadian Demographics, Family Life Cycles, and Life Courses

Some 'milestones' are considered important for the transition to adulthood. In this thesis, we are examining couple formation and the age at which one becomes a parent. Note, however, that there are other markers also typically drawn upon to determine 'adult' status by sociologists such as school completion, entry into first job, home-leaving, first cohabitation, marriage, and first birth (Ravenaro et. al. 2002:297). Also, they note that ... 'Given that transition to adulthood involves a number of events, it is to be expected that there are myriad pathways towards adulthood (297).'

I was having a discussion with my mother and a family friend about families, family planning and the timing of starting a family today. Our friend suggested that it seemed to her that people are having their children either very early or very late but not during their twenties as was typical for women of her generation. I thought this was a very interesting point. We tend to use the mean age of mothers at the birth of their first child to discuss the increase in age of new mothers. Being an average of ages, this figure tells us little about the age distribution for women at the time of the birth of their first child. I think this distribution is critical to the discussion of theories of life course and family life cycles theories.

Imagine for a moment the social service implications for assisting families if the majority of children were being born to young parents (adolescents and early twenties) and older parents (over 35 or 40 years of age) given that we are typically working with the mean age of 29 as a reference starting point for theories, policies and social programming. The average age at the time of the birth of a mother's first child is on the rise in Canada. Barbara Mitchell (2006:162) discusses this point drawing on Census data: "With respect to parenthood, first-time mothers were on average, 29.5 years in 2001, up almost five years from 1970." This incline is clearly depicted in the following chart (see appendix for the CANSIM table figures:

Graph 1 Mean Age of Mother At Time of Delivery
Mean Age of mother at time of delivery (live births) in Canada from 1991-2011

Source:
Statistics Canada. Table 102-4504 - Mean age of mother at time of delivery (live births), Canada, provinces and territories, annual (years)
(accessed: March 18, 2014)

My current question is: what is the age *distribution* for live births to women according to the parity of the mother, particularly for the first born child. How has this fluctuated from the beginning of the baby-boom to present times. In searching data from the Vital Statics - Birth Database via CANSIM table 102-4508 Live births, by age and parity of mother, Canada, I was able to retrieve data between 1991 and 2011. While we do not see the inverted bell curve with higher figures for younger and older mothers than mothers in their mid to late 20s as my friend had suggested, we do see some interesting and relevant changes taking place during this twenty year span. Before discussing these Canadian trends, it should be noted that these figures would

not exclude the possibility of localized, regional differences. Such comparisons would be interesting. However, I do not currently have this data to work with.

Graph 2

Number of Live Births in Canada by Age and Parity of Mothers (for mother's first live birth) occurring between 1991-2011
 Number of Live Births In Canada
 Age Categories by Parity of Mother (First Live Birth)

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics, Birth Database

1. Live Birth is the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy, which, after such separation, breathes or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of

the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or placenta is attached.

2. Source: Statistics Canada. Table 102-4508 - Live births, by age and parity of mother, Canada annual (Accessed March 18, 2014)

At first glance we see the bulk of women have their first child during the 25-29 age category. What I find particularly interesting and important is what happens to the categories that flank either side. Notice how in 1991 the second highest age category is for women between the ages of 20-24 and the third highest category is for women between the ages of 30-34 years old. Now notice that between 2000 and 2001 these categories level off and then trade places by the year 2011 with the 30-34 year-old age category trading places of the 20-24 year old category.

This particular phenomenon is also discussed from a medical and biological standpoint by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada.

Currently, the average age of a woman giving birth in Canada is 29 years, which represents a significant increase from previous decades. The proportion of first births occurring among women ≥ 35 has also increased from 4% in 1987 to 11% in 2005. At the same time, the proportion of first births occurring among women between 30 and 34 years increased from 18.9% in 1982 to 34.1% in 2006, and for the first time, the fertility rate of 30-to34-year-old women exceeded the rate for women aged 29 years. Over the same period, the proportion of live births to women between the age of 34-39 and 40 to 44 years also increased from 4.7% to 14.8% and from 0.6% to 2.8% respectively.

In my view this is incredibly significant. First, it is significant because people who were in their adolescence during the early 1990's were socialized within a social context where it is much more likely to have children during one's twenties followed by a very rapid shift where it becomes much more likely to have one's children in their early 30's, especially if they have pursued an education. In terms of the way women might relate to these rapid change, I see the shift as potentially creating a reaction. While some may have welcomed the delay of parenthood, others, especially those who may have expected and wanted to have their children in their twenties may have felt disappointed or even anxious regarding the timing of their fertility. The point is that historically the

marker of bearing one's first child as a sign of adulthood was typically met much earlier in a woman's life span and the corresponding age for this marker has shifted significantly in a short period of time and perhaps not exactly in the way we commonly speak of this shift when we utilize averages rather than categorical age distributions. It would be one thing to say that women's parity has little or nothing to do with adulthood but I think this changed so quickly it was unclear what would have replaced it as a marker. Further, I am not convinced that women's attitudes towards adulthood and parity have completely shifted and adjusted in sync with the changes in demography as it relates to fertility for women. Thus, being 'on track,' like they are meeting traditional milestones and markers for adulthood. By looking solely at the mean age, we can say that most people have their first child by the time they are thirty without recognizing how many women are actually waiting much longer than this to have their children.

Important changes have occurred within the other age categories as well. Take note, as others have (Johnson and Tough 2012), the rate of first births that occur to mothers within their adolescent years. We see a significant decline in this category. Whereas, we see a sharp increase in the number of mothers who are first time mothers after the age forty-five. These are important in terms of the types of social services offered to new mothers who span the spectrum of women's fertile years. Family planning and information services would need to be tailored differently to women who become mothers during early adolescence and women who become mothers for the first time during their 40's.

With respect to our theories regarding families, let us think of the impact of women becoming first time mothers at the age of 40. Imagine how the role of the

grandparent would be different with a family where a woman becomes a mother for the first time at the age of 23 versus a woman who becomes a mother at the age of 43. A wider time span between generations may impact the type of supports that a grandparent might provide to their child and grandchild because they may not be as able to do certain tasks such as providing childcare for a toddler for example. Whereas a shorter time span may create a financial strain because the younger parent may not yet be as financially stable to support a child particularly if they have to also finish school and work.

Graph 3

Number of first time live births for women in the age categories of under 15 years & 45-49 years:

Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics, Birth Database

Notes:

1. Live Birth is the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother a product of conception, irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy, which, after such separation, breathes or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or placenta is attached.

2. Source: Statistics Canada. Table 102-4508 - Live births, by age and parity of mother, Canada annual (Accessed March 18, 2014)

Chapter 6 Re-Thinking Developmental Models of Family and Psychosocial Development

How Might Emerging Adulthood Impact Duvall and Miller's Model of Family Life Course?

Delays in Launching and Boomerang Children

Delays in launching have impacts for both generations living within the same households but also this trend can have impact on housing markets and housing markets can impact launching. Barbara Mitchell (2006:158) points out that: "Life course events, such as homeleaving and marriage are also subject to reversibility, such as in the case of returning home as a 'boomerang kid' or in divorce." Discussing changes in the transitions of young men Ravenara (2006) describe the following changes and it would remain interesting to complete the same analysis for women:

Leaving the parental home seems to have undergone the least change. The age at home-leaving hovered around 21 to 22 years with the more recent cohorts leaving home just about a year later. But there are indications that the dependency relationship between parents and children has undergone changes as well. Prolonged schooling and later work start point to children's longer dependence on parents. And, the duration between starting work and leaving home was longer among the earlier cohorts indicating that they might have extended more help to their family of origin prior to starting their own family. The longer dependency among later cohorts is probably dictated by necessity engendered by changed economic structures but facilitated by parents' relative affluence and fewer children (307).

Sometimes this longer dependency can create a strain on the parent-child relationship.

Arnett (2013) has written a new book called *When Will My Grown-Up Kid Grow-Up* and as the title suggests some parents may have expected that their children would become gainfully employed and leave them with an empty nest as their child entered his or her early twenties. When launching does not happen in an adult child's early twenties, the dynamic between the parent and their adult child is impacted and sometimes strained.

Delays and Changes in Coupling Patterns:

Going back to how Ward (2006) suggested that Duvall and Miller's work and Erikson's model fit well together, we can imagine how in 'ideal' theoretical terms as parents are assisting and launching adult children into intimate and meaningful personal relationships and into the generativity of parenthood and work-life, they themselves can reflect positively on their parenting contribution and efforts to sustain their child until they have matured and are able to become self-sufficient and even provide for their own family.

Mitchell (2006:164) notes that:

...delays in youth transitions also delay parental counter-transitions, such as when they experience the empty nest, their children's marriage, and grandparenthood. Transition reversals (i.e. returning home and divorce) are also found to affect intergenerational relations and they have the potential to create complexity or confusion, particularly when these behaviours are "institutionally incomplete"

When emerging adulthood delays launching or means that a child 'boomerangs' home, this in theory could create a delay in both the emerging adult moving towards generativity but also delays for their parents a move into a stage where they begin to reflect on the integrity of their life's work. In other words, stagnation for emerging adults might mean 'despair' for their parents, and I would suggest that further investigation using a multi-generational systems approach to question whether or not this has been the case for families who have been impacted by emerging adulthood.

Also, important here are housing trends. We may find that young couples are unable to move out of their parent's homes because they are unable to afford adequate housing on their own depending on their state of employment. This means that emerging adulthood may also be contributing to multi-generational households in some cases. In instances like these multi-generational analyses of family dynamics and adulthood it

would be both interesting and important in documenting and explaining the variable nature of social aspects of Systems Theory provides a strong framework to begin discussing the multi-generational household that is a product of emerging adulthood.

Older Parents and Aging Grandparents and Changes to Informal Family Support Networks:

The widening of the generation gap not only means that we have older parents. It also means that we have an older and smaller informal support networks. For example, it means that families with two working parents or with single working parents, grandparents may be older and unable to take care of a toddler during a sick day. Further, many daycares have policies that ask parents to keep children home for 24 or even 48 hours after they have had a fever. This means that a child who has a fever for two days may be home for four days and not all parents are able to take this much time off work. Further, with families having fewer siblings this may mean that there are fewer aunts and uncles that can assist each other especially if they do not live within the same location. The widening generation gap along with public daycare policies have important implications for parents in the workforce. This matters for both the economies of individual families and the economy at large.

Delays in Retirement loop back to delays in launching...

People are living longer and healthier lives and therefore are continuing to work longer. We have read a great deal about how the baby-boomers continue to occupy the labour force and that those of Generation X had a later start to their career. Again, this relates to the emerging adult's ability to make purchases that are linked to the markers for adulthood in mainstream Canadian and American culture. What does adulthood look

like beyond the commodified markers for it? How do emerging adults attain full citizenship without the financial means to meet certain milestone markers?

Generation Gaps and Future Shock

The length of time between generations and family life cycles is significant and has some impacts on both the micro and macro levels of family life. To begin, the widening of the generation gap in terms of time coupled with rapid social changes in technology have created (as I argue elsewhere) left many of those born in generation X with a world that barely resembles the world in which they were socialized. It is a type of culture shock that is trans-temporal, trans-epistemic, trans-modal. This is somewhat in line with Alvin Toffler's concept of "future shock."

How Emerging Adulthood might impact the experience of Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development:

Identity Status

It has been noted that Erikson had commented on a prolonging of adolescence and identity formation (Arnett, 2013:164). I think that there are a few stages that relate more intensely to the emerging adult: These are: Identity Synthesis vs. Identity Confusion; Intimacy vs. Isolation; and Generativity Vs. Stagnation. One of the stages in Erikson's life span psycho social theory was that of Identity Synthesis vs. Identity Confusion.

Schwartz et. al (2013) define these two concepts as follows:

Identity synthesis represents a coherent and internally consistent sense of self over time and across situations (Dunkel, 2005), whereas identity confusion represents a fragmented or piecemeal sense of self that does not support self-directed decision (Schwartz, 2013: 97).

James Marcia was one of the first to operationalize Erikson's work on identity vs. identity confusion (Schwartz, 2003). Arnett outlines Marcia's Four Identity Statuses as follows:

Figure 5 James Marcia's (1966) Four Identity

James Marcia's (1966) Four Identity Statuses as Defined by Arnett (2013:163)	
Identity Status	Definition
Identity Diffusion	An identity status that combines no exploration with no commitment. No commitments have been made among the available paths of identity formation, and the person is not seriously attempting to sort through potential choices and make enduring commitments
Identity Moratorium	An identity status that involves exploration but no commitment, in which young people are trying out different personal occupational, and ideological possibilities.
Identity Foreclosure	An identity Status in which young people have not experimented with a range of possibilities but have nevertheless committed themselves to certain choices--commitment, but no exploration.
Identity Achievement	The identity status of young people who have made definite personal, occupational, and ideological choices following a period of exploring possible alternatives.

Figure 6 The Four Identity Statuses as summarized by Arnett (2013:163)

		Commitment	
		YES	NO
Exploration	YES	Achievement	Moratorium
	NO	Foreclosure	Diffusion

Schwartz et. al. (2013:99) review the processes of identity formation drawing on Marcia's (1966) identity statuses work. Clearly, affluence within post-industrial society can influence the length of one's identity moratorium and delay identity achievement. What seems interesting to me is the fact that researchers have, in adjusting, expanding and elaborating upon Erikson and Marcia's work added a sort of reflexive flexibility within the final stages of identity status processes. I read this to mean that Marcia's Identity Achievement is contested ground within post-modern analysis of identity development.

...for many adolescents and emerging adults, the identity statuses may represent semi-permanent personality profiles that endure over time, rather than transitional states as originally hypothesized by Marcia (1966)

For example:

Meeus et al. differentiate between classical moratorium--the uncommitted status in which exploration is often associated with symptoms of anxiety, depression, and poor well-being--and searching moratorium, where the person considers new potential identity commitments without discarding her or his present commitments (Schwartz et al. 2013:99)

I think this is an important change in the actual process and in recognition of how people 'build' identity today. In postmodern societies identity can be quite malleable and tied to a continual project of becoming rather than a state of being in a static sense. While moratorium might offer agency, and be ultimately beneficial, it can be a difficult process.

We know, as Schwartz et. al. 2013:103) point out that:

"Although achievement and foreclosure are linked with relatively high levels of well-being, the opposite is true of moratorium and diffusion...
... Schwartz, Klimstra and colleagues (2011, 2012) found that reconsideration serves as a mechanism through which one's sense of self is revised when it is no longer satisfactory. That is, when one re-evaluates one's commitments by exploring them in depth and finds that they are no longer workable in light of one's current goal or life circumstances, one is likely to seek an alternative set of commitments. Because commitments serve to anchor the person in a set of societal roles (e.g. parent, employee, student), relinquishing these commitments is likely to result in deductions in one's level of well-being (Crocetti Klimstra,

Keijsers, Hale Meeus 2009). However, when new commitments are established, one's well-being may improve Schwartz et. al. 2013:103).

Given the length of time it takes to complete education and delayed ages for monogamous coupling or the choice not to form a couple or have children or not, identity formation within a postmodern context can take much longer. However, as noted in the above quotes, it is important to understand that the changes to identity formation go beyond extended moratoriums and delayed identity achievement. The postmodern identity can include a faceted or fractured sense of identity; one that exists in multiplicity (Giddens, 1991). The postmodern identity not only allows but often requires a continual process of becoming and this will have important consequences for the achievement of 'adult' status within the framework of psychosocial development. I think it begs the question: In postmodern society do we ever fully reach identity achievement in a permanent sense. How could we achieve adulthood if identity is fractured or faceted or fluid? By what processes do we achieve and/or maintain the status of 'adult' given a postmodern concept of identity and given that identity synthesis is considered a key feature of adult life. Postmodern identity is one that is continually in flux. This remains an important point with respect to the stage vs. process debate because where identity is of concern, a postmodern stance moves us away from the 'lockstep' notion of identity development to a more fluid process-informed theory of identity.

Further, as we look at a few other 'disruptions' to the ordering of the 'stages' of individual social-psychological development and family development, we should keep in mind Josselson's (1987, 1996) work that suggests that adult women 'weave' back and forth through stages and tie together various aspects of everyday life. Citing Josselson, Slater reports:

Josselson (1987, 1996) says that female development is more of a weaving of strands that recur in a variety of forms rather than a stage-structured progression. However, this 'weaving' could reflect the interrelatedness of all the stages that is so integral to the theory. Each stage is to some extent present before it appears, and the concept of adaptive regression (Bilsker & Marcia, 1991) implies what may appear to be a back and forth 'weaving' of developmental stage issues (Slater, 2003, 59).

Josselson's categories regarding identity exploration and commitment in women are an extension of Marcia's work and are described as follows:

Josselson(1996) rated women as high or low in exploration and commitment in an examination of identity from college age to midlife. She found that women fell into one of four categories: guardians, who made identity commitments without a sense of choice; pathmakers, who explored or went through a crisis to make identity commitments on their own terms; searchers, who were still in an active period of searching; and drifters who were without commitments and did not appear to be actively searching (Slater 2003, 61).

What is important to understand here is that there are variations in order and duration of identity statuses. Further, as Josselson notes, these are not only ordered differently but processed differently in that developmental stage issues are 'weaved' for women. Again, we see that there may be 'stages' but that these are not universal and what occurs within and between the stages suggests that differing processes are at work depending on characteristics such as class and gender.

Changes to Intimacy vs. Isolation Stage

Because emerging adults may not be married or may have little contact with their families, friendships become very important in terms of intimacy (Arnett 2011:222). The emerging adult may be single and 'between families' but this does not necessarily mean that they are isolated or without significant relationships. Other-sex friendships also become common and significant. Sometimes, these friendships include sexual intimacy. "A study of American college students found that half reported having sexual relations

with an 'other-sex' friend," (Afifi & Falkner 2000). In most cases, both friends were single when the sexual contact occurred, but in one-third of the cases one or both of the friends was romantically involved with someone else. As they form intimate relationships with a romantic/life partner the amount of time spent with their close friends decreases.

For an extensive discussion of emerging adulthood and sexuality see Lefkowitz and Gillen (2006). They begin by reminding their readers that an important task during emerging adulthood is to build intimate relationships and that these often include sexual intimacy. The processes by which individuals may learn to live intimately with another may have changed significantly because of the time gap that exists between when people have the first sexual experience and the time when they choose to live as a couple (or to remain single). The process changes at the individual psychological level because the family life course stage changed at the familial level.

...one of the major tasks of emerging adulthood is the establishment of intimacy, which often includes sexual intimacy (Erikson, 1950; Sullivan, 1953). The average age at first sexual intercourse is 16 or 17 (Alan Guttmacher Institute [AGI], 1994); the average age at first marriage is almost 27 for males, and 25 for females (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Thus, emerging adulthood corresponds to the years that the majority of individuals are both sexually active and unmarried (Lefkowitz and Gillen, 2006: 235).

There is an important overlap between intimacy and identity where sexuality is of concern. Relating also to the development of sexual intimacy as well as identity as discussed above, Schwartz et al. (2013: 101) refer to the processes of creating a sexual identity as universal, that is to say that the construction of a sexual identity is common to all people regardless of sexual orientation:

According to this emerging perspective, through a variety of sexual experiences, young people from heterosexual as well as sexual-minority backgrounds explore and consider to whom they are attracted, what kinds of sexual behaviours they enjoy, and the ways in which they are most comfortable expressing affection and

love. This type of exploration is independent of sexual orientation, which refers to the gender/genders of people with whom one is most likely to engage in sexual relations (Schwartz et. al., 2003: 101).

Leftkowitz and Gillen (2006:235) also discuss the relationship between identity, intimacy, and sexuality. They point to moving away from home during emerging adulthood as providing both time and space for this type of exploration:

Many of the reasons for becoming sexually active, particularly love and exploration, appear to be similar during adolescence and emerging adulthood. During emerging adulthood, sexuality may be influenced by the various changes that occur in the areas of identity, residence, and relationships (Arnett, 2000). Identity exploration during emerging adulthood may include exploration of sexual orientation, and sexual beliefs regarding abstinence, premarital sex, monogamy, contraception, and sexual behaviors. Moving away from the parents' home may result in increased freedom and, as a consequence, exploration and experimentation with sexual behaviors. Involvement in intimate and romantic relationships may situate sexual behaviors within the context of emotional connections.

With the possibility of fluidity of identity, gender and sexuality, it makes the suggestion that the types of intimacy one might seek may also be changing and fluid within postmodern society. I would suggest that we need more information about what constitutes 'intimacy' and 'isolation' within postmodern society. Certainly with practices such as serial monogamy or sexual friendships, or simply sex with several partners, an opening up of the definition of intimacy will be required if we want to avoid pathologizing the types of 'intimacies' achieved by emerging adults. Again, I would point to varying processes within stages.

Emerging adults are working on intimacy skills, the processes are different because the stage is altered. Emerging adults are typically working on intimacy with friends because they are not in secure marital or co-habitational. I see no reason to consider this a negative consequence, actually, I tend to think building intimate

friendships may be an avenue for honing some aspects of intimacy, communication, and interpersonal skills prior to being in a romantic/life-partnership. The slogan used by Leftkowitz and Gillen (2006) "Sex is just a normal part of life," tells only part of the story because there exists variation to the way that people organize sex rather than it being simply 'normal.' While statistically speaking the point that sex is normal may be the case. Most emerging adults have sex and often have more than one partner (Leftkowitz and Gillen, 2006). However, I think given this information, the more interesting question may be: 'What happens to the link between intimacy, identity and sexuality within the context of the transformation of social maturity?' rather than simply questioning whether or not emerging adults are having sex, how often, and with how many partners. What happens to self-identity when we dislodge intimacy from sex and sexuality? Historically, gay, lesbian and bisexual people have been guided or pressured to dislodge sexuality from self-identity in favour of heterosexuality, the more socially acceptable option and this was described as painful (Adams, 1997). It would be interesting for future studies to examine further the relationship between these three concepts within postmodern society but especially where emerging adulthood is of concern.

Generativity vs. Stagnation

The adult stage of generativity has broad application to family, relationships, work, and society. "Generativity, then is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation...the concept is meant to include...productivity and creativity" (Erikson, 1950, p. 267), (As cited by: Slater, 2003:57).

The pathway that one's life course takes, has an impact on one's experience of generativity. Both work life and parenting choices are central stage for emerging adults. Slater continues stating that:

Everyone faces the crisis of parenthood. Most make a deliberate decision to become parents, but some become parents without conscious decision, others decide not to become parents, and still others want to become parents but cannot. The decision and its outcome provoke a crisis that calls for a re-examination of life roles. The timing of this crisis varies tremendously from early teens to early 40's. Other adult crises of generativity are not universal but can play an important role in one's sense of generativity or stagnation (2003:57).

It seems that the lengthening of the transition and the delayed meeting of 'traditional' markers such as: completion of education, marriage or common-law relationship and/age at first child can impact one's experience of and identification with the beginnings of the stage of 'Generativity vs. Stagnation.' Further, that these markers are met within a cohesive set of institutions means that sometimes they are met 'out-of-order' and out of synchronicity with one another. The point here is not necessarily to re-inscribe mainstream notions of the appropriate 'order' for these markers. However, some of the women I interviewed noted feeling ill-at-ease with either the length of time it took them to complete the milestones or that they felt that their lives were out of sync with their expectations. The point is that the categories of 'generativity' and 'stagnation' can both be felt at the same time. One might feel very productive in one realm of social life and at the same time feel that they are stagnating in another. Many women describe that they had many hard feelings about the out of sync or delayed stages, processes, milestones in their lives when they were in their 20's but then came to see this experience in a different light when reflecting upon it later, in their 30's. Slater (2003) discusses feelings of generativity vs. stagnations in relation to launching:

There is a constant tension between inclusion and exclusion as the child differentiates from the family and eventually leaves to live independently. The departure of the young adult can bring on a crisis for the caregivers when they no longer have someone to care for, and when they see that the child will not live out their projected fantasies. Yet, at the same time, in today's world, the child goes

back and forth between living at home as a child and living independently as an adult (Slater 2003: 59).

I think Slater makes an important point regarding feelings of generativity and stagnation for emerging adults. This one has to do with one's creativity. It might seem obvious or straightforward that one is being creative in the project of building a couple, a family. However, Slater makes the point that when emerging adults efforts to 'parent' in terms of having children and/or in terms of other 'creations' they may feel unsettled and unsure where to direct their creative energies. When I look at the statistics above regarding fertility, I can't help but wonder how women are feeling about these delays. In reading what Slater has to say below, I think it would depend on whether they have chosen with agency not to create, children or projects of their own:

One of the crises that can occur at this stage is when a couple is unable to have children. The urge to procreate is blocked. Or worse, a child may die leaving the parents with no place to invest all the devotion and feeling that they have had. Such a crisis requires all the ego strength from earlier stages to weather the storm and set new goals to create again. Parenting, here, means more than being a biological parent. It means parenting one's creations as well....The adult begins to realize the temporary nature of life and so, may strive for self-transcendence through children and work. Ultimately, one's creations are the only chance to have something succeed oneself in the world. The parent might say, "I see myself in my creations" (Slater, 2003:)

With delays in establishing a full time career and family there may be some negative feelings in terms of Generativity versus Stagnation for both the adult child and the parent of the adult child. Below, Slater comments on parental feelings toward their children's accomplishments and directions in life and explains what might happen when these do not match the expectations that the parent holds for their child. I think that the sentiments may be similar in terms of feelings of pride and embarrassment in terms of

delayed launching, romantic relationships, and parenting particularly if they hold a more traditional 1950's nuclear family mindset.

Parents also worry about what they are going to leave behind. They wonder how their children will turn out and how much they should regulate or control them to get the desired result. Parenting is a constant process of "holding on and letting go."... Most parents want to take pride in their children, but when they choose an endeavor that appears alien to the parent's lifestyle, such as chess instead of football, or cheerleading instead of ballet, a parent can be embarrassed. Later, when adolescents rebel, perhaps choosing to deny the family religion, parents can face a more serious crisis. They ask, "How can we take pride in our children when they have gone against our beliefs? What will the neighbors say? What will the relatives say? How can we go on saying that our religion is important if our children do not follow it?" If they successfully traverse this crisis, parents could ultimately conclude, "My children reflect on me for better or worse, and I am comfortable with what I can control." (Slater 2003:61).

Integrity vs. Despair and Risk Society:

Perhaps the influence of life within risk society has some people visiting the later stage of integrity vs. despair earlier than the original model might suggest. In attempting to cultivate the future, people may try to envision what they want for the future and the many steps they may need to take in order to create the personal life they so desire.

Having children or not can be an important question when making lifestyle choices that will work to shape one's personal life. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2005: 124-125) have advanced a thesis regarding what they term "the question of children" and the realization children are considered an 'existential risk.'

Now women have to learn in a market economy, motherhood limits their chances on the labour market and single mothers in particular are excluded and marginalized (Großmann and Huth, 1995). It is becoming clear that to have children is an occupational, financial and existential risk. The new message communicated to women is that the main priority is to make sure of your own way in life...

The basic thesis may be summarized as follows. The greater people's options and the demand for a bit of 'a life of one's own,' and the greater the attendant risks, uncertainties and demands, the more does children cease to be a natural part of life and become the object of conscious planning and

calculations, hopes and fears, --in short the more it becomes 'the question of children.'

It is the planning and calculating aspects that concern me here. It seems to me that in light of emerging adulthood and particularly the concept of the QLC that people are perhaps visiting the stage of integrity vs. despair long before they are looking back on their lives. In essence, they are counting backwards not necessarily forward from the place they want to be when they are looking back on their lives. In essence, they are attempting to cultivate agency, make the best choices that will grant them 'a life of one's own' children and financial security (if these are the things they want). They are asking themselves, what will the stages of my life course look like in order for me to attain the personal life I desire. If they have trouble envisioning the pathway, already it is plausible that they may begin to feel despair or at least discouraged.

Return to the Stage vs. Process Debate:

Stage or Process for Psychological models:

My sense is that whether or not we can *easily* apply a stage theory or process theory to make sense of pathways to adult life is likely to depend first on whether we are conducting our analysis from a psychological or a sociological perspective. This not to say that we should not utilize stage theories as Hendry and Kloep suggest, it is to say that it will require the kind of 'patch-work' they suggest is necessary. In other words, it may not be easy but I will explain why it may be worthwhile.

I posit that it seems plausible to utilize the new category of emerging adulthood as the backdrop upon which we may overlay and 'fit' certain 'stages' of psychological developmental model without creating too much disruption to the integrity of the

developmental model. I think we need to recognize that these stages occur sometimes simultaneously or out of sync and out of order for the emerging adult but that there are some stages that seem still to me more likely to be associated with emerging adulthood than other stages. For example, in the case of Erikson's theory, the stages that would likely occur against the backdrop of emerging adulthood are: Identity vs. Role Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation. In the same way, other stages such as might occur against the backdrop of 'childhood' or 'adulthood.'

Further, I would suggest that we take caution in applying the concept of emerging adulthood and that we do so with specificity to time, space and subjects of analysis. The concept of emerging adulthood is a useful concept when applied to developmental theories to be used when explaining *some* of the experiences of *some* people transitioning from adolescence to adulthood, for example those who have had the resources to extend their educations within the last twenty years. In other words, the concept of emerging adulthood allows us to understand the various non-linear orders and means by which they master new meanings of intimacy, identity, and generativity that are perhaps more consistent and fitting with the postmodern sphere within which they live. Further, the concept of emerging adulthood helps us to understand 'shifts' in meanings, 'misalignments' with other developmental models such as Duvall and Miller's or 'extensions' and 'elaborations' without necessarily pathologizing the variable transitions and without necessarily 'Othering' the developmental trajectories of individuals within the postmodern generations.

Stage or process for Family Models?

However, the underlay of this emerging adulthood concept creates an even more complex and entangled array of non-linear possibilities for sociological discussions of emerging adults within familial contexts. First, because as we add to the number of subjects to analyze we add to the dynamics of inter-relations. Second, when we remove the proposed 'order' from the stages the variations become exponential.

Adjusting the early stages of the family life cycle becomes problematic also because whether or not emerging adults are coupled or not, have children or not, I would argue, is highly variable. Therefore, emerging adulthood is difficult to define as a universal stage. It can be utilized as a back drop with the understanding that family relations do not necessarily follow Carter and McGoldrick's model, although often times they do still at least start out following a version of this model. If we were to adjust family life cycle models to include a stage called 'the family with emerging adults,' it would likely replace and include the family that is launching adolescents and young adults. During emerging adulthood the emerging adult might continue to live within their parent's household, be launched, return and/or re-launched as in the case of adult children who boomerang between post-secondary housing and their parent's home.

Emerging Adulthood Stage or process: Links between Self and Family

In contrast to Kloep and Hendry (2011), I would not so sharply suggest doing away with stage theories altogether because they are part of how many of us have historically come to understand and expect family life to occur. That is to say that it is too soon, historically speaking and epistemologically speaking, to do away with developmental theories altogether because they are still being used as reference points by many of the people we study. Still today, many people hold in their minds, if not in their

practice a version of these linear models for, markers of adulthood, couple formation and family development that were developed by theorists like Duvall and Miller, Carter and McGoldrick, Erikson, Piaget etc. It would seem to me that it makes sense to use a patchwork of theories to make sense of social beings who exist as 'patch-worked' beings. For example, many of the women I interviewed may have said it was acceptable to complete these markers for adulthood out of order, many also said they think within their 'society' there remains a prescribed order that these markers should be accomplished in. In my view, this represents a discontinuity between the changing lifestyle choice practices for people in their twenties and the residual thoughts and discourses that remain regarding being married, with a full time job, and having a first child by the time one is the age of "30." The operative word is 'changing.' We can still see within Census Canada data that there are strong norms for leaving one's parent's home, coupling, having a child and sometimes children. While the stages may be prolonged and the order may be delayed and the cycle may occur without a formal marriage, and may result in families with fewer children, the order and stages still remain for many, in documented practice, as being quite common for many people within Canada.

Kloep and Hendry conclude that it is not worth doing the patchwork that is necessary in order to utilize a developmental model to explain the transition to adulthood today. I would tend to disagree because it is exactly by doing this patchwork that I was able to pinpoint discontinuities and disjunctures between theoretical models, between individual and family life cycles, and chart changes to these over time. It allows me to talk about how the systems within the stages are working and have changed over time and at different levels for individuals and families at various levels for different

generations. It, therefore, enriches my discussion. I am in agreement that systems theory offers us a very strong framework that allows us to complete multi-generation analyses of families that do and do not necessarily follow a 'typical' developmental model without comparing these to a mainstream notion of the family that has been defined by some as "patriarchal" (Stacey, 1993) and as the product of heterosexual hegemony (Adams, 1997). In sum, there may be a day when developmental theories have little or no use for us as researchers and theorists in explaining future versions of family life and individual psycho-social progression but I do not believe that day is upon us. Moreover, in a hermeneutic sense these models may impact our understandings of these transitions for many generations to come as it is conceivable that they may continue to hold strong epistemological weight.

Further, I would suggest that, particularly for many women, the experience of the QLC can be explained by looking at the disjuncture between current discourses of individualization and residual past ideologies relating to normalized life-course models. That is to say, it is difficult to actively live out an individualized model of 'self-as-ultimate-project-&-product,' at the same time as living a life course that would fit within the norms of Duvall's model. The presentation of information regarding women's fertility, biological clocks and the increase in incidents of miscarriages, anatomical and genetic anomalies in infants, increased physical risks to older women who give birth was meant to help women understand their own corporeality. This presentation was not for the purpose of suggesting a neat and timely re-version to Duvall and Miller's model. Rather, it is to acknowledge how families will have a different composition and therefore parents will require different types of assistance. Also, as it relates to 'becoming an

adult,' if that becoming included parenthood as a marker we need to understand that perhaps emerging adulthood lasts much longer than until one's early 30s maybe it lasts until that marker is met even if it is as they turn 40, 45. Perhaps, emerging adulthood opens up the concept of becoming an adult to a never-ending process of becoming. This is how the age at first birth demographics become tied to the question of adulthood because on an individual level this may continue to represent a 'marker' even if markers are out of order and the process of becoming an adult is potentially a life-long pursuit.

Generations X and Y and the Stage Vs. Process Debate:

By way of conclusion, I will say that I agree with Kloep and Hendry, when they remind us that Arnett's 'Emerging Adulthood' is a concept and not in and of itself a stage theory, it is just that, a concept. Albeit, a useful one. Further, whether or not we utilize the concept of emerging adulthood, at all, depends on who, when and where we are conducting our analysis. In keeping with Kloep and Hendry, I see far too many variations historically and cross-culturally to attempt to normalize the concept of emerging adulthood, at this point. Nonetheless, I do think it is a concept that adds a more detailed description of the context within which processes and/or stages, that *some* people live through, occur.

As we will see in later chapters, the women that I interviewed referred to the action of 'growing-up' with many references to everything from stages, to roads and pathways, to filling in pieces of a pie, to a learning project, etc. In other words, we will see how respondents used both types of words that would be synonymous with the experiences of passing through a stage-like, road-like journey to the 'destination' of 'adulthood' and in the next breath will describe becoming an 'adult' as 'really not about

getting there' which might suggest the experience of a 'process' of becoming an 'adult.'

In looking back at what I presented above, my social location, developmental models of family life, a statistical description of coupling patterns and family-type trends and age related fertility trends, along with the interviews I will introduce later, I ask myself "Is adulthood, at least figuratively speaking, a 'destination' or is it that becoming an adult is a "project" of self re/creation?

The question is important because 'stages' suggest a pathway with a 'destination' whereas processes 'suggest' a project with an end 'product.' Whether or not we are going to employ developmental theories with stages or systems theories with processes depends on what we think adulthood is: a set of normative milestones achieved or what we think adults are: 'unstable,' 'fluid' 'products' born of projects of ultimate self re/creation. Notice also that stages lead to a collective experience of 'adulthood' whereas never-ending processes give rise to the individuated experience of becoming an 'adult.' The implications in terms of this difference in terms of agency is paramount, as I see it and I will come back to this extensively.

For the moment, what I see between the changing statistical norms and the life histories described by the women I interviewed, is that people themselves are working with both 'normative' stage-models as they self-govern towards the destination of adulthood *and* processes through which they engage in the project of self 're-creation.' It looks like and it sounds like many people started out on a 'normative' journey whether by choice or by social influence but did not continue because it no longer fits with what they wanted or because there were social barriers in their way.

Understand, that many of Generation X perhaps began their transition to adulthood with these sets of stages or milestones in mind, a roadmap to complete but then found themselves either by choice or by social circumstances, negotiating and inventing the objectives and rules of a new 'game' (as Bourdieu might refer to it) of becoming. That being said, in making sense of Generation X and (Generation Y too, to some extent), we must use both models because I would argue many GenXers would have experienced their coming of age through both the completion of stages *and* the through engagements with projects of individualization and self-re/creation. When I look at the X in Generation X it represents for me, not at all, a nothingness or a void, or lack of _____ that has been associated with this Generation in the media. Rather, to me the X has represented the intersection of the modern and postmodern. It has represented the lived reality of historical intersections and of hybrid identities. It represents at the very least a duality if not multiplicity; it represents 'more' rather than 'less.' We were socialized within modern post-industrial families and with a postmodern dawn on the horizon we set off each on our own, but collectively, on a journey with a road map corresponding to a land that seemed to no longer exist. It seemed I was in new land, where X no longer 'marked the spot,' it meant: forget this treasure box you think you are going to find in this place called 'adulthood.' It meant I had to figure out for myself and tell myself: 'forget who you thought you were going to be and pick up a pen (or a keyboard, or a touch screen, no thanks keyboard works bests) and be a pioneer, fill in the _____ 'X' _____ with what you already know is there: Exponential intersectionality. Only in retrospect, can I articulate it this way.

Best and Kellner, (2003) perhaps had half the story as they wrote:

Today's youth are privileged subjects of the postmodern adventure because they are the first generation to live intensely in the transformative realms of cyberspace and hyperreality where media culture, computers, genetic engineering, and other emerging technologies are dramatically transforming all aspects of life (see Best and Kellner, 2001)....

Consequently, the youth of the new millennium are the first generation to live the themes of postmodern theory: Entropy, chaos, indeterminacy, contingency, simulation, and hyperreality are not just concepts they might encounter in a seminar, but forces that constitute the very texture of their experience, as they deal with corporate downsizing and the disappearance of good jobs, economic recession, information and media overload, the demands of a high-tech computer society, crime and violence, identity crises, terrorism, war, and an increasingly unpredictable future. For youth, the postmodern adventure is a wild and dangerous ride, a rapid rollercoaster of thrills and spills plunging into the unknown (Best and Kellner, 2003).

The point I am making is that in addition to the point that Best and Kellner made, I would remind us that the children of GenerationX were also socialized with ideas linked to the modern tradition that shaped their expectations for their futures. Then, they had to very quickly re-socialize themselves to deal with all that Best and Kellner described above.

We were hosts to generations of ideas, not just in the historical sense but in both the historical and present sense. The way I see it, we were not merely GenerationX. Rather, we are Generation^x and if this is visible anywhere, I think it is in the way we have thought about and act out family life, parenting and sexuality as we emerged as adults.

Hence, the need for several frameworks in explaining their individual and collective life courses.

Chapter 7 Theoretical Framework Revisited

Individualization, Personal Life and the QLC

We know from macro-level data regarding education trends that more women are extending their educational careers (McQuillan and Burnshot, 2011). Further, recent fertility trends indicate that women are tending to have children later (Wu and Shimele, 2011). These questions lead me to questions: How do shifts in the timing, order, meeting and/or maintaining of markers for adulthood such as moving out of one's parents' home, graduation from secondary or post-secondary education, marriage, parenting, influence one's concept of self as an adult. How does it impact the way people feel about shifting from adolescence to adulthood?

Originally, my sociological question surfaced out of 1) my own experience of 'growing-up' and not filling roles that I expected to fill at the time that I expected to fill them, for example the roles of wife and mother; and 2) not hitting anticipated 'social markers for adulthood' at times when I would have expected to meet them; for example attaining a full time permanent job. I asked myself, 'What do people do when the roles they expect to fill are not available for them to fill at the time they would have expected to fill them?' I have raised my analysis to the level of sociological inquiry addressing the above questions using a grounded theory methodology. The social construction of adulthood and social maturity have been examined both through interviews and also autoethnographically with a focus on the influence of anticipator socialization and residual tradition. I have outlined my autoethnographic response to this question more separately than the conventional sociological analysis that has incorporated a discussion of long interviews, newspaper articles and a review of popular literature. It is contained

within a separate chapter as are the full case studies based on long interviews so as to provide the reader with adequate context.

While Oliver Robinson's 4 Stages of Model of the QLC seems directly applicable to some of the respondents life course histories, I would like to examine this psychological 'crisis' from a sociological lens. Robinson's model is useful in that some people may feel they cannot leave their job or their relationship. However, there may be factors that are holding them back from leaving their job or relationship. Further, an analysis that accounts for race, class and gender may highlight the ways in which people might experience difficulty either attaining a job or forming the type of relationship they may have in mind. The present study is limited in the sense that the sample is almost entirely comprised of participants who would define themselves as being 'white.' On the other hand, this gives a clear picture of this group of women racially and ethnically speaking. Variations and comparative levels that exist within the sample relate more to economic class and levels and types of education. It continues to be important to understand how race and ethnicity can impact experiences of emerging adulthood and the QLC. I would suggest that future studies with this specific focus are required in order to more fully address the question of universality with respect to emerging adulthood as has been presented by Jeffrey Arnett (2004, 2011).

In this analytic section we will revisit the impact of uneven social change and, in so doing, we will discuss the evidence of residual traditions and reflexive agency with respect to personal lives as they are lived in the everyday. Ultimately, this analysis seeks to redefine the meaning of 'growing up' as it challenges the notion that traditional markers for adulthood often have little to do with social maturity. These markers serve to

represent and reify a commodified version of adulthood that has a history of being limiting in terms of gender roles, particularly for women. This commodified version of adulthood has kept many women on the outskirts of full citizenship as it thwarts their agency and power within the social framework.

As we examine a generation of women who have had more access to post-secondary education, we discuss their relationship to their lived corporeality, the timing of their social life and the timing and, not just the balancing of work and family but a complex coordination across the domains of their personal life. These domains are (but are not limited to) work, education, personal, intimate and familial relationships. It is not the sum of these, rather it is via the interplay, the coordination, timing, inclusion, omission, and acting out of these aspects of personal life that women create their own personal life and in essence become or continually re-create themselves. Indeed, to create oneself and a personal life is an ethnomethodological project that exists as an avenue and vehicle⁸ for personal agency within the context of changing and residual structures. I describe this as an ethnomethodological project as people through their lived everyday interactions and practices create an ongoing sense of themselves. It could also be described this way: "...the life of one's own is an experimental life" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:26 point #9).

Substantively, we are looking at life histories of a small pocket of daughters who described their expectations of their twenties, their experiences of their twenties, and their expectations for what they plan to do next with their personal lives. We are discussing a rapid shift and uneven shifts in the way women have lived their personal lives. We are talking about a shift away from what is now known not only as an historically specific

⁸ Foucault wrote 'we are the vehicle of our own liberation.'

but also almost mythological family⁹ form called the traditional 1950's family type where mothers had little post secondary education and worked mostly or only in the home and fathers perhaps went to college and worked most often semi-skilled labour jobs or in family businesses that they inherited or to women who go directly to college or university from high school. Many of the women who were participants in the study described being raised by breadwinner fathers and stay at home mothers who had lower levels of post-secondary education and who married early and remained married. This is not to say that all families in Canada look like these or even looked like these, it is to suggest that this small pocket of women came predominantly but not exclusively from families of this type. What is interesting with the present interview data is that we are able to examine residual traditions within the social context of rapid and uneven social change. We are examining women's emotions regarding: 1) the educational shift but also 2) how the time it takes to complete education and the timing of education impacts all aspects of their personal lives including: education, work, intimate partnerships, parenthood and selfhood.

Individualization, Personal life and the Post-Secondary Education of Young Women

Let us begin the analysis with a return to the theoretical context as it was outlined in earlier chapters. Here, I would like to discuss and apply the theories of Giddens, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, Carole Smart and Gross to the responses delivered by the participants in this study. In this section, I would like to address the questions of structure and agency with regards to 'Individualization' and 'Personal Life.' Throughout

⁹ See Mary Louise Adams (1997) for a discussion of prevalence and problematics associated with heterosexual marriages and the nuclear family of this historical period.

this discussion I will draw on Giddens' concepts of reflexivity and recursivity, and Gross' concept of 'residual traditions.'

Participants were each asked to think back to high school and recall what they were anticipating for their twenties. They were asked to tell me about their twenties and they were asked to look ahead to life in their 30's, 40's and 50's. They were asked questions about 1) their education; 2) their households and families; and 3) their work life and the timing and order of these. The participants were asked to define 'growing-up' and they were asked if they felt like a 'grown-up' and to describe in what ways they were grown-up or not. The participants were given the opportunity to discuss how they felt about the timing of life events and meeting 'markers for adulthood' such as graduation, marriage, purchase of a car, a house, first full time permanent job, and or birth/adoption of their first child. They were also given open-ended opportunities to address anything they considered relevant to the transition between adolescence and adulthood and 'growing up.'

Before addressing the content of their responses, it is important to make an important point about the demographics of the sample of participants. Originally, I had aimed to interview and compare the life histories of women who went to university and/or college versus women who had not pursued university or college. Probably because of the close proximity of the local college and because of the availability of government funding, most women interviewed, had at least attempted a college and or university program. What stood out was the disparity in opportunity for and levels of education between the participants and their parents. Most participants had two major factors in common with each other. First, the women interviewed for this study came

from households whereby their parent's seemed to marry at an early age (in their late teens or their early twenties), had lower levels of post secondary education, and often worked mainly in the home while their fathers worked mainly outside of their home. However, a recurring theme was noted especially for the Generation X participants and this was that they were not given adequate direction regarding their educational and career choices. Second, most of the participants felt encouraged by their parents, other family members, or teachers and/or guidance counsellors to pursue and further their education. Third, most expected a monogamous relationship and children either by their mid-twenties or at least by the time they turned 30.

I could start this analysis from many points. However, my first point of analysis is the influence of increasing a *daughter's* educational level relative to that of her parents. I say daughter rather than woman here because I believe her familial context is significant to the discussion of 'family life course.' The education of daughters has been purposefully slanted, skewed and more specifically domestic, historically speaking. I am reminded of an older instruction and guide booklet called *The Education of a Daughter* written by Archbishop Fenelon written in 1675 and published in the United States in 1847. Fenelon writes:

We are now come to the detail of those things on which a woman ought to be instructed. What are her employments? She is charged with the education of her children: of sons, until they come to a certain age; of the daughters, marry or enter into religion, of the conduct of the domestics, of their manners, of their service of the detail of expense, of the means of doing everything with honour and economy, sometimes to manage estates and receive rents.

The science of women, like that of men, ought to be limited to that instruction which relates to their duties. The differences of their employment ought to make that of their studies. We should then limit the instruction of women to the things which we have just spoken of. But a woman desirous of knowledge will feel that this is giving very limited bounds to her curiosity; she deceives herself in this, and it is because she knows not the importance and the

extent of those duties in which I propose to instruct her. What discernment is it not necessary to possess, in order to enter into the nature and disposition of each of her children; to find the most proper manner of conducting herself with them, in order to understand their humour, their inclination and their talents; to guard against their growing passions, to induce them to good habits and to cure their errors? What prudence ought not she have, to acquire and preserve authority over them, without losing their friendship or confidence? And is it not also necessary that she should be fully acquainted with those persons whom she has about them? Undoubtedly the mother of a family should have a mind matured, firm, regulated, and experienced in government (Fellon 1847:104-105).

This passage is quite old by today's standard but interestingly, the women interviewed had mothers who were without the sort of education that their daughters would need to take on careers normally taken on by men. Many of these mothers, as described by their daughters, were without post-secondary education and faced barriers to the possibility to explore what they wanted to learn more about and so in a way it remains relevant.

Particularly for women like Suzie's mother who did not obtain a post-secondary education but encouraged her daughter to 'do great things' and 'see the world' (Case Study #3). It remains relevant because we are looking at what happens when women are educated beyond the bounds of domesticity. It is relevant because we are looking at what happens when women are encouraged and supported as they pursue interests outside of religion, marriage, motherhood, home economics and home governance. While the above passage acknowledges the importance and power that may be located in the work of socialization and home economy that remain true today, we see a stark contrast to the type of discourse and advice that is given to women and young people at this point in history. As discussed in a section analyzing current popular literature, the term 'passion' is related to much differently. In fact, many authors of popularized literature have suggested fueling passion and pursuing education in topic of interest rather than those that have been guarded as traditionally feminine. Further, as one of these women who

made such a great leap educationally speaking, I can recognize and appreciate what a privilege and opportunity it has been. Of course, it was long and challenging in ways that I had not anticipated. On the surface, it might seem like a challenge to imagine what we could do rather than being confined to the challenge of doing what we should do. Could and should all pre-exist us and are impossible to remove from the social without a denial to the hermeneutic tension between our *habitus* and the social.

I ask the question what is the influence of post-secondary education upon her 'personal life?' The insertion of post-secondary education to a daughter's life course can, indeed, delay or influence change on her anticipated family life cycle development. The first and most obvious way that this occurs is simply by the time that it takes to attain a post secondary education. However, the influence is greater than a simple pause to 'the family life cycle.' The introduction of college and university educations into the lives of women whose mothers had not previously completed post-secondary education in some cases illustrates for us a sort of temporary 'gender pause' according to the social norms within the family context within which they received their primary socialization. This 'pause' sometimes gives women both the time, information, and tools with which to re-evaluate the course of their 'family life' and/or realize they have greater opportunity and agency to mold a 'personal life.' Of course, no one stops living during their education. They continue to form relationships and have familial ties. However, we often see a delay in 'marriage and childbearing.' Thus education is both a pause and an opportunity for a secondary socialization.

It is not only the post-secondary curriculum that influences women's understanding of education, work , family, and sexuality; it is the variable and flexible

lifestyles and households they might encounter or live within during this time period that also have an impact. Post-secondary education can act as more than a temporary 2-4 year pause, it exposes women to competing discourses, other household types, new forms of relationships, and/or career types. Still, for some women an expectation and/or desire for marriage, children, and 'raising a family' remains strong. Why? It could be argued that these expectations and desires represent the resistive, recursive turn propelled by residual traditions relating to monogamy, motherhood and the idea that social maturation is pre-ordered by the existing social in the Duvall and Miller's (1985) work or Carter and McGoldrick's (1999) work and stage-like (as in Erikson's Stages of Development) rather than flexible and more self-driven and processual. The drive and desire for marriage and children might also be tied to the notion that adulthood is a destination or static state rather than an 'emerging' or continual process of becoming. Ultimately, whether or not the participants chose education, work, marriage, children, serial monogamy, the single life, and/or any given combination and order of these possibilities is always a question of exercising personal agency amidst existing social structures.

Take for instance Lisa's description of how intimidating even considering a university education was for her:

I was accepted to go to the university [] to study business in the fall...and I had my [provincial government] student loan plan that cost 2200 bucks imagine that is all I needed. Anyway, I had the okay and I didn't go. It was a fight to get there. I would have been the first person in my family to go to university too...so the pressure...everyone wanted me to do well. They basically tell you ...you know you are going from a classroom...they come and talk to you...you are going from a classroom of 30 kids to a classroom of 250 kids or more and a campus that has 40 thousand people on it and it is very intimidating to somebody who...and whose parent's have no experience doing that. like I said

nobody I knew had that experience and it was just overwhelming pressure and rather...the fear of failure just stopped me so anyway, needless to say I didn't get there. I wish I would have, but I didn't too, late now (Lisa Case Study #1).

Beginning with a description of her parent's marriage, Shelley (Case Study #9) describes the influence of 'residual traditions' on her lifestyle choices and also her favoring of her 'original plan.' Recursively, we see a favoring of monogamy and marriage (Wu & Schimmele, 2011:236-272)with a preference for children at an early age and reflexively speaking, we see the acceptance and practice of serial monogamy as Shelley opted not to stay in the original marriage to 'the wrong person' and formed a second marriage with a new person.

I think my parents...I know my mom lived at home until she was married. She got married at 23. My Dad 27. I know my dad started a good career at [a local plant] like at 18 or 19. I think they were in a better financial position in their younger years. Yeah, I would say they were in a better financial position. I think, I think just the expectations of a wife and mother at that time were a lot more straightforward than for women of my age. You know I started out with all the wants of being an independent woman. I still want to be a wife and a mother and how can you mesh that all together? So I think that that probably created more stress

[Note:] She was asked how she felt about life events that did not happen at the time you expected them to happen. In hindsight, she reconsidered her first plan:

I liked my original plan best [laughing] I think that would have been a good plan. I look at the kids thing specifically and I wish I had kids younger. I know I wasn't ready and I wasn't in the right place but it would be ...you know I would like to be done having kids now but I still would like another one so...I am getting older so there's that ...I don't feel that this is really realistic you know.

[Kelly] While you were going though it how did you feel about it?

I know that that my original plan was it is constantly in your mind growing up ...These are the milestones I think I should have reached and I haven't. That's definitely part of the thought process along the way.

Individualization, Personal Life and Social Bonds Amidst Uneven Societal Change

Whether we make sense of lifestyle and life course choices by applying the 'individualization' vs. 'personal life' theses is indicative of the relationship that we see and understand between selves and the social. The 'individualization' theses as presented by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) is one that sees the agents as more fractured from the social than is the case with the relationship between agents and the social as presented by the 'personal life' thesis envisioned by Carol Smart (2007). Smart's concept of *personal life* softens the separation between self and society and returns an elastic tension between the two. To expand on and clarify what was meant earlier by the statement that I see value in the concept of *personal life*, I will elaborate here.

First, it is important to understand that as Carol Smart uses the term personal life, she does not intend for it to be interpreted as meaning one's private life. Personal life, in this sense is utilized by sociologists to refer to 'a reflexive state, but it is not private and it is lived out in relation to one's class position, ethnicity, gender and so on' (Smart, 2007:28). Smart then writes:

'The personal' designates an area of life which impacts closely on people and means much to them, but does not presume that there is an autonomous individual who makes free choices and exercises unfettered agency. This means that the term 'personal life' can invoke the social, indeed it is conceptualized as already part of the social.

Smart goes on to write the following:

The concept of personal life allows for ideas of the life project--particularly significant in the work of Giddens and Beck--in which people have scope for decisions and plans, but it does not incorporate the idea of individually crafted biographies as if people are free-floating agents with sufficient resources to achieve their goals. In Gross' terms 'meaning-constitutive traditions are important here, as are such structural factors as social class ethnicity and gender. So this mode of conceptualizing recognizes the importance of memory and generation or

cultural transmission and is alert to the extent to which people are embedded in both sedimented structures and the imaginary (Smart, 2007:28).

Personal life remains an instrumental concept to the current analysis of the case studies because I am attempting to make sense of anticipatory socialization, life course expectations and rapid intergenerational change. I think because the sample set is drawn from a smaller urban setting with an industrial history rather than a metropolitan and/or cosmopolitan urban centre, the micro-level relationships implied by the notion of personal life are present and well-illustrated in the accounts of the participants' lives during their twenties. Having said this, I think it is important to say that I do not reject the individualization thesis as it is presented by either Giddens or Beck and Beck-Gernsheim. The concepts reflexivity and recursivity, agency and structure, presented by Giddens elaborate on the inter-connections between self and society, as well as, tradition and social change. Even the concept of disembedding selves or things pre-supposes an original embeddedness of people and things. Differentiating their argument from Ostner and Roy (1991) and Karl Ulrich Mayer (1991), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim explain what they do not mean by 'Individualization:'

Individualization in this sense, therefore, certainly does not mean an 'unfettered logic of action, juggling in a virtually empty space'; neither does it mean mere 'subjectivity', an attitude which refuses to see that 'beneath the surface of life is a highly efficient, densely woven institutional society'. On the contrary, the space in which modern subjects deploy their options is anything but a non-social sphere. The density of regulations informing modern society is well known, even notorious from MOT test and the tax return to the laws governing the sorting of refuse. In its overall effect it is a work of art of labyrinthine complexity, which accompanies us literally from the cradle to the grave (2001:2).

The point is that from the beginning of the Individualization thesis, as presented by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001), the individuals do not act with 'unfettered agency,'

as Smart has criticized. As they explain it, even as we move toward the 'atomized' concept of the self, the current concept of 'a life of one's own' maintains and relies on a social context while it allows for 'elective biography', 'do-it-yourself' biography and/or 'reflexive biography.' Beck and Beck-Gernsheim make an important point about the nature of this social 'atomization' or individualization:

So there is a big difference to be made between individualization where there are institutional resources like human rights, education and the welfare state to cope with the contradiction of modern biographies and 'atomization' where there are not. The neoliberal market ideology enforces atomization with all its will (2001:24 point #4).

I will come back to discuss neoliberal market ideology below as it pertains to the sociological critique of the concept of the 'QLC.' For now, my understanding is that Beck and Beck-Gernsheim are not stating that we have reached a state of total 'atomization.' Instead, as they suggest, we exist within the paradox of institutionalized individualism meaning that we are individually both bound by and liberated through these institutional resources, for example the ones they mention above.

Looking at the changing distinctions between public and private, I want to now highlight a point in Smart's work that is particularly useful that she makes about personal life. She writes:

There is also the potential to overcome the older distinctions between private and public spheres which have conceptualized family life as a distinct place or institution separate from other social spaces and structures...Personal life is not so concerned with boundary marking and provides the possibility of tracing its flows through systems of education, work or elsewhere. As one of the respondents pointed out, she had always thought of her growth across social spheres in a very compartmentalized fashion. In reordering the process of growing up, moving back and forth or living within several contexts can breakdown the distinctions between these (2001:29 point #6).

Further, Smart likens the 'I' to the individual within the individualization thesis and the 'me' to the person within the personal life thesis. I would suggest that both the 'I' and the 'me' continue to be needed, both and at once, in order to understand social life under both these theses precisely because action is not 'unfettered' in either case. To further elaborate, I would suggest that the 'I' and the 'me' continue to exist more as micro versions of embodied structure and agency.

As it breaks down the distinctions that exist between public and private, personal life becomes an important concept in that it allows for a conversation about the timing and ordering and the coordination of life course across various domains of life. While women recall and recount their coming of age stories, I hear patterns of residual traditions. Here Giddens' concepts of reflexivity and recursivity remain useful in that women might act not so much with 'unbounded agency' but with what Gross (2005) might term 'residual tradition' which once again re-invites the social, constrains action and creates re-visions of the original tradition. With constrained agency, women navigate their pathway through their '*own*' life course as they have designed it within the loosening limits of social order. As women and men delay coupling and starting a family (Wu and Shimelle, 2011) a new language is needed in order to discuss personal relationships. Personal life not only allows for the inclusion of friendships and families of choice, it also allows for a conversation about customizing one's life course across the domains of personal life because the distinction between public and private is not as specifically defined. We can now talk about the personalized ordering of social life. It is now possible to talk about new intimacies beyond that of the husband and wife who have the intention of procreation. It is now possible to talk about familial-like adult friendships

that people invest in while building work careers and chose to delay starting a biological family or choose not to start one at all. To say, my personal life allows us to refer to not only to what happens in our private life but also what happens in our individually customized life while at the same time acknowledging that we exist and act, within and in reference to, an overarching social context.

While even the concept of atomized individualization does not fully divorce the self from the social as we continue to see macro-level relationships between self and governmental programs, for one example. The concept of personal life more obviously acknowledges the connection at the micro level, in particular but also at all levels of society. When analyzing women's life histories and the discussions of their connections between themselves, their family members, friends, work, education, and home life within a smaller urban setting, the term personal life is quite useful. This is not to discount the individualization thesis. I think the point, set forth by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, that society is changing at variable paces in variable locations is an important one (2001:5). Some people may live a life that looks more 'individualized' and perhaps that is because they live in more metropolitan, cosmopolitan, postmodern realms that moves far beyond the 'society' life that we might referred to as an industrial 'Gesellschaft,' following Ferdinand Tönnies' (1963) description. On the other hand, others may live lives that are more 'personalized' and 'communal.' Perhaps these are people who live in smaller urban or rural settings where 'traditional' families with breadwinner fathers and stay-at-home mothers continue to exist and the idea of them continues to exist for many at least in 'residual' forms such as desire or 'shoulds.' Further, in these more personal communal social setting it seems business itself continues to be conducted on a

'community' or even 'familial' plane whereby the social operates with smaller scale community bonds of a 'Gemeinschaft,' more typical of pre-industrial societies, at least residually speaking. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim point out with their first point that 'the compulsion to live a life of one's own and the possibility of doing so emerges when a society is highly differentiated' and this high differentiation and 'constant changing between different, partly incompatible logics of action, they are forced to take into their own hands that which is in danger of breaking into pieces: their own lives' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001:23). This coupled with the assertion that was made above that suggest that change has not taken place evenly make me see value in holding onto both concepts: 'individualization' and 'personal life'. I see both 'individualization' and 'personal life' as useful and not necessarily competing theses. Rather, I can imagine that they are describing different people in different settings and can be used to described different types of social phenomena as change continues to take place at micro, meso and macro levels of societies spanning the globe. The complicated and interesting thing about this is that people across these sites of the social know each other, interact with each other, and compete economically with each other with minimal degrees of separation because of technology. Distinctions have moved so far beyond the old story of 'the country mouse who visits the city mouse.' Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001:25 point #7) have described this life as multilocal and transnational where 'people are wedded to several places at once.' Beyond the shift rural and local craft worker to industrialization and urbanization to globalization and postmodernism with metropolity, cosmopolitanism, technocracy and technopoly (Postman, 1993), distinctions have become far more varied and complex than between the near binary distinction of

'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft.' The impact of living a multilocal, transnational, life with its varying degree of social 'development' between first and second levels of modernity is that people exists on a personal level with a "modern society [that] does not integrate them as whole persons into its functional systems; rather, it relies on the fact that individuals are not integrated but only partly and temporarily involved as they wander between different functional worlds" as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001:23 point #1). I would describe living within heightened modernity as living as a symphony of selves.

To come back to Bourdieu's work and the concept of *habitus* and his discussion of Claudel's version of 'connaître.' I wonder how it is that we live across these locals as one person? I can best sum up my understanding in French with this statement: "Même chez-nous, se re-connaître n'est plus évident." By this I mean that the means by which we might know and become ourselves, is no longer easily discernible. It is an experimental, ethnomethodological, contingent process. That is to say the means by which we once again bring ourselves into being with reflexive and reflective thought and action is much more than to recognize ourselves in the mirror. The means by which we might know ourselves and become ourselves and who we are once we do is no longer simple 'common knowledge.'

The Transformation of Intimacy and the Re-conceptualization of 'Social Maturity'

One challenge for the sociologist remains to determine, locate and call into question sites of residual tradition and attempt to define it either as a site of active resistance or a site of social constraint. The difficulty is that most instances of the social exist as holograms presenting a different picture when examined from different angles

and perspectives. Take for example, a couple who chooses to opt out of a religious marriage when that has been their family's tradition for generations but who chose to live in a monogamous relationship with a sharp gendered division all the same. In what ways have they been resistive to norms? In what ways have their actions been constrained? In what ways, have they acted and re-created with reflexivity? Do the answers to these questions change given who is examining and analyzing the social situation? The point I am making here is that determining what actions exist as liberation versus what actions exist as examples of constraint is rarely a simple or obvious task. As intimacy becomes 'transformed' we could say that 'individualization' might help us talk about the relationship between individuals and marriage laws where 'personal life' might facilitate the conversation about how people feel about the everyday lived experience of rapidly changing traditions in their own family's life course. It also allows us to talk about how the 'personal' ordering of work and education amidst the many 'options' for 'individuals' in the society at large exists in a sort of ecological tandem with fertility, family life and the transformation of intimacy. The transformation of intimacy is important because with it, we move to a different concept of social maturation, one whereby intimacy grows not out of external dependency but out of a relationship that exists for the sake of itself. What this means in light of my current analysis is that many marriages are not necessarily 'intimate' by the same definition as a relationship that is an approximation of the ideal 'pure relationship' based on 'confluent love.' A pure relationship is defined by Giddens (1992:58) as:

"a situation where the social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with one another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it.

'Confluent love' is defined by Giddens (1992:61) as "...active, contingent love and therefore jars with the 'forever', 'one-and-only' qualities of the romantic love complex."

In terms of highly modern societies, marriage itself does not necessarily mean one has reached 'intimacy' rather than isolation in Eriksonian psycho-social developmental terms.¹⁰ The time and effort that it takes in order to establish one's self as 'independant' and 'self-sufficient' before entering a relationship would likely be lengthy and only ever be an approximation of the 'pure relationship' as it exists in ideal terms. This can delay the creation of an intimate relationship under the new understanding of transformed intimacy set forth by Giddens (1992). Further, the notion of the 'pure relationship' potentially changes the face of the 'nucleus' intimate relationship at the center of what we call family or kin. It may be that more egalitarian forms of a heterosexual relationship with potentially blurred gender roles, a homosexual relationship, or a very close friendship that exists much like kinships, (and other potentialities exist). Some form of positive attachment to another beyond one's own parents seems to be of central importance to the process of becoming an adult in society for without it, sociologically speaking we risk a sort of asocial 'anomie' far beyond what is described by 'atomized individualization' described by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001). Our attachment to our parents and those who first socialize us remain important but the second task of creating an intimate bond is part of what weaves the bonds of the social at large. It is important on a personal level and on a larger social level which is likely why Erikson saw the development of intimate bonds as being significant to social maturation.

¹⁰ Cross reference this statement to the discussion that will appear later in the thesis regarding the newspaper article written by Patrick O'Connor entitled 'Marriage is not the ticket to maturity, adulthood' that was printed in the *Vancouver Sun* Jan 14, 2011.

A few points seem to recur across the literature and data analyzed. These are that social maturation involves a degree of individuated identity, a form of intimate attachment to another, demonstration of economic self-sufficiency and responsibility for self and others such as children. Interestingly, as intimacy becomes 'transformed' so does the order and process of becoming an 'adult' within an approximation of the 'pure relationship' and 'confluent love.' Giddens discusses the history and changes that occur in relation to the economics embedded in the structures of intimate relationships:

In pre-modern Europe, most marriages were contracted, not on the basis of mutual sexual attraction, but economic circumstance. Among the poor marriage was a means of organizing agrarian labour. A life characterized by unremitting hard labour was as unlikely to be conducive to sexual passion (Giddens, 1992:38).

Giddens later describes how romantic marriages have trapped women into domesticity:

De facto, however, romantic love is thoroughly skewed in terms of power. For women dreams of romantic love have all too often led to grim domestic subjection (1992:62).

Marriage no longer organized labour the way it did in pre-modern or even early modern times, neither do other forms of intimate relationships such as common law relationships or serial monogamy. Drawing on Thompson's work, Giddens discusses adolescent expectations regarding work and intimate relationships:

By their late teens, many of the girls have already had experience of unhappy love affairs, and are well aware that romance can no longer be equated with permanence. In a highly reflexive society they come into contact with, and in their television watching and reading actively search out, numerous discussions about sex, relationships, and influences affecting the position of women. The fragmentary elements of the romantic love complex with which these girls are grappling in seeking to take practical control of their lives are no longer linked wholly to marriage. Virtually all recognize that they will be in paid work for much of their lives, and most see the importance of work skills as a basis for their future autonomy (Giddens, 1992:52).

Though he doesn't seem to say this exactly or specifically, the following suggestion seems to build across Giddens discussion of love, commitment, and the pure relationship: paid work is needed in order to achieve economic autonomy, and economic autonomy seems to be needed in order to escape the kind of romantic love that leads to 'domestic subjection' in favour of building the kind of confluent love and pure relationship whereby women have enough economic autonomy, and therefore with enough safety from the economic risks associated with engaging in an 'until further notice' kind of love as a woman.

How can a woman enter an approximation of a 'pure' relationship when one is not 'self-sufficient'? The work involved in achieving this 'pure relationship' seems very involving. One would need a job in order to be self-sufficient so that the relationship could exist for its own sake and not by economic necessity, and they would need an education to attain the job, and a job to pay for attaining the education and then they would need to find time to continually re-negotiate the relationship. There is a very important point to be made here regarding the understanding of social maturation for women. For many of the women who were interviewed, their mothers married early, had little or no post-secondary education and were economically dependent upon their husbands who took them on as their economic 'responsibility.' For a full description of the Patriarchal Model of the Family see Margarit Eichler's work (Eichler, 1997:9-12). Understand, here, that this shift whereby women are educated with post-secondary educations are not only now presented with new opportunities, they are saddled with new and perhaps unexpected responsibilities. This highlights for us the variable understandings of 'social maturity' across history and the differential treatment and

expectations of women as citizens over time. Does 'social maturity' now look like delaying or foregoing motherhood if it is not economically feasible? Does 'social maturity' mean not getting married because you have not co-created the 'right' relationship with the 'right' person? Does it mean paying your way in society? Can someone who lives economically dependent within the bounds of a religious patriarchal marriage be considered 'socially mature'?¹¹ Were they ever? Does leaving a marriage that is unsatisfying constitute 'social maturation'?¹²

The important point to be made is that when the meaning and process of intimacy are transformed so too are the stages, meanings and processes of social maturation. It seems to me that there is a lot of self-preparatory work that would need to be done for women to become educated and employed prior to being able to enter into a relationship that exists for its own sake. This would be especially so for women who come from economically disadvantaged families with low literacy levels. If I juxtapose confluent love of the pure relationship against not just the romantic love described by Giddens (1992) (the romantic love that originates from novels) but also with a version of biblical love, another important point emerges. Romantic love, seems to me to be intertwined with a version of biblical love and one major difference I see is that you can learn to love as you practice it because it is patient and kind and keeps no record of wrong and always perseveres. The love that is described in Corinthians 13 is at the root of this romantic love. To remind us of the passage, I quote it here:

¹¹ Understand that my fear in uttering such a question is that I might offend so many women of generations past who were grown and responsible for the care and socialization of children and that I continue to recognize that that was and remains such an important role within society that continues to escape adequate recognition. Still, the questions of changing definitions of social maturity are ones that I will not skirt despite the discomfort that might be felt as I pull at the threads of social maturity.

¹² I will come back to this as I contextualize the concept of the QLC in relation to neoliberal economic theories and moral ethical discourses associated with neoliberalism.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

My point here is not to suggest for others which one should be employed but to highlight that they are very different processes leading to different types of love and intimacy. One problematic that I see is that confluent love is a sort of relationship with prerequisites that need to be paid for as described above. Indirectly speaking, confluent love needs to be bought because self-sufficiency comes at a cost. Confluent love also is self-seeking and keeps record of wrongs. In theory, the love described in Corinthians appears to cost nothing yet if it is misused to subjugate women into domesticity, its costs are high and not only monetary. Many might say there are costs to not counting (Waring, 1995) and/or not being self-seeking. It may be a very bounded 'personal life.' The worth of the costs in either situation need to be weighed by people as they co-construct their lives whether they choose an approximation of confluent or romantic, biblical or any other version of love and intimacy. Here I would go back to what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim have pointed out:

Even traditional conditions of life become dependent on decisions; they have to be chosen, defended and justified against other options and lived out as a personal risk. Not only genetically modified food but also love and marriage, including the traditional housewife marriage, become a risk (2001:27).

The point I am making here is that I am suggesting it may be a far leap for people who were socialized with the above version of romanticized 'unfailing' biblical love to make the leap to contingent 'confluent' love. It is a far leap in terms of re-conceptualizing love and intimacy itself but also it is a far leap in terms of earning and accessing the means by which these new adult intimacies are co-constructed and maintained. It is important to

see here that the aspect of adulthood that is to engage in an intimate relationship is intertwined with education, work and wealth and in some indirect way commodifies adulthood. That being said, a different version of adulthood and social maturity can be attained for women via efforts to engage in 'confluent love' and 'pure' relationships rather than romantic patriarchal love that often leads to 'grim domestic subjection.' Still, it leaves me with the question: What do we consider socially mature love and intimacy? Is it contingent love or is it enduring love? Again, there is an intersection of competing discourses that many women of Generations X and Y have faced between their early socialization and their lives during emerging adulthood.

Chapter 8 A Discussion of the Newsprint Data:

Extended adolescence, the QLC and emerging Adulthood have circulated throughout media over the last decade and a half. Two major points are of interest to me. The first is the lengthening of the age range associated with emerging adulthood and also the attitudinal shift from dismissive tone to a more sympathetic tone regarding the challenges of emerging adulthood and the 'QLC. With the shift in the age definition of Emerging Adulthood we can see that initially there wasn't an age category. For example, as Laura Padilla-Walker is quoted in Mysty Harris's article in the Vancouver Sun "Up until 10 to 20 years ago, children reached the age of 18 and parenting was considered largely over" (Harris, 2013:D1). This article was published in 2013, therefore she was referring to a time between 1993-2003 (As a side note, as I point out in a later chapter, I was the last or first cohort for many things such as learning to type on a typewriter, library index cards, learning SPSS on paper while the computer lab was being updated, email with the black screen and early green or orange font, I also turned 18 in 1993) . Articles published before or alongside Wilner and Robbins book on the QLC, typically record an earlier age bracket between the ages of 18-25 (Marshall, 2001:A1; Saccone 2002:, C1). With the introduction of Arnett's work we see a similar 18-25 age range for emerging adulthood (Irvine, 2003:Life D1 citing Arnett; Smith, 2001:B6; Irvine, 2005:A1). Whereas with the popularization of Arnett's work we see an extension of this age category as we have examples where the age range is elongated to 18-29 (Owens, 2013: D1) or 18-30 or 18-30 or so (Steinfels, 2007:B6) or 18-34 to coordinate education, career, and family with many women not having their first child until after 35 (Cohen 2010: pA26(L). Some studies featured in newspaper articles have an age range from

between 18-45 as does Robert Wuthrow's study *How Twenty and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future*, (Steinfels, 2007: A30). In a letter responding to the *What Is it About 20-Somethings?* Following this, is the admission that emerging adulthood lasts into one's 30's for some people, including Arnett in his more recent work. Why such variability for a stage that is expressed to be common and constant by Arnett? I would argue this is because of a shift away from stage theory towards an epistemological and ontological understanding of becoming and adulthood that is more akin with process theories. Still, we maintain residual conceptions of becoming associated with modern epistemology and more 'traditional' developmental pathways to adulthood. My educated guess with regard to the shifting age brackets is that emerging adulthood may be a temporary stage specific to this time period and that as milestones become less meaningful and more arbitrary social maturity will take on a new face. Adulthood will not look the same because social maturity in terms of intimacy, responsibility (social and economic), and identity formation will be transformed.

Also noted, was the shift in attitude ranging from denial and insensitivity to an attempt to acknowledge emerging adulthood and the QLC as real and something to sympathize with. Let us look at a few of the articles reviewed. Reactionary headlines to the QLC sometimes took on a very sarcastic dismissive tone. Take for example an editorial that was featured in the Vancouver Sun "It's Called Life, Kids" (May 2001:A14). Even more formal informative articles that feature Arnett's academic work were written with quite value-laden language. An example of this would be Lynn Smith's article featured in the Washington Post and entitled: "Staggering Into Adulthood." When I read this, I immediately had an image of a disoriented graduate stumbling out of

university party life and into the real responsibilities of adulthood. Further, the sociologist quoted in the article, Padilla-Walker notes that: "Too many parents feel they shouldn't be helping their threshold children." She stands in favour of parents supporting emerging adults. This article can be contrasted with a later article where a study by Arnett from Clark University was featured. The headline read as follows: 'Clark University Poll of Parents of Emerging Adults finds released: For most parents, back to school send off means saying goodbye to their BFF.' This article was optimistic quoting Arnett who stated: "Adolescence can be a tough time between parents and kids, but relations almost always improve from adolescence to emerging adulthood. It becomes more like a friendship than a strict hierarchy between parent and child. Yet another article suggests that the transition is not always as smooth as Arnett's results are optimistic. The headline read: 'Because I'm the Parent, That's Why!' Home life with grown young adults can be a power struggle by Misty Harris (2013:D1). In this article Padilla-Walker is again quoted stating 'Children of this age still need support, but they also need as much autonomy as parents can possibly give them.' It would seem that Padilla-Walker is offering a more sympathetic approach to parents of emerging adults than they started out with.

An early article by Julie Saccone introduces Wilner and Robbins' QLC concept as though it might not even be believable to the reader:

Many youth suffer a major emotional crisis in their lives when it comes time to make big life decisions such as career choices. The common symptoms include self-doubt, depression, and lack of direction.
Sounds like psychological mumbo jumbo, right?
Wrong. This problem among youth is so widespread , it's been coined the QLC by twentysomething researchers Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner...(Saccone, 2002:C1)

Headlines continued to cross the newsprint media as further detailing emerging adulthood and anxieties and challenges related to this time in one's life. 'Emerging Adults' Not There Yet; Young People Report Anxiety' by Sharon Jayson in *USA Today* July 30, 2012 8B. The various ways by which adulthood and independence are delayed are more fully explored. "By choice or by circumstance, independence no longer begins at 21" (Cohen, 2010:A26). Beyond being simply for detailed and less skeptical, dismissive, or sarcastic., one article captured the 'child at heart' theme that was brought forth in the interviews. This was: 'Player of Urban Games Delays Adulthood' by Niall McKenna in *Kamloops Daily News* 28 Sept, 2007.

There was a most recent opinion article that was written by Jill Sexton, graduate student in Communications at Carleton whereby the millennial was seeking and giving permission to grow up. In her article: 'Yes, Millennials, You're Allowed to Grow Up,' she describes the major life decisions her friend is about to take, Sexton describes how taking these steps would actually feel like going against what they 'should' be doing in their twenties. In other words, she is highlighting an attitudinal shift from the idea that we 'should' be marrying and starting families in our twenties to the idea that we 'should' be:

"exploring the world, falling in love with new and exotic men every other month, eating lots of gluten-free food, wearing sweatpants on a Tuesday at 2 p.m. while watching Netflix, and Instagramming our freedom for all 250 of our closest followers to see."

She follows this with a plea to allow her to grow up:

Maybe it's because I'm stepping from the category "mid-20's" into my "late-20's" but I'm tired of being told it's okay that I'm not really adult yet. I don't want to spend full weekdays reading romance novels in a coffee shop. I want a job, and I want health insurance, and I want to come home at 5 p.m. and cook dinner. I want to pay bills on time and put money in a savings account. I want to water plants and clean my bathroom once a week and fold my laundry as soon as it

comes out of the dryer. I want to take responsibility for the mundanity of the every day.

And I want to be told that this is also part of being a young single adult. That it's fine to be a mess for a while, but that part of being a mess is learning how to clean yourself up. I want to be told that I am not boring for wanting these things. I want to be told that I am allowed to grow up.

Compare this to an earlier article that was featured in the *Globe and Mail* a few years earlier by Tabatha Southey entitled: 'Boot Our Young Out of the Nest? Oh, Grow Up.' She challenges the notion that feeling grown up and not so grown up is not new and can be found throughout literature for decades. She suggests that we need to re-examine and re-define the 'benchmarkers' for adulthood. My suggestion is that like Lee Wellman explains below, our 'goals' or 'benchmarkers' will no longer be as tangible as the face of adulthood and social maturity are transformed. This article was written in response to a lengthy article found in the *New York Times* magazine in 2010 by Robin Marantz Henig. Southey said she swore she would never write in defense of emerging adults again but she finds herself doing just that in the end saying that:

The Times piece suggests to me, unintentionally, that it's also reasonable to question whether all of the misery that attentive parents are accused of saving their children from isn't as beneficial as was believed, either.

What if, while some young people rise to an emotional or financial crisis, learn from it, and reap benefits, others merely fail and never quite get back on their feet? And what if individual parents of children, even of people in their twenties are the ones best able to gauge how much adult-child-assisting should be done?

There are, at the root here, economic and work related influences at play. To some degree the recession impacted the potential to 'grow up' in terms of jobs and this is very clearly stated in Henig's article. The question remains, how much intervening should parents of adult children do, in what ways? This question is addressed by Henig here:

Does that mean it's a good thing to let 20-somethings meander — or even to encourage them to meander — before they settle down? That's the question that plagues so many of their parents. It's easy to see the advantages to the delay. There is time enough for adulthood and its attendant obligations; maybe if kids take longer to choose their mates and their careers, they'll make fewer mistakes and live happier lives. But it's just as easy to see the drawbacks. As the settling-down sputters along for the “emerging adults,” things can get precarious for the rest of us. Parents are helping pay bills they never counted on paying, and social institutions are missing out on young people contributing to productivity and growth. Of course, the recession complicates things, and even if every 20-something were ready to skip the “emerging” moratorium and act like a grown-up, there wouldn't necessarily be jobs for them all. So we're caught in a weird moment, unsure whether to allow young people to keep exploring and questioning or to cut them off and tell them just to find something, anything, to put food on the table and get on with their lives.

So as an earlier response to the feelings expressed by Jill Sexton, it may not be that millennials aren't 'allowed' to grow-up. It may be that we are caught in a 'weird moment' where we want those great feelings that go along with autonomy, but social re-structuring and the economy on a macro level make this difficult on the individual level. The one thing I find most striking about Sexton's article is that she is asking for permission to grow up at the same time as the headline suggests she is telling other millennials that it is okay to grow up. It seems odd to me that 'growing up' would come with a permission slip. Growing-up to me seems more to be an exercise in agency whereby the re-definition of oneself comes in large part from themselves and their own behaviour. It seems to me that social maturity might look like folding laundry because you have realized and decided that you enjoy keeping your linen closet in order regardless of who is in favour of this practice. Attaining a full-time job might facilitate one's ability to be economically responsible for oneself thus securing a job might facilitate some aspects of growing up. I really think seeking permission to grow up exemplifies a lack of recognition whereby sites of agency to become an adult or 'grown-up' are located. A

sense of becoming that is so dependent on the permission of another is an example of a problematic and uneven power relationship. Further, this isn't the message I am hearing from the tone of most articles. I am hearing, that it is okay not to be married or that it is excusable not to have a job because there are not enough jobs. I am hearing enjoy and take advantage of this time of self-exploration, relationship exploration, education, while you are waiting for spaces of meaningful work to open up. In this final quote I am hearing sympathy for the difficulties millennials might encounter. It is explained that Millennials may have little to no choice but to wait to grow up. This is quite different from having their adulthood being deliberately prevented.

Arnett would like to see us choose a middle course. "To be a young American today is to experience both excitement and uncertainty, wide-open possibility and confusion, new freedoms and new fears," he writes in "Emerging Adulthood." During the timeout they are granted from nonstop, often tedious and dispiriting responsibilities, "emerging adults develop skills for daily living, gain a better understanding of who they are and what they want from life and begin to build a foundation for their adult lives." If it really works that way, if this longer road to adulthood really leads to more insight and better choices, then Arnett's vision of an insightful, sensitive, thoughtful, content, well-honed, self-actualizing crop of grown-ups would indeed be something worth waiting for.

It sounds to me like parents would more than give permission to their children to 'grow-up.' It sounds like they are waiting too, some more patiently than others.

Chapter 9 Discussion of Popular Literature and Self-Help Books

There is a wide range of popularized literature regarding twenty-somethings, the QLC, emerging adulthood. These books come in several genres: novels, biographies, journalistic portrayals, self-help how-to types, collections of individual coming of age stories, collections of essays or non-fiction writing. I have surveyed and reviewed a number of these publications (see the table at the end of the methodological chapter). My questions regarding popular print media were: 1) Do they present a unified discourse regarding the topic at hand or are there variations?; and 2) Do they see the current issues being faced by twenty-somethings as specific and individual or general to all people who pass through their twenties. In responding to these questions, I will compare the way the authors frame 'emerging adulthood' and the QLC in terms of: 1) definitions; 2) causes; and 3) advice regarding emerging adulthood and the QLC.

Lia Macko and Kerry Rubin (2004) wrote a book entitled, *Midlife Crisis at 30: How the Stakes have changed for a New Generation--And What to Do About it*. The authors' aim with this book was to highlight the common threads that exist in the many stories of struggles that exist for women of Generations X and Y. They explain that they have found no perfect solution to these problems although they do discuss some of the strategies utilized by women who have experienced a 'midlife crisis' at 30:

So, this book is not intended to identify rigid and perfect solutions as the authors now realize that no such things exist. Instead, it is intended to launch a meaningful dialogue about the story of a generation and share with women in the midst of a personal crisis an awareness of the cultural threads that bind them, while revealing the galvanizing power of that shared acknowledgement.

The common thread that they have highlighted across the women that they have surveyed was a generational one. They describe the generational component of their

analysis of the women they interviewed as follows: "All of them came of age during or after the women's movement, and all were raised to believe that their futures were defined by *options* rather than limitations" (Macko & Rubin, 2004:2). Similarly to the study of women that I have conducted here, they found that expectations played a part in the way women felt about the timing of the milestones and events as they occurred in each of their lives. They also describe a pressure for women to fit their lives into a 'time crunch' that can be limiting and difficult to do.

Just what is driving this "crunch"? First the timetable of events defining adulthood has completely transformed over the course of just one generation. In the past, the major milestones in a woman's adult life--marriage, motherhood and decisions about career stretched out over the course of a lifetime in fairly predictable ways. Most women married in their early twenties and expected careers (if they had them) to build slowly over multiple decades. But the latest census data measuring new timetables for marriage, motherhood and women's earning power show that today's young women are getting married, having babies and making major decisions about the direction of conflicting expectations about romantic relationships and professional success add yet more emotional intensity to what is emerging as a significant interval in their careers at a very compressed juncture --right around their thirtieth birthdays. At the same time, there are more single women in their late twenties and early thirties than ever before (2003:3).

They describe pressure and anxiety with regard to this 'time crunch' and the expectation that women have placed on themselves to co-ordinate their lives in this timely fashion.

The echoing, pervasive anxiety our peers expressed during interviews is also largely connected to the lingering social and economic contradictions that continue to affect women of all ages--namely, the persistent gap between What has Changed in terms of women's progress and What has Stayed the Same in terms of old-school corporate structures and rigid social conventions (2004:3).

This last point reminds me of the concept of residual tradition that was discussed earlier.

Again, I see evidence that Generations X and Y remain hosts to social conventions relating to monogamy, 'the nuclear family,' and the economic structures that existed to uphold this family form. At the same time, the introduction of higher education for more

women and the expectation of *opportunities* with respect to work especially instilled a new set of discourses to be paired with many residual social conventions. Notice in the quote below the new sequence that is highlighted: Work, Marriage, and Kids. This is a new order in that the types of work opportunities that many women are seeking also involve education. What has not been highlighted here is the length of education. In other words, I would suggest that for women who want to work in high paying positions within this technologized world, more education is required. Thus there may actually be four stages to consider rather than three: Education, Work, Marriage, and Kids. Moreover, the authors are still working with a progressive step by step model here. Today, these stages may not necessarily occur within this order at all. They are often fluid rather than compartmentalized categories. Further, they are not acknowledging that many versions of 'Happily Ever After' occur reflexively and recursively with constrained agency and not necessarily 'on their own terms, and by their own design.' Here is how they explained their understanding of the new sequential order of personal life:

Many Gen-X-Y women have assumed their lives would play out in a specific, sequential order: Stage One: work. Stage Two: marriage. Stage Three: kids. Some of us have focused so much energy on conquering Stage One that we failed to recognize that unless each stage of life makes sense with the one that follows, work and marriage and kids can eventually become mutually exclusive categories. These members of the New Girls' Club figured out how to avoid falling into this trap either by learning to make choices that led to integrated lives or by recognizing that not all vision of happiness will come in traditional packages or on predictable timetables. Instead, these accomplished women have embraced new versions of Happily Ever After that comes on their own terms and by their own design (Macko and Rubin, 2004:141).

Below are the two excerpts from the narratives that women compiled with the authors. The first woman discusses age 35 as the right to time to think about getting married. Here we see the variations in ideas presented across the literature. While there

are no hard rules about when to have a child, after reading information from the Canadian Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, we know fertility starts to decline at about this time. Embedded within her statement, is the idea that all women today are able to 'go out and get a fabulous job.' As discussed above, economic reasons for marriage and children may have shifted. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the body has limitations and their remain socio-economic barriers for women in even achieving an education let alone attaining 'a fabulous job.' I am reminded of the women who described that their families were upon them before they even had time to think about it. Here is her description of the 'right' time to think about getting married:

Just looking at all of the women I know, I think 35 is the right time to think about getting married. You still have time to have children then. When I got out of college, the last thing on my mind was getting married I had already worked for *Newsweek*, and I knew I could pretty much do whatever I wanted one way or another. I felt like I had my whole twenties to get through before even thinking about marriage. If the guy I was previously engaged to had not completely rearranged his life, I wouldn't have considered getting married then, I don't think. Happily Ever After for us cannot look like it did for our parents --many of them married for economic reasons. Not all women were able to go out and get fabulous jobs (Macko and Rubin, 2004:147).

What I find most interesting about the quote below is how she says at the end "maybe I needed to grow up a lot more before I could really be happily married." This really stands 'traditional' thought and conventional pathways to growing up on their head. Compared to Julie who I interviewed who said she felt like a grown up because her mother would always tell her that she is a grown-up now because she is married and has two children. Thus, marriage is again not necessarily a pathway to or signifier of social maturity. Further, there is highlighted here an new openness to other roles between children and adult women that exist other than mother. She did eventually re-marry and created new roles for herself with regard to the children who already surrounded her in

her life. This creative re-definition of one woman's role vis-a-vis children is an example of reflexive agency in the face of social and biological constraints.

Ultimately, my husband and I ended up getting divorced. It wasn't the Army's fault; we just really were not meant to be with each other. He was not the right choice for me. That was really hard because I also knew getting divorced meant that I was at risk of not having time to have children. If you rewind and do the math, I was 28 when I realized this marriage was not working and it was only a matter of time before it would collapse. I knew I wasn't going to have children with this person. And then, it would be a few years to recover and a few years to figure out what's coming next. At that time, the thinking was that 35 was the oldest you could be to get pregnant. By the time I got to 35, I thought I still had until 40. I thought maybe 45. My friends listened to me agonize about this for 15 years. The issue of children and motherhood was alive all the time for me. Yet I think I stayed in the Army because I just found the work so compelling. I knew for sure I could make it work there, that it was just up to me, and if I worked hard, it would come out right. I had already seen that working hard would not necessarily make a marriage work out right. And maybe I needed to grow up a lot more before I could really be happily married (Claudia Kennedy in Macko and Rubin, 2004: 161-162).

Bess Vanrenen (2007) edited a compilation of quarter life stories entitled, *Generation What: Dispatches from the Quarter-Life Crisis* and she has placed a generational slant on her reading of these. This compilation was intended for a general audience and has a colloquial tone. In describing her aim with this present piece of work, she acknowledges that many people are filled with anxiety and despair during their twenties and even into their thirties:

I wanted to provide a cohesive, interesting, insightful book. *Generation What?* is a book for those filled with the anxiety and despair that this time in life often brings. Again, this book is not everything to all people. Hopefully, if you are in the midst of a mid-twenties/thirties crisis, you will find a story in here that echoes your own. If not, you can at least laugh and cry with the writers as they expose their stories (Vanrenen, 2007:15).

As she describes it here, the QLC today may be different from the social circumstances felt in the past:

...But different social circumstances--whether it's a world war, an economic depression or even a boom--bring on changes to the existing social norms and the way humans relate to each other. As a result, the crisis a young person experiences today may be distinct from ones felt in years past...

...Back in the fifties and early sixties, most young Americans were getting married and having babies by their early twenties. Folks found a job after high school or college and stuck with it to the bitter end. Sex before marriage was the exception, not the rule (at least that's what they say).; But the civil rights movement, the sexual revolution, feminism and anti-war protest of the era changed the future for kids.

Picture a hip lady of Dylan's times they-are-a-changing era. Long hair flowing, she attends a few protests at her college campus. At some point, she meets a like-minded fellow and they run off to the courthouse to get married. Though she has a lot more freedom than her mother, there are still a lot of careers she can't really pursue, a lot of lifestyles not quite available to her. Soon she has a baby in tow, and since she is getting paid much less than her hubby anyway, she decides to quit working and take care of the child. She will undoubtedly raise this child much differently than her parents' raised her. Now picture her grown-up daughter. Older generations paved the way for a whole new style of living. Rather than feeling compelled to settle down at twenty-one, the new generation can go to college or opt out, date several people, try out a few different jobs and wait until they're ready for marriage. They don't have to get married either, or if they're gay they can't but that's a whole different story (Vanrenen, 2007:11-12).

While written with a much more familiar tone, she seems to acknowledge social barriers and influences upon the QLC. She acknowledges the disparity between the options and what people can actually grab hold of. Vanrenan points out that this is also a crisis of 'closed door' in a world where children are socialized with the 'American Dream.' The biographies presented in her compilation challenge the 'illusory' notion set forth by Robinson. In her words:

...But, wait there's a problem, and here is where the quarter-life crisis creeps in. Twentysomethings aren't exactly reveling in their lack of restrictions, social economic or otherwise. In a way it appears like there is too much freedom these days, too many choices. And these societal changes don't just hit the middle to upper classes, this is a widespread movement. What school to go to? Who to date? Who to marry? What career to pursue? Seem like nice problems to have right? But for anyone who's been sold the American dream, it's actually quite overwhelming.

Not only are young people surrounded by hundreds of new options, there is also a disparity between what they see and what they can grab hold of. Once high school graduates think they have made a decision, they just might realize that what they want and what they can get are two very different things. This is important to realize. The QLC is not just a crisis of indecision; it is also a crisis of closed doors. The American dream says any child can grow up to be President of the United States. In high school and college, kids believe this is more or less true (Vanrenen 2007:12).

She explains that common sense would suggest that there are two types of quarter life crises, (more or less):

Common sense says that there are, more or less, two types of quarter-life crises. There is the young adult who gets a job right out of high school or college, but then begins to question if that job is really a good fit and suddenly makes a major life change. And there is the one who does not necessarily finish school (at least not in a hurry), cannot really figure out what to do, and flounders around for a while not committing to anything. Usually the latter comes to hate the instability of that kind of life and eventually settles down in some way, even clinging desperately to something stable, like a job or a partner (Vanrenen, 2007:14).

I would suggest that there are more types of QLCs than this. Quarter life dilemmas and challenges would have common threads and the difficulties with coordinating one life in a world of exponential multiplicity would be extensive. What about the young woman who marries and has a baby right out of high school, who changes her mind and doesn't want to be married anymore? Or, what about the girl who had her baby in high school as a single woman who then decides she wants to get a college diploma? Or what about the university student who finished her degree on time and with honours but spends years in an entry level job that she could have had without a huge educational debt? What about the 35 year old career woman who has an education and the job she worked for but doesn't have a family of her own yet because there has been no time to focus on this yet? This common sense definition of the QLC is limited and over-simplified.

Sylvia Ann Hewlett (20) has written an academic/journalistic 'how to' for becoming a professional mother. It is entitled, *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*. She provides her reader with a very strict list of guidelines for how to go about doing this. Here is the list:

1. Figure out what you want your life to look like at age 45. What do you want your personal life to look like? What do you want your career to look like? If it turns out that you want children (and approximately 86 percent of high achieving women do) you need to become highly intentional -- and seriously proactive. If you don't want children the pressure is off.
2. Give urgent priority to finding a partner. This project is extremely time-sensitive and deserves special attention in your twenties. Understand that a forgiving lover, lasting marriage will enhance your life and make it much more likely that you will have children. The data presented in this book demonstrate that high-achieving women find it much easier to find partners at younger ages.
3. Have your first child before 35. The miracles of ART notwithstanding, do not wait until your late thirties or early forties before trying to have that first child. As we now understand, late-in-life childbearing is fraught with risk and failure. And even if you manage to get one child "under the wire" you may fail to have a second. This, too, can trigger enormous regret.
4. Choose a Career that will give you the "gift of time." Certain careers lend themselves to a better work/family balance because they provide more flexibility and are much more forgiving of career interruptions. As we now know, female entrepreneurs do much better than female lawyers in combining career and family. And lawyers do better than corporate women. Overall, there's huge gap between entrepreneurs and executives in terms of how easily they're able to balance work and family. As Molly Friedrich pointed out in Chapter 1 young women wanting both a career and children should think about avoiding professions with rigid career trajectories.
5. Choose a company that will help you achieve work/life balance. Companies vary widely in the kinds of work/life options they provide. If you are an ambitious young woman who wants a family find a job at a firm that provides employees with a rich array of work/life policies that include reduced-hour schedules and various kinds of job-protected leave (2002:301-302).

The first thing she suggests to her reader is the sort of back counting that was discussed earlier. She asks her reader to imagine their dream life at the age of 45 and then follow a series of steps, if they want children. Her model is very much based on a nuclear family type model where marriage is included before having children. Already,

this seems like it may be a challenge to many emerging adult women who may not fit or may not want to fit into this type of relationship or family structure. Urgent priority must be given to finding a partner in their twenties and she should bear her first child by the time she is 35. As we have seen, in many of the life stories presented in the interviews I conducted, life just isn't always that orderly even if you try really hard to make it that way. 'Women who want both a career and a baby, should avoid careers with rigid trajectories.'

Christine Hassler has written another 'how to' type book regarding the experience of women's twenties entitled, *20 Something 20 Everything*. This book also has a generational slant having the reader examine the 'shoulds' they have learned as they were growing up.

This book is a guide to what has become a very difficult decade in a woman's life. I wrote it so that we -- the daughters of feminists, hippies, wage earners, and homemakers -- could share what we are going through and why it's happening. It is up to our generation of twenty-somethings to challenge the pressurized idea that today's young women must have it all and to champion the concept that the twenties are a time to discover our identity and goals while building a firm foundation for the rest of our lives. Our twenty-something years do not have to be so lonely, confusing, and treacherous. By addressing the questions we ask ourselves in our twenties and by providing ways to answer them, this book will guide you toward the contentment, balance and direction you crave (2005:11).

Hassler discusses where 'shoulds' come from and the role of 'shoulds' with regards to expectations for adulthood and how these expectations fuel what she calls the 'should' epidemic:

Beginning in childhood we take in endless information about the way we should be, pictures of how life should look, and ideas about what we should want. Our belief system continues to welcome such expectations as we grow up, and thus the 'should' epidemic continues to grow throughout our twenties (2005:54).

In order to determine whether the reader is in the midst of 'an early mid-life crisis,'

Hassler suggests to the reader to consider the following questions:

1. Do you feel a need to have it all?
 2. Do you feel older for the first time in your life?
 3. Do feel pressure to grow up and get your adult life in order?
 4. Do you often feel depressed overwhelmed, lost and maybe even a little hopeless?
 5. Do you ever feel that time is running out when you try to figure out your career and decide whether you want to get married and/or have children?
 6. Are you stressed out by choices that seemingly will affect the rest of your life?
 7. Do you feel that you have failed because you don't know what you want to do with your life?
 8. Do you overanalyze yourself and your decisions?
 9. Do you ever feel guilty for complaining about your life when you've lived only about a quarter of it?
 10. Are you embarrassed that you have not figured out or accomplished more?
- (2005:10-11)

If your total is five or more, welcome to your early midlife crisis! Don't worry; you are in good company. The Feminine twenty-something crisis has become a bit of an epidemic; and sorry, ladies, there is no vaccine or antibiotic for this ailment. We are all just sweating it out. But is there a way to make this in our lives a little more comfortable and a bit less of a crisis? *Yes!* And I can say that with confidence because I experienced my own twenty-something crisis (2005:11).

The reader is then encouraged to answer three questions and begins with the idea of the twenties triangle: Who am I? What do I want? How do I get what I want? Note that these questions focus on the individual whereas questioning the 'shoulds' focuses on the agents of socialization and the structural mechanisms. Again, expectations play a big role in explaining where these anxious or stressed feeling may originate from. Take for example the quote below given by a twenty-five year old woman whose personal life did not resemble the life she not only expected but thought that she should have:

I just turned twenty-five, and my family and I celebrated as we always do. When they brought out the cake, signing 'Happy Birthday,' I started crying. I was so upset because I thought I was not where I was supposed to be in my life. I am not married; I don't even have a boyfriend! No house; my career is up in the air; and there is no way I could have a baby by twenty seven. This is the lowest time in my life. I feel like a loser because I have not met any of my life's goals and my twenties are already half-over (2005:89).

Her explanation for where distressing feelings come from is less problematic than what she suggests people do about these. What seems to be problematic about Hassler's advice is the idea that we might be able to easily distinguish our 'wants' from our 'shoulds.' Even with reflexive thinking it may be hard to shake our 'wants' free from our 'shoulds.'

Further, she provides her own sets of questionable 'shoulds' (although she doesn't come right out and call them this) for example the list of 'red flag men' who should be avoided without any real justification for avoiding these men. Moreover, many men who are emerging adults might very well be on this list because they have lived their life. They may find themselves on the list for many of the same reasons that a woman might find herself reading Hasslers' book.

Exercise #50

Mr. I'm not ready or the commitment phobe;
The undercover asshole (really nice on the outside but a snake on the inside)
The "Yes" man (you can walk all over him and he does whatever you say)
The palette cleansers or FIBS ("Fill in the blanks") or simply rebound men
who we like simply because they are there
The 'Wounded Bird' (he just got his heart broken and he thinks you will be the
one to heal it)
The really rich guy without a lot of depth
The guy who will sleep with you but considers love a four letter word
The older (as in old enough to be your dad) man
The married or recently divorced man
A guy who reminds you too much of your father or who you wish was your
father
The project (a guy you are convinced you can improve)
The mamma's boy

The guy whose baggage shares cargo space with yours (you have the same issues)
 The "You'll never do better than me" guy
 The addict, the heavy drinker, or the party guy
 The text messaging emailing but never calling guy
 The friend who wants more but to whom you are not attracted guy
 The friend you want but who is not attracted to you
 The guy who always says the right things
 The "Good on paper" guy (the one your parents like more than you do)
 Mr. Chronically unemployed
 The dreamer (all talk, no action)
 Anyone who carries a man purse
 Grown men who still live at home for no good reason (Hassler, 2005:224-225)

There are two key questions that she wants the reader to consider regarding career: Do you know what your passion is? and Are you currently doing something you are passionate about and making money at it? She is. She wants the reader to leave behind the 'suffering' type definition of the word 'passion' that is found in the dictionary. I am assuming here that she is discarding a biblical notion of passion as depicted illustrations of the Passions of Christ. She says we need to do away with the notion that we need to be passionate about the work we do. Perhaps our passion may have nothing to do with our work. Somewhat ironically, Hassler's passion is herself and she makes money talking about herself and her 'crisis' yet suggests to her reader to 'get this whole idea of passion, also known as suffering, out of our heads' This is a different strategy than the one that is suggested down below. By writing this book, Hassler is allowing herself to capitalize on her own 'suffering' and agonizing 'crisis,' why shouldn't her readers? In the last chapter of her book, Hassler discusses the importance of being passionate about oneself and becoming her own soul mate. She concludes:

Discovering and pursuing what I feel to be my purpose in life became possible when I finally got passionate about *me*. Meeting the man of my dreams and falling in love were effortless after I had become my own soul mate. For years I had searched for fulfillment but instead encountered all kinds of

obstacles that blocked the easy flow of my life -- and the biggest one was myself. As soon as I began to clear my foundation and get to the root of my own twenties triangle, I was able to remove those obstacles and stop squeezing myself into situations that did not feel right and learn how to let go (2005:312).

Damian Barr (2004) opens his book with a generational take on the QLC. He begins: *Get It Together* is the first book to capture the feelings and fears of a generation unprepared for life in an increasingly competitive and fragmented world" (Barr, 2004:3). 'Who are you today without a struggle?' He asks rhetorically. This remains an important thread throughout his book as he sees an identity crisis at the core of the QLC whether the symptomatic issues present at the level of relationships or employment. He asks another question: "Is the pressure to get it together making you fall apart? If so, you are in good company. If not fuck off. Nobody wants to hear about how fabulous your life is" (2004:4).

He defines the QLC as generational explaining that at the point when he is writing there are no quarter life experts

There are no quarterlife 'experts' because no other generation has experienced the QLC. No other generation has graduated into as much debt. No other generation has been thrown into a world of instant microcelebrity where you're no one if you haven't been on *Big Brother* or aren't the friend of a friend of someone who has. *We're* the experts on our own lives, even when we expertly fuck them up (Barr 2004:3).

This generational take stands somewhat in contrast with the one I have presented here.

Rather than focusing on what women were not prepared for, I also focused on what women were prepared for. Damien Bar describes the QLC as follows:

So this is it -- The decade when the shit really hits the fan. You leave home then move back. You go travelling. You get a job then quit it. You get another job and quit that too. You have your first big relationship and your first big break-up. You have your first orgasm, hopefully. You catch crabs and promise to be more careful. You have kids or find you can't or get a dog instead. You buy a place, or

try to. You find God, change sex, grow a fringe (then cut it off). Basically, you get a life (2004:251).

'So...you don't know what you're doing or where you're going or whether you should buy a flat, get a pension or go travelling. Who cares? You have the rest of your life to work that shit out. The decisions we make now *are* incredibly important, but they're rarely irreversible. In the meantime, I think I'll get my hair cut. Just a little bit shorter. I can always grow it back (2004:258).

It's okay to be indecisive because you have your whole life to figure that out and most decisions are reversible. However, I would remind us of the gendered nature of the QLC. Contrast Barr's take on the quarter life dilemma with what Hewlett was saying. The very important decisions regarding children are not so easily reversible. It is not to say that the added layer that the 'to be or not to be a parent' question adds to the identity dilemmas, challenges and work throughout emerging adulthood do not apply to men, the biological time factor may allow for them to be less immediately pressing. For some men, such as Lee Wellman whose biographical account of what he refers to as his QLC is discussed below, rigid social time-tables with regard to marriage severely impacted his anxiety-level.

Po Bronson (2002) has compiled a series of stories whereby people have described how they have come to know what they should do with their life entitled, *What Should I Do With My Life? The True Story of People who Answered the Ultimate Question*. This was not an academic or journalistic study. It seems it was more of a personal journey learning about personal journeys as he approached life as one of them. Unlike other books, this was not a 'how to' filled with recipe knowledge. Rather, it seems it is a series of 'what I did with my life' stories that come together to form 'what Po Bronson did with his life. '

I was no expert. I had no credentials as a counselor or academic. I approached these people as merely "one of them." The events of my life had shredded any theories I used to have about how to address the question "What should I do with my life?" I had been humbled into admitting I knew nothing...(2002:xvii).

Again, this is someone who is starting out (again) not knowing what direction to take but with a new openness to error and willingness to be malleable. It is another example of a 'non calculated' approach to life within the framework of risk society. Bronson brings these two discourses together by noting that it seemed that people, "were as likely to stumble into a better life as they were to arrive there by reasoned planning."

...I learned that it was in hard times that people usually changed the course of their life; in good times, they frequently only talked about change. Hard times forced them to overcome the doubts that normally gave them pause. So the people herein suffered layoffs, bankruptcies, divorces, evictions, illnesses, and the deaths of loved ones, and as a result they were as likely to stumble into a better life as they were to arrive there by reasoned planning. They made mistakes before summoning the courage to get it right. Their path called into question the notion that a calling is something you inherently know when you're young....

...They did not find some Single Perfect Answer to the question; at some point it felt right enough that they made their choice and the energy formerly spent casting doubt about was now devoted to making their choice fruitful for as long as it might last (2002:xvii).

Bronson, explains that the multiplicity in their stories, variability in their 'success' and 'failures' helped him to understand, and be patient and flexible in his own life. He asked himself: "What do people really want?" and this brings us back to the word 'passion.' Only his version of passion is slightly different as he acknowledges the influence of 'hardship' on the creation of 'passion.'

They want to find work they're passionate about. Offering benefits and incentives are mere compromises. Educating people is important but not enough--far too many of our most educated people are operating at quarter-speed, unsure of their place in the world, contributing too little to the productive engine of modern civilization, still feeling like observers, like they haven't come close to living up to their potential. Our guidance needs to be better. We need to encourage people

to find their sweet spot. Productivity explodes when people love what they do. We're sitting on a huge potential boom in productivity, which we could tap into if we got all the square pegs in the square holes and round pegs in round holes. It's not something we can measure with statistics but it's a huge economic issue. It's a great natural resources that we're ignoring (2002:363).

I used to think certain jobs were "cool," and more likely to inspire passion. Now I know passion is rooted in deeply felt experiences, which happen anywhere. I used to think life presented a five-page menu of choices. I think the choice is in whether to be honest, to ourselves and others, and the rest is more of an uncovering, a peeling away layers, discovering talents we assumed we didn't have. I used to treasure the innocence of first love. Now I treasure the hard-fought. I used to want to change the world. Now I'm open to letting it change me (2002:365).

Interestingly, Bronson so clearly brings the concept of 'passion' back to an economic issue. If we were all fully engaged with our work and passionate about it we would be more productive and we would be a great resource. Moreover, according to Bronson passion doesn't come from finding a 'cool' job. Passion comes from our own deeply felt experiences and thus we are responsible for the generation of our passion through exploration of our life and self. Here, I go back to my earlier theoretical point that the project of the self is tied to the economic climate of postmodern society and a heightened system of capitalism.

Lee Wellman (2006) offers with his book an autobiographical approach to the QLC as he, personally experienced it. He described high levels of debilitating anxiety in his book, *My QLC: How an Anxiety Disorder Knocked Me Down and How I Got Back Up*. Without naming it as such, he does note and describe what resembles the destination vs. process discourses. He talks about his 'iceberg beliefs' (Wellman, 2006:81) which are similar to Hassler's 'shoulds.' One of his iceberg beliefs was that he should be married by the time he was 30. In his career life, Lee explained that he felt very accomplished and

that he had met milestones. However, there is an important discontinuity in his narrative concerning whether or not he had 'arrived.' On the one hand he says that he had met all his goals but then on the other hand he discusses that he had assumed that he would be married at 30 but had not yet 'arrived' in the relationship domain of his life. He describes feeling *behind* with regard to intimate relationships. Lee describes a new type of goal that he sets. These are goals that are intangible and often require never-ending everyday commitment to work on them. An example of this is: "Life does not have a blueprint, there is no rulebook to follow nor any way to keep score (so don't live like it does) (Wellman, 2006:91). He describes the process of coming to this new understanding here:

When I moved back to Boston, I left what became a very comfortable and enjoyable lifestyle in New York City, and a fantastic group of friends. I didn't realize how much I'd miss them until I arrived in Boston and found that many of my old friends had married and moved out to the suburbs of Boston. This transition highlighted the fact that I was twenty-nine years old, single and starting all over...again. And it seemed as though the older I got, the more difficult it had become to uproot myself and start fresh. This difficulty coupled with my iceberg belief that I had always thought I'd be married by age thirty, caused me to feel that something was off almost as if I was *behind* in life. In addition to all of the stressors that spurred my quarter-life crisis, there was one other circumstance that played a large part in my struggle: I had *arrived*. Simply explained, I had checked off all of the major goals that I had set for myself and had arrived at my 'destination'. Up until that point my life had been a series of setting, striving, and accomplishing goals. From these goals I derived motivation. They were what I worked towards and pursued each day.

So what happens when you accomplish all of your goals, when you reach your destination? What happens when you *arrive*? Well the answer lies in the type of goals that you set. Throughout my struggles, I have come to realize that there are two types of goals, those that can be viewed as tangible destination goals and those that can be viewed as ways to live your life. While setting destination goals can provide a great deal of motivation, achieving them can also lead to unexplained anxiety and/or depression. On the other hand, when goals are set in regard to how you live your life, there is no box to check off and no trophy to take home, simply a guiding reminder of what you consider to be valuable in your life. These goals can be pursued each and every day (Wellman, 2006:87-89).

Lee Wellman provides a chapter that he calls the 'Cheat Sheet.' This chapter is a list of the short notes to everything he has learned about the QLC and also fighting an anxiety disorder. These are listed here and my particular concern for the moment are #2 and #3.:

1. Breathe, Relax, and Slow Down
2. TODAY --live for today and be present
3. Stop future thinking--don't get bogged down with 'what ifs' and 'shoulds'
4. Identify and control your negative thinking.
5. Be happy in SPITE of Problems, Things will not be perfect for life is not perfect there is no blueprint to follow
6. Be thankful for your health and the moments you are fortunate enough to live
7. Don't be so hard on yourself
8. Accept your feelings and don't anticipate how you will feel
9. Put it into perspective--don't let anxiety become your focus.
10. Have courage--Bring it on!
11. Be happy with progress and know that this will pass.
12. Better for going through this
13. Maximize the positives--turn negatives into positives
14. Anxiety will become less captive and scary
15. Be comfortable with yourself wherever you are.

To suggest that we live for today and stop future thinking is a strikingly different type of suggestion than is offered by Hewlett to professional women on a quest to also have children. It also stands in opposition to more academic pieces such as Beck's work or Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) as they discuss risk society and the economic and social implications of being very calculated when it comes to the question of children. While there are 'no blue prints to follow.' There are blue prints that we can recall. Juxtaposing Hewlett's list and Wellman's list I can feel two very different orientations towards life. With Hewlett's list I get the sense that she thinks we have a high degree of agency and that we are very much in control of our destiny if we chose and act

purposefully. Her model depends on that iceberg belief that Wellman ultimately let go of: Getting married by the age of 30. When I read Wellman's list I get the impression that there is a good possibility that a lot will happen that is beyond our control and that we don't have as much agency or control over our destiny, rather we have control over our feelings about it. As women gain more biological control over their bodies and lives with birth control and New Reproductive Technologies (NRTs), they seem to engage with the question of children with a great deal of future thinking, planning and living today for the 'most perfect' tomorrow to welcome a limited number of children into. Women who engage with the discourses similar to the one presented by Hewlett, may feel the pressure of time and anxiety with regard to the question of children because they are calculating, future thinking and not living in the moment but instead for a future moment that is never guaranteed and often incalculable.

Chapter 10 - An Engagement with the Interview Data:

Introduction:

It is entirely plausible to me that, historically speaking, people have met the transition from adolescence to adulthood but perhaps the types of challenges and the ways that they related to these as challenging could be more variable. Most, but not all, participants noted that 'growing up' is hard. One respondent said she actually found it 'very easy' but then contradicted herself later in the interview. What is highlighted in the interviews being analyzed here, is the difference in type of challenges that are posed by a quick shift from marriage as the first stepping stone to adulthood to attempting post-secondary education as the first stepping stone towards adulthood - at least in so far as it is perceived by the women in the study. What next becomes apparent is that the terms 'adult,' 'adulthood' and 'grown-up' are unstable categories. That is to say that there is a shift from the idea of stepping towards adulthood as a destination to an understanding of engaging in the continual, contingent and non-linear process of becoming an adult. The current 'quarter-life' dilemmas and challenges may have something to do with being caught between these two schools of thought and two methods of becoming. For example, to a woman who finds herself limited by motherhood and marriage may have a daughter who in the next generation finds herself unsure how to mesh together serial monogamy, children and full-time work outside the home. Third, the interview research suggests that 'resiliency skills' (Reivich and Shatte, 2003) may have something to do with how women are able to cope with 'quarter life' dilemmas and challenges.

As a sociologist, it is the participant's negotiation of the often diverging and even conflicting discourses and practices concerning life course pathways that are of specific concern to me with the present study. What I find to be particular with the 'coming of

age' stories of women of Generations X and Y is the background influence of rapid social changes relating to technology, education, work, reproduction and family life itself. Given this rapid rate of social change some women of Generation X, particularly those who sat on the Generation XY cusp had little time to re-adjust to the new landscape of early adulthood, now known as 'emerging adulthood.' Women experience this re-adjustment variably, meaning that their feelings range from liberation to uncertainty and confusion to a generalized overwhelmed feeling. For example, some women might express feeling liberated from rigid pathways relating to stereotypical roles such as 'wife' and 'mother.' Still, others may feel uncertainty and confusion concerning what to do in the absence of the adult roles such as wife and mother if they expected and desired these. Others still, may feel overwhelmed by the daunting task of meshing together 'traditional' roles of wife and mother with new life course options such as higher education and full time work. Below, we will review the participants' definitions and experiences of growing up. We will then describe some of the processes associated with growing up and emerging adulthood as expressed by the women in the interview. Finally, we will discuss, what could be read as 'resiliency skills' that were relied on by participants as they attempted to deal with quarterlife dilemmas and challenges.

Growing Up Is....?

Although there were themes, each respondent had personal responses when completing the statement, "Growing up is..." In a broad sense, their definitions include the above listed categories. Here I provide a few examples expressed by the participants during the interviews. We should note that the first three categories differ from the last two in that they do not deal specifically with the questioning and re-defining that is typical of emerging adulthood. The last two categories are discussed below and relate closely to the central research question: what do women do when the roles they were socialized to fill are not there for them to fill in the way that they may have expected to. I will begin by discussing the first three categories by way of listing some interview comments that relate to each. Here are some examples that are relate to: 1) Responsibilities and care for self and others; 2) Autonomy, independence and exercising agency; and 3) Becoming, identity and status.

Responsibility and Care for Self and Others

- Being responsible for your own happy (Lisa, Case #1)
- Knowing what to do with your baby bonus (Carly, Case #12)
- Learning to do everything in moderation (Suzie, Case #2)
- Paying your bills and having food rotting in your fridge (Carrie, Case #6)
- I had a lot of responsibilities and that made me feel grown up (Stephanie, Case #23)
- Having to take care of a spouse. It is like being a mother but not really being a mother (Tanya, Case #23 - also status & becoming i.e. married)
- I am like the adult. I am responsible for everyone. I have to make sure I don't lose anyone (Shelley, Case #9).

Autonomy, Independence and Exercising Agency

- Making your own decisions (Lucie, Case #3)
- Not needing financial and emotional support of your parents (Emily, Case #18)
- Sovereignty. (Julie Case #)
- Establishing your life in the way you see fit (Mireille, Case #20)
- Definitely buying your first house makes you feel grown up. There are a lot of legalities to it and contracts that you have to sign. Signing paper work always makes you feel grown up. (Stephanie, Case Study #23)
- When you make your first move out, it's independence. When you get your first car, it's independence. (Lisa)

Becoming, Identity and Status

- Coming into your own (Julie, Case #)
- My mom keeps telling me I'm a grown up now because I am married and have two kids (Laurie, Case Study #13)
- Getting to know yourself, (Chantal, Case Study #8)
- Sitting in the back of the bus (Suzie, #2)
- Oh boy the minute that you have kids (Lisa, Case Study #1)

I will now discuss the above themes as we relate them to other more substantive examples of 'growing-up' below. It seemed that the question about what social maturity is, is variable and debatable across, at least the above categories.

The Processes Related to Growing-Up:

Responsibilities:

Not surprisingly the concepts of 'Care' and 'Responsibility' were very present in the narratives of the participants. I have grouped care and responsibility together here not because they are one and the same but because they are related as sometimes 'Care' can fall under the category of 'Responsibility.' I begin here because I think that it is care and responsibility that really shape the direction and focus of the lives of the women that I interviewed. To begin. I want to list the categories of analysis for this theme: 1) Responsibilities for Self; 2) Responsibilities for others; 3) Care of oneself; and 4) Care for others. Further, Carol Gilligan outlined 'Care' and 'Responsibility' as important to women's moral development so this emphasis has been previously stated. Interestingly, not all women related to 'care' and 'responsibility' in the same way. Class, marital, and maternal status seemed to matter. Depending on their relationships, whether they were a 'boomerang kid,' single, divorced, married, and/or mothers served to shape their responsibilities and their care and whether or not theses were directed mainly at themselves or others.

For instance, there were two participants (Sky and Crystal) whose mothers were ill and passed away during their adolescence and one whose mother fell ill during her early twenties and passed away. Emily and Meaghan also lost parents. To begin with Sky, she discussed the extra 'household responsibilities' that were placed upon her at an

early age. She did a lot of groceries and meal preparation and care for her siblings. In this sense she said 'growing up' was harder because it was earlier for her than for her siblings:

*I think it was harder for me because my mother got sick when we were very young and my father put a lot of household **responsibilities** on me. Whereas my older sister and my younger brother were all playing games with their friends and having fun and I was making sure we had supper on the table after school, making sure the chores were done, helping my father with the grocery shopping. (Sky)*

Later, Sky talks about going back to school focusing more on herself and what she wants to become and what her financial responsibilities would be. Keep in mind, Sky is already employed, a home owner and still assisting her father in his care. When I look at the whole narrative, I see her trying to negotiate fulfilling both her caring role within her family and aspiring to furthering her career and support herself financially and she considers the scholarship assistance she may need to.

*I am going to go back for library sciences. They have a program at _____ University and if I can get in they have a scholarship for Native American students. and they pay your whole tuition and you are only **responsible** for you room and board and even if you take your three year master program, I want to do mine online so they would still pay for the tuition so I wouldn't pay for that room and board because I already own my own home. (Sky)*

Throughout the interview Sky teeters between her caring role and also the idea that her father had really encouraged her to go away to school and 'not come back.' The two rolls are conflicting and while both could be seen as 'growing up' 'being responsible' and 'becoming' they are two lifestyles that seem to be difficult for her to live out at once. She seemed 'stuck' between wanting to 'care' for her father, being 'responsible' for herself financially and having the 'autonomy' to 'become' who wanted to be professionally. She is having difficulty with the given order of her social development and throughout was

reflecting on how she could 'coordinate' her personal life so that she could care for her father and/or go on to graduate school.

Crystal's mother was also ill when she was an adolescent. While taking on a mothering role and working pushed her to feel more grown-up at an earlier age, she sees this as incomplete without being financially independent and starting her own family where she can fully take on the role of mother.

*I was growing up and that I started seeing that there is more to life than just being a kid, living at your parents and that you know there were **responsibilities** that had to be met....*

*I feel um like a grown up because I have **responsibilities**. Like have a home like I have a duplex to keep care of and I have my car and my job... Growing up means being responsibilities being an adult having, having family a job to like I said responsibilities. I don't know just having your life not having your parents pay for your bills and whatnot...*

*I feel um like a grown up because I have **responsibilities**. Like have a home like I have a duplex to keep care of and I have my car and my job. To say that I am not grown up, I feel like something is missing maybe when I have the husband, the children maybe it will feel more complete. (Crystal)*

When we look at what she sees as missing from her life we see that there is more than financial responsibility to her concept of growing up. It includes family relationships such as husband and children. While the care aspect was present early on in a way where she took on many tasks that her mother would have, she is still looking to be a wife to a husband and a mother to children of her own as part of her growing-up. In this sense she is looking for both the responsibilities but also the status and identity of mother before she feels as though she will have become a mother.

Lisa considered the weight of having children to her list of responsibilities. She was less concerned with having her children physically than she was about being responsible for them thereafter. Talking about growing up she said"

*Oh Boy the minute that you have kids. I mean you've got something that is looking at you that's all you. That's huge! I mean you talk to people about what you're afraid of and I worked with a woman who was pregnant at the same time I was and she was afraid of delivery and I thought...they have been giving birth since caveman days...for me giving birth was not an issue...thinking when...what made me afraid was that then I was going to be **responsible** for that person and have a huge impact on their life and that's was it. (Lisa on growing up and **responsibility**)*

Carly also talked about the responsibilities of parenting. She talked a lot about wanting to be a more responsible parent to her children:

*Well it was when we were young we were with family a lot because she was out partying or sick or whatever happened so we were with our family a lot and I remember saying whenever my daughter was born I remember thinking when I had my daughter that there was no way in hell I would let them grow up like that **because they are my responsibility** not somebody else's. That's one big difference like if I party I always make sure my kids are taken care of too. Um so was different a lot because I wanted to be there for my kids more than everybody else was because **they are my responsibility**. (Carly)*

Shelley also talked about feeling responsible for her children as significant to her growing up.

*This past weekend was for me like the biggest oh my god I'm an adult we took our little ones away for the weekend and we have never done a family vacation...We have never done that....I even said to my mom 'Oh my God I am like the adult I am **responsible** for everyone. I have to make sure I don't lose anyone.' (Shelley)*

For others, work related responsibility and purchases made them feel more grown-up.

Consider the following quote by Stephanie who in some ways has felt signing authority gave her a sense of growing up.

*Definitely buying your first house makes you feel grown up. There are a lot of legalities to it and contracts that you have to sign. Signing paper work always makes you feel grown up. Your first full time job. When I worked at the distributing and logistics company I had a lot of **responsibilities** and that made me feel grown up I was looking after people there were people working beneath me, I was managing the place I was **responsible** for the day to day activities. If I wasn't there I felt like things didn't get done. That makes you feel like an adult (Stephanie).*

Rachelle discussed the that 'mistakes' seemed to take on a 'grand level' now that she is older. She uses the word 'stupid mistake' to refer to her pregnancy.

*...I feel like I still make stupid mistakes and I consider myself an adult I have adult **responsibilities** but the mistakes I make now are like on grand levels you know like the fact that I am pregnant and I have only been in a relationship for three months is something that I was making fun of one of my friends for doing and I supposed I was still thinking that I was invincible because I didn't think it could happen to me before because it didn't happen to me before. I was married for 6 years we never used a condom we wanted to have a baby we never did. How the heck did it happen now. But it was still a mistake, should have still been more careful but uhm I feel like I am still constantly learning new things that I go through that make me feel like I am this big (small) and sometimes it is experiencing things that I haven't experienced before. (Rachelle)*

*So I feel like I may have gone through the same emotions as my mom being committed to someone so young. But I didn't have any of the **responsibilities** of raising children like my mom. (Rachelle)*

Tanya refers here to feeling grown up in that she has taken on many new responsibilities to manage earlier than she had expected to. Interestingly, she refers to being a wife as a lot like being a mother. In a way not being a mother, is a representative of being responsible to her in that she is working hard and planning to set in place certain conditions before her children are born. In this sense, ironically, not having children is seen as being responsible. I will come back to this point below.

*I think it is because I had moved out of the area in order to get more money and it is definitely hard being this young and having all these extra **responsibilities** that you definitely don't expect for another 5 years. Managing a house. Keeping bills*

in line. Having to take care of a spouse. It is like being a mother but not really being a mother yet but he makes me happy and proud. I also think that I am very lucky and I know that a lot of my friends couldn't make it as far as I have (teary) so they don't have...They are not married. Their boyfriends left them and they are stuck with kids. I couldn't imagine being in that position and that is where I know that I am very lucky. (Tanya)

Sarah, is single and does not have children. Her feelings relating to responsibility revolve around being able to 'pay [her] bills and do [her] taxes.' Not centering her focus on the caring roles and tasks allows her space and autonomy to be 'young at heart.'

*Growing-up is more **responsibility**...For my job and my life I feel like a pretty **responsible** person and I feel like an adult and I pay my bills and I do my taxes and all that sort of stuff. But most of the time I just still like to have fun and just be silly and if I have a bit of extra money I just like to go on a vacation and maybe some people wouldn't think that is very **responsible** so in that way not but I'm like yeah whatever I'm young at heart but very like do it while you're young kinda person because you never know what's coming so sometimes I just live in the moment and I just take off. (Sarah)*

Being funny and lighthearted Suzie joked through questions about maturity showing how variable 'maturity' can be in terms of age.

*I have said, 'When I grow up I want to be more like my daughter. [laughing] I try to be mature and **responsible**. (Suzie)*

Although, she joked often throughout the interview, Suzie seemed keenly aware of herself and what she wanted for her personal life. See her comments below regarding dependence and independence.

Autonomy, Independence and Exercising Agency:

The participants tended to use the word independence much more frequently than the words 'autonomy' or 'agency.' They discussed independence in relation to financial independence. This suggested to me that they were looking for ways to break cycles of financial dependency but not so much that they were exert autonomy or agency. In other

words the emphasis was on a reactionary establishing of independence (especially financial) rather than acting autonomously. The participants seemed more unified in their responses regarding independence. However, there were still a few variations regarding their levels and types of independence. They also talked about emotional independence and independence from other relationships. Note in the following quotes the difference between the emotional independence and the financial independence. The following comments relate to finances and independence:

*When you make your first move out, it's **independence**. When you get your first car, it's **independence**. (Lisa)*

*There were never any issues with my jobs, I've always had jobs. I was nervous at first because both of my parents wanted me to go into medicine, to be **independent to be my own boss** and that so sort of stuff. They wanted me to be **financially secure**. So when I told them I wanted to be a teacher I was very nervous about it. I knew mom would accept it. I wasn't sure how dad would because again he is 'old school' European and doctors are the be all end all but he accepted and supported me and paid for my teacher education. (Mary)*

*Maybe I would finish the sentence now by saying: "you feel grown up when you are removed from the need of having your parents support both financially and emotionally. So I guess that distance began to establish that **independence** from your parents for me. University was close enough that I came home often enough that it wasn't...(Emily)*

*The chances of being able to support yourself as an **independent** maker of things isn't that...is a big challenge. And then at 30 I was sure where it was heading so I ended up dropping out of that course....I think like I said by my late twenties I **was ready to be a more independent person** and be more self-sustained so that I could be more on my own and not have a roommate or not live with my parents. (Shannon)*

The point about how it is challenging to establish one's self as financially independent is an important one because if it is too difficult to become financially independent and financial independence is seen as one of the pillars to 'growing-up' and being responsible,

then there are aspects of growing that will be denied to those who cannot financially afford independence. I will come back to this point below. Several women talked about how independence came to them through divorce and I will elaborate on this item further below. For the moment, here is a quote that illustrates that feelings of independence can follow divorce for some.

*And even ending the relationship was a big deal because I felt like I was pulling myself away from some type of **dependence and becoming independent** again.
(Rachelle)*

There is a shift in thinking about independence. Shelley questions this as she notes that she 'started out with all the wants of being an independent woman' but that she still wants to be married and be a mother. She refers to the stress of trying to 'mesh' this type of personal life together.

*I think, I think just the expectations of a wife and mother at that time [for her mother's generation] were a lot more straightforward for women of my age. You know I start out with all the wants of being an **independent** woman. I still want to be a wife and a mother and how can you mesh that all that together so I think that that probably created more stress. (Shelley)*

Suzie makes a similar point but doesn't seem to try to 'mesh' this personal life together.

Rather, she tries to order it. She notes that she wanted to be independent and then be dependent. In other words she was looking to first establish herself financially and emotionally then she wanted to be taken care of and that might mean financial dependence. However, it would then be a choice rather than a mere circumstance.

*I didn't see myself living **dependently** with friends for very long. I wanted to be **independent and then dependent**...[Laughing] (Suzie)*

Status Rolls, Identity and The Project of Becoming:

Here, I looked specifically at the statuses of wife and mother. I should begin by saying that the participants typically referred to 'having kids or children' rather than becoming or being a mom. This is interesting in terms of the below discussion regarding the value of children in today's families. We will come back to this point as I discuss Neoliberalism. Still some of the participants thought they would be stay at home mothers or at least wanted to be but were not sure how it would happen. This is interesting because the example that many had from their mothers was that of a stay-at-home mother and bread-winner father. Laurie and Suzie said, for example:

*Honestly, **I thought I would be a stay-at-home mom.** (Laurie)*

I wanted to be a housewife. I didn't want to work. I wanted to raise a family and my mother wasn't impressed because she did that. That was the stereotype that was put upon her and she wasn't encouraged to go to college or university because her father was, I guess, sort of sexist. So she sort of pushed...I have three younger sisters and she was very wanting us to do what she hadn't done. She did go to college while she was raising us she like took courses at the college. Because I really didn't know what I wanted to do...I was pretty sure I didn't want to work. I wanted to stay home....

*...Yes, I wasn't actively seeking a husband I was actively seeking meaning, and a meaningful relationship. I was actively seeking meaning for myself because I didn't know what I wanted to do. I knew **I wanted to be a wife and mother but how** am I going to do that?...I was dating some losers (Laughing). (Suzie)*

*I think, I think just **the expectations of a wife and mother** at that time [for her mother's generation] were a lot more straightforward for women of my age. You know I start out with all the wants of being an independent woman. I still **want to be a wife and a mother and how** can you mesh that all that together so I think that that probably created more stress. (Shelley)*

Other women were not yet mothers. However, they saw the steps that they were taking now as instrumental to the type of mothering they wanted to provide and a certain type of mother that they wanted to be. For example, Emily was very clear that there were many

acceptable paths other than motherhood. However, she did come back to it chalking up her life experiences to an asset to the mothering she envisions in the future.

*I think I am glad that I waited. I think **I will be a better mom** when that happens...I think I had a lot of great experiences that I may not have had had I had a partner that was tied to a job or different things like that so I guess I am glad with the way it's worked out at this point. (Emily)*

Some participants took on motherhood at an earlier age than expected such as Cassandra, Carly and Suzie. Cassandra refers to 'battling being a mom,' suggesting that motherhood was a difficult path for her. Also, the type of mothering that was required by her two children with special needs meant that she had to focus on learning how to mother them. She had to give up school and she had such a high stress and anxiety level that she could not work. Her 'becoming' and identity have been focused on motherhood rather than work or education. This beginning to shift as her children become older and she describes now having the opportunity to imagine becoming a writer but she did explain that being at home with her kids was 'absolutely necessary in a lot of ways.'

*There was either this level of stress...I have an anxiety disorder that I found out a few years ago and um look back on in then it maybe had something to do with it. But I was **battling being a mom** with two very young children and I actually separated when they were young. It made for the ups and downs. You know you try to go back to work and you burn out and you know I had to stop and re-focus on what is most important...you know... being at home with my kids...you know...' absolutely necessary in a lot of ways. (Cassandra)*

The point I would make here is that there was a lot of identity and status work that was being done or had been done by the participants. 'Having kids' is a biological practice. However, the social circumstances described by the participants is that it requires coordination, planning, preparation. On the other hand, some were mothers long before they expected to be. Either way, when mothers or in the absence of being mothers, it

seemed to organize the other aspects of their lives and the whole was not a clear or straightforward path.

We will now discuss the timing of growing up and feelings about emerging adulthood. The themes explored will be: 1) Growing up early and quickly; 2) Growing up out-of-synchronicity; and 3) Slowly and not feeling fully grown-up 4) Feeling young at heart; and 5) Difficult feelings about the timing of growing-up and emerging as an 'adult.'

Growing Up Early and Quickly

Their definitions varied in type but also whether or not they felt they had matured very quickly or very slowly. For example, Case Angie #19, Sky Case # 10, Shannon, Case #11; Carly Case Study #12 and Rebecca #25; Carrie CS #6 all described feeling that they grew up quickly either because they met social markers for adulthood early or because they were responsible for the care of someone else or for their own care at an early age. Angie attributes her feelings of growing up faster to having her house, her marriage, a child and a full time job earlier than her friends. She explained that while her friends were partying she was tending to her responsibilities. She followed what her parents did and she had met all the above mentioned milestones by the age of 20. She admits the stability in her life makes it hard for her to risk for example trying out a new career that she may enjoy more. Still, she did note uneven feelings of maturity. For example, when she does her laundry she feels grown up but when she is out with her friends then things are not so serious.

Some felt that because they had taken on many of the demands that would have been placed on their mothers they had to grow up more quickly. Both Sky and Shannon's mothers were ill during their adolescent years and this, as they report it, strongly influenced their growing up in terms of responsibility. Rebecca had moved away at the age of 14 and so she has considered herself grown up for a long time because she has had to care for herself and provide for herself since a very early age by today's standards. Others reported something more similar to a 'false' growing up relating to attaining adulthood via milestones such as a marriage that ultimately dissolved (Rachelle Case #24, Mary Case Study #5, Chantal Case Study #8). Interestingly, all three of these women described what sounded like a shift from the lock-step developmental model to a never-ending, process-type mode of development.

Growing-Up Out of Synchronicity

Still others felt the uneven development across different aspects of their personal life. Maturity is out of sync across the domains of personal life. Emily (Case Study #18) and Cassandra (Case Study #7) were participants who describe this feeling with regard to growing up in terms of meeting educational and work milestones and goals yet having 'setbacks' that they understood as progressive to their development. She referred to feeling like she had had cycles of feeling like an adult. Cassandra described this type of compartmentalized development, as well. However, she explained that as a 'personal individual' and as a 'mom,' she felt as though she was grown up but wanted to explore career and education in order to become a writer.

Not attaining the role of 'mother' was for some a barrier to feeling like a full adult. Some examples were: Mary, Crystal, and Tanya.

No I don't. I am not sure why. I still feel ...maybe it's the kid thing because we just did get married and we are in the process of buying a house so maybe it's the kid thing or maybe I will just wake up and go oh..I'm adult. 'cause I know my age and I don't think I am being unrealistic about my age but modern medicine being what it is 40 isn't what it used to be but I've got the grey hair now so I think it slowly coming but I think it is going to be a process this time. I don't think it is going to be I am going to wake up and go oh. (Mary Case #5)

Yes and no. I feel like a grown up because I have responsibilities. Like...have a home...like I have a duplex to keep care of and I have my car and my job. To say that I am not grown up, I feel like something is missing maybe when I have the husband, the children maybe it will feel more complete. So, am I there yet? Yes and no I'm a kid at heart so... (Crystal Case Study #21).

Growing Up Slowly and Not Feeling Fully Grown-Up:

Some others experienced not feeling like an adult for example Rachelle (Case Study #24) who was planning on going back to school but now recently started a new relationship and found out she is now pregnant. She replied 'Absolutely not!' to the question. Rebecca felt that at least now she was on her way to becoming a 'grown up.'

[Rebecca] I don't think I will ever be there. I think there is always room for improvement and I am starting life with a new pair of eyes. I am starting to focus more onto what real and what I am passionate about...And so, I could say I am on the road to it. I am not beside the road anymore.

Cindy (Case Study #26) didn't see herself as 'grown-up' given that she cannot support herself economically:

No! No! No! No! I do not! I can't barely support myself and I am still going through school...So, no, I do not feel like an adult. If you're kind of autonomous and you don't depend on anyone else...Then you can really call yourself an adult.

Chantal did not see the journey to adulthood as being about 'getting there.' At least not until, she re-considered what it would feel like to live as a 'boomerang' kid. In other words, while she did not want to look at growing up as meeting a destination, she seemed

to agree that after a certain point that destination was probably not living in your parents' home.

Feeling Young at Heart:

Some participants repeated a theme of feeling young at heart or having an inner child. By this they meant that they would live as economically responsible adults but that there was a lot of room for leisure in their lives. For example, Mireille (Case Study #20) - still wants a girls' night out and Sarah (Case Study #22) continues to see herself as a child at heart. Similarly Stephanie (Case Study #23) described herself as a kid at heart. Jennifer (Case Study #17) found irony in being an aunt as it makes her feel younger to be with her nieces and nephews. Shannon described how she "cherishes her inner child." Questions relating to 'how' one matures socially is even more elusive. To elaborate after the above excerpt, some participants shifted their understanding of the transition from adolescence to adulthood from that as steps with a destination to a more fluid and lengthy process and it seems that this may have set a context for their emotions regarding their status as adults. Further, some participants seemed to unexpectedly 'fall' into adult roles at early ages while others fell out of 'adult' roles or faced barriers to fulfill these at later ages. Some of the women described working as mothers or mother-figures, and caregivers or having to take care of themselves, while others 'worked' to attain milestones such as graduations, careers, relationships, and engage in their 'chosen' self-actualizing activities. Ultimately, these differences impact *how* one becomes an adult and also *how* one thinks of adulthood as a process or a destination. The quote by one of the participants illustrates how while people might begin to understand that growing up is

a process they still carry the base of the developmental, pre-ordered, step-by-step approach in their minds.

Ooh growing up is...well, I really think it's well to truly grow up it is a process type of journey. You can't just jump to the end and expect to do that well, to now be a grown up and now have experienced all those little things along the way. It is important to you know for teenagers to experience some things that there are not supposed to maybe until they are 19 as long as it's done in an open way with the parents or the parents to about it and they have been given the information you know it's part of the learning process as long as they have been taught about it first. Growing up is a process and you have to hit certain things and certain milestones and experience things before you can totally say you are grown up. I would say that I didn't feel that I was grown up until I was probably about 35. (Sandra, Case Study #7).

Difficult Feelings About Growing-Up and Emerging as an Adult

Sometimes feelings towards mismatched expectations and outcomes created a great deal of difficult emotions. Other times, some women were more able to be flexible with the unexpected directions or more patient with regard to an uncertain future. Shannon describes how it was difficult at the time but as things unfolded she began to feel more at ease and in retrospect wishes she hadn't worried as much:

No, so throughout my twenties I suffered from depression, so there was always a thinking things would never happen and instead of not worrying about it and thinking things will never happen. I was just sad about that....And just, I think living in [a larger urban centre] as a single person there was a bit of loneliness. There wasn't a lot of pressure, I would tell myself it will be fine if it doesn't happen but there was always a fear that it wasn't going to happen. So there was some mixed emotions for sure about some future goals.

I wish I had enjoyed it more now that I see that ya I am going to have a family and I am going to have a partner. I feel more secure about myself and I wish that I had enjoyed the 20s when I didn't. uh sorry. I feel so sad about it...sorry...Just thinking back to the time and how I felt. You know you just wish you could tell yourself don't worry so much. (crying)

[Kelly:] Do you feel relieved now?

I ... yeah... I guess I do. You know my career never came about the way I wanted it to but I guess it was not as important as I initially thought. More 'comfortable' I think is a word I would use and comforted as well. I mean as busy as I felt then I realize how much time I had and so I feel busier now more than then. Not busy as in stressed out just fuller more engaged. (Smiling) (Shannon, Case Study #11)

Jennifer also described some very difficult emotions regarding the order and time of life events during her twenties. More than this, Jennifer refers to how it can be quite difficult to wear many hats. Here we see how complex identities and personal lives can layer feelings and again the question of children is raised:

[Jennifer] It has been stressful. I want to pay off my OSAP and I want to be able to have a stake for myself in this life and not be reliant on my husband despite the fact that I appreciate him and everything. It's just that with the current career that I am in it is an uphill battle. I don't know...That's how I feel...I'm going to get all emotional! (teary) That's what I want I mean I don't know that's what I want and I continue to apply for other jobs. And I've had interviews recently for... I was interviewed for the cultural development program I was one of the top four people maybe one of the top two I don't know but I know that I was told that there was four that were selected for the interview process and if I was qualified for something like that that then it means that I am doing something right, but I think in reality I need to continue to look outside of reality outside of my teaching if I want to take a stake and start taking care of my debt feeling not so inadequate because I do feel like that these days. I mean I wear several hats but it's just...it's just such a battle.

I don't know if I am coming or going, so I wear my teacher hat in the institution or the professional school boards which is kind of stressful. You know I never considered myself to be the role model kind of type and here I am. And then I host a show, it's just volunteer work and it was just for fun but it was also to create a reputation. And then teaching dance, teaching ballet, and jazz and Broadway. There are all these different things that I am trying to be so good at and so it just seems that I am cutting each group a little bit short. I can't completely invest my whole self into it and so and well then you think about okay my relationship with my husband will I even have a family or is that even part of the plan? Is that what is going to happen? or I don't know and then family itself, I

mean family means so much, I mean it is what I was brought up to do and we are so close so it's...it's a lot!

[Kelly] You said you have many hats and you don't know whether you are coming or going. Does that have something to do with having many paths?

[Jennifer] Yeah, I think so I don't really know which one to focus on.

[Kelly] Is that more difficult for you or is that beneficial to you?

[Jennifer] I think it is beneficial but it is definitely difficult. So I mean it's opening more doors. So I went to school and I have so much debt but if I didn't I would probably be stuck in a crumbier situation with less opportunity and less opportunity to wear all those different hats. I think now there is definitely value there. Given the opportunities that I am given but I do feel it. (Jennifer Case Study #17)

Lucie (Case Study #3), for example thought to herself, "I am not getting married. So this is good." Mireille (Case Study #20) who admits that if she had not had the family support that she did she may not have fared as well psychologically or emotionally and may not be in the same position today. When things did not turn out quite as planned with her relationship she said to herself, "Ya wanna know what? Things have changed and that's okay!" Meaghan described that she was able to adjust well to things that were in her control but it was the events that were out of her control that were most difficult to handle. For example, both of her parents passed away while she was in university and this accelerated her growing up at an unexpected time.

Most of my decisions that I made, I was comfortable with them and you make choices and you decide and the choices you make are yours and you decide what to do with them. The events that happened that were outside of my control, those were the hard ones. It just seemed like whenever I was young, it was like everyone was like I have to get this done and that done and when I got to that point it was like you never know what life is going to throw at you so you just see life as an adventure.

Both my parents passed away in my late twenties and that was very difficult....Yeah, that would be the exact moment that I started realizing that ...it's the moment that you realize that you are really on your own. It is not a bad thing. It's just sort of like: Okay...I am the one that has to...that I am in control and I am the one...I am the only one that ...when you make bad decisions then it's up to you to fix them. So, that was a pivotal moment when I was 27. It was like: Okay it's time to settle down and get focused. (Meaghan Case Study #16).

Carrie (Case Study #6) described how an early bloomer accomplished everything early. Perhaps this helped her to feel more at ease with the discrepancies between her expected and lived experience of her twenties. Angie (Case Study #19) described how it all worked out and she simply felt good about this. Laurie (Case Study #13) on the other hand would have preferred to be married and then have the baby but ultimately she was content as well. Mary (Case Study #5) disappointed by her divorce but ultimately says she grew from it. Chantal (Case Study #8) explained that doing things out of order made her feel like she was doing something wrong. Shelley (Case Study #9) explained that she liked her original plan best. Not meeting milestones was constantly on her mind. Sky (Case Study #10) explained that she had wanted to be a child at the time she was supposed to be a child.

A few respondents explained how their difficult emotions were temporary. For example, Julie (Case Study #14) explained that she has felt differently about meeting the markers and the milestones at different times throughout her life:

I think, again, I think it would be my perception. If I were looking forward I would definitely think it would be my completing school and post-secondary all these would have been indicators that I was on the right path the right course but looking back at them I realize they were just things and points in my life that have occurred but do they make me who I am today? No. So... (Julie Case Study #14)

In terms of asserting agency in the midst of structure, there exist competing discourses with respect to becoming. For example, Sky has built agency to become who she wants to be but then is pulled to be with her family and help her father.

Yeah, I felt that for a long time. When I was a senior in college, my mom got real sick and she had cancer and the doctor gave her 3 months to live and I was the one that was still in school and my mom died 3 months to the day from the time the doctor said she would. So my last trimester, I was at school for three weeks and one of those weeks was to take the finals. When my mother died, I had to make the decision was I going to go work for the law firm in [the United States] or was I going to come home and help my father. My father had never lived alone. That's when I thought I was growing up, because I was giving up what I wanted to do to come home and take care of him.

All my friends at school were like 'Why are you doing that? Why are you doing that?' Because that's the way things are done where I live. You put your elders first, he is my father. To this day, my friends don't understand why I am still here.

I am a whole different person when I am not around here. I am more carefree. I take my chances and I feel like I am making just my decisions. When I'm here I feel like, well if I decide this, who is it going to affect? What's the consequence? Who is going to get hurt if I do something? (Sky, Case Study #10)

Also of interest, is her last comment where she explains that she feels like a 'whole different person' when she is not around her home. She is moving between two very different types of social settings, her hometown where her life is a community life where she is very much embedded and exists in a less individual way compared to the way she lives when she is in a larger American city.

Planning and Organizing in Growing-Up:

Here Tanya describes that starting a family is very important to her concept of growing up. Tanya had already described a lot of planning and organizing in her life and I asked

her if any of those plans were in relation to starting a family she was quite emotional with her response:

[Tanya] I feel I still have a long way to go. I wish I was completely grown up. But yeah you know like I feel for me to be completely grown up, it involves having a family...Yeah...definitely having a family is definitely what is going to make my 'grown-up feeling' complete.

[Kelly] Is that something that you plan or is that something that you have discussions about or do you keep that in your head?

[Tanya] Every now and then it kind of comes up...one of these days we will have kids. I know he is not ready so I just keep it in my head. I know he could notice especially when you go around and start hugging babies like crazy [laughing].

[Kelly] With all of these steps that you have already taken were any of them in relation to having children?

[Tanya] (exhale and whispers) Definitely. I kind of have like I wanted to make sure that I finished the schooling so I would have a good job so I could take care of my children in the long run. You know make sure they have a roof over their head and it just seems like everyone expects it...You know you get a job...You get married you have kids. You make sure you have a roof over your head and I actually definitely didn't expect it to happen the way it did with all my other friends getting pregnant right in high school. So...yeah...so I am definitely glad with the way I took my steps. (Tanya Case Study #27).

Questioning and Re-Defining:

Women recounted stories whereby certain life events that they had not expected pushed them to mature in ways they hadn't anticipated. In this sense, their lived processes for social maturity held a certain level of irony in the face of the stage theory that was embedded within their *habitus* structure. For example, some women felt that it was not their marriage that propelled their social and psychological growth, it was their divorce that made them 'feel more grown up.' At other times in history or even within their own lives they may have viewed the choice to separate or divorce as 'immature' or

'irresponsible' or a 'failure.' This was not what they were reporting, they were reporting social growth and maturity via divorce and separation.

As I stated earlier, some of my respondents may have faced quarter life dilemmas that could be aligned with Robinson's model. Under the stage theory and with progressive lockstep milestones as the framework or reference point for 'growing up,' it would be expected that entry into marriage might bring one to feel like they were maturing. Rather, what was occasionally described was that women felt that divorce or separation from their partners made them feel like they were 'growing up.' What is it about leaving a relationship that moves one to 'growing-up?' It seems that it has a lot to do with individuation, responsibility for one's own choices and life direction, being responsible for oneself.

When women reflect on their twenties and lifestyle choices we hear both stories of reflexive agency and detect that elements of residual forms of tradition remain. An example of this may be the attempt to form an egalitarian intimate relationship whereby women are educated and employed and that begins to approximate the idea of the pure relationship but doesn't fully adopt the concept of 'confluent' love in that it attempts to reject 'contingency' while it retains the 'forever' ideal of 'romantic love.' In this example of reflexive agency and residual tradition an intimate relationship might be thought of as forever, not necessarily because the church or state says it has to be that way but because the relationship is so pleasing and equitable and there exists at least a hope, if not a belief, that it always will be pleasing and equitable and in effect without question or contingency. A stage theory may keep the notion that the establishment of a life-long intimate relationship with another is necessary for growing up. Whereas, those who have

transitioned to the understanding and acceptance of 'confluent' love see the process and maintenance of contingent intimacy as instrumental to promotion of social maturity rather than the attainment of it. It really is a different orientation to understanding 'progress' in social life.

A rapid generational shift in timing, order, attainment or reversal of individual socio-economic milestones relating to expected adult roles that occurs at the micro-familial level, between parents and their children (Fong, 2011), sets an emotional context for meanings and feelings relating to 'growing-up,' the attainment of markers for adulthood, and one's concept of self as an adult. It can create uncomfortable feelings and impact the adult child's self-categorization as a 'grown-up' adult. It can also be associated with a sense of achievement, agency, and pride. Feelings and emotions can be uneven and mixed as they relate to various spheres of social life: education, work life, familial life, and personal life. Emotional discomfort and a conception of one's self as not fully adult despite the attainment of legal adult status typically hinged upon not yet meeting and/or maintaining specific markers for adulthood. For example, not yet having children, not being financially independent and/or not yet fully completing their personal life project of self 'becoming' were associated with not feeling like an adult yet. Some more comfortable emotions were expressed with regard to maintaining an 'inner child' who enjoys leisure activities and/or 'refining' rather than 'constructing' their adult self. Some comfortable emotions were expressed when participants discussed adulthood in terms of a journey or process rather than a destination. Pursuing post-secondary education, particularly a higher-level degree, seemed to be associated with a sense of entitlement to and agency to construct their own project of becoming with regard to the

postmodern adult self from an earlier age. There were some examples whereby resilient thinking seemed to grow in tandem and perhaps by necessity from the shift from stages to processes of becoming.

Re-Ordering and Coordinating Personal Life

One thing that was clear was the emphasis that women placed on ordering and coordinating their lives. Some women had very clear plans while others were uncertain what they wanted or expected for their futures. If it wasn't there at first, the notion to order or reorder their lives seems to surface in the women's narratives. Michelle had very clear plans and she knew that this would not be an easy pathway but she was very strategic in her coordinating of her choices:

It's not easy but I have always been very ambitious and very determined and so even though I did not chose the easy path I deliberately knowing that I would choose a path that would lead me to a lot of student loans, I did so knowing it would result in a secure job and a career even more than just a job when I was done and a very portable one at that and so I saw it as the investment in myself knowing that I would be fine knowing that I would someday eventually pay off all my student loans and knew that I someday I wouldn't have to worry about it. It was sort of a conscious decision to choose a profession that I knew I would always be employable with. (Michelle)

Other times, women such as Chantal realized that the linear approach to marriage and work-life did not allow for her to explore her own personal identity.

Yeah, I would add is that what I was missing from my twenties is that because I transitioned so quickly from my family life to married life I didn't have a chance to discover who I was, my own personal identity, before trying to...bond with somebody else. (Chantal)

Shelley also had a similar sentiment regarding her 'original plan.' She took what she called a course 'correction.' She feels it was a 'set back' but at the same time she is re-working and re-thinking her life direction at this point.

I think that my original plan is sort of what lead me into marrying the wrong person. And then trying to do a course correction at 30. uhm I think had there not been that pressure to follow that line cause I was on that line...I just didn't have the right person with me. [Laughing] I think that that is why I am set back farther as far as society says I should be on my timeline of major events and course correcting at 30 ...a few years engage and then I feel like I am set back a little bit (Shelley)

It is clear to me from the interviews that these three aspects of social life: education, work, and family are ever-present in women's lives. Typically, one of the three aspects sits in the foreground of women's personal life. Occasionally, two will sit in the foreground and one in the background.

For example Lisa focused mainly on work in the beginning of her twenties. Even in the description of her mothering, she reported emphasizing work to her children. With Cassandra, mothering sits at the forefront of her personal life because, as she said, it was in a lot of ways 'necessary.' She was a mother unexpectedly and she needed to focus her learning on how to parent them. Her work, necessarily became 'mothering.' For Michelle, education sat at the forefront of her personal life during her twenties. She focused her time, her efforts and her resources towards this goal. Her living arrangements were influenced by her need to save money to pay for her education. Her employment was in the form of student placement. She waited to have her children. The pursuit of her education shaped other aspects of her life. Conversely, a lack of emphasis on a certain aspect can also shape one's life during their twenties. Even Carly who said: 'I guess you could say I should have been thinking about school' does not escape having education as an important aspect of her social life because it continues to shape her life by virtue of a lack that largely impacts her agency and position within her family. Emily

focused consistently on education and work. As she explained it, she had not placed the same emphasis and focus on building relationships so she was less engaged with this aspect of her personal life. The point, and actually Emily was the participant who highlighted this so clearly, is that these aspects do not happen in a neat order and independent of one another. This re-ordering and coordinating became more apparent after a major influential factor such as: the death of a parent, a divorce, a change in educational program, a change in employment such as being laid off. In other words, after a quarter life challenge or dilemma, we see re-ordering and more purposeful coordination. This piece falls directly in line with Robinson's Model of the QLC whereby people engage in the last stage. Let us now turn to this model so as to provide a sociological extension to his model.

Chapter 11 - Neoliberalism and the Commodification of Adulthood:

Contextualizing Robinson's 4 Stage Model:

For the moment, I will turn to a sociological critique of 'The QLC.' It is important to contextualize Robinson's 4 Stage model within a larger framework of shifting modes of economic production and consumption for families of postmodern times. Changes in modes of economic production have long influenced the composition and functions of families and their members. When families of production existed children acted as human capital. That is as the workers on farms and in workshops and they worked to fill and carry the economic cart as 'the family' accumulated capital by virtue of their collective labour. As post-industrial families became 'families of consumption,' children became adorned status symbols carting the cultural representation of their parents' labour.

As modernity heightens, and 'collective individualization' takes hold, individuals rather than families become sites of both production and consumption. Capitalism is fueled to a new height beyond the type of liberal capitalism described by Adam Smith (Thorson, 2010) during industrial times. With the neoliberal economic regime there are transactions maximized in numbers around the clock and across the globe as many times over as possible. For a thorough discussion of neoliberalism consult Dag Einar Thorsen (2010) who challenges Harvey's (2005) definition of neoliberalism and offers the following definition after discussing David Harvey's definition. He describes Harvey's definition here:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

Proposing his own definition he writes:

Neoliberalism is, as I see it, a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual liberty, understood as a sort of mercantile liberty for individuals and corporations. This conviction usually issues, in turn, in a belief that the state ought to be minimal or at least drastically reduced in strength, size and that any transgression by the state beyond its sole legitimate *raison d'être* is unacceptable (cf. especially Mises 1962; Norzick 1974; Hayek 1979).

...Neoliberalism could also include a perspective on moral virtue; the virtuous person is one who is able to access the relevant markets and function as a competent actor in these markets. He or she is willing to accept the risks associated with participating in free markets, and to adapt to rapid changes arising from such participation (Friedman 1980). Individuals are also seen as being solely responsible for the consequences of the choices and decisions they freely make. Inequality and glaring social injustice are under this perspective morally acceptable, at least to the degree in which such states of affairs could be seen as the result of long chains of freely made decisions by individuals (Norzick 1974; Hayek 1976). If a person demands that the state should regulate the market or

make reparations to the unfortunate, who have been caught at the losing end of freely initiated market transaction, this is viewed as an indication that the person in question is morally depraved and underdeveloped and scarcely different from a proponent of a totalitarian state (Mises 1962).

Thus understood and defined, neoliberalism becomes a loose set of ideas of how the relationship between the state and its external environment ought to be organized, and not a complete political philosophy or ideology (Blomgren 1997; Malnes 1998; Thorsen, 2010).

Under this line of thinking, it seems to me that becoming an 'adult' in post-modern society can, to a degree, be represented by one's ability to be both the site of production and the site of 'calculated' and 'responsible' consumption. With this type of commodified adulthood the individual works to avoid debt at minimum, tries to be self-sufficient but preferably gains and accumulates capital. It is important to understand that with individual options come individual responsibilities and under this framework, emerging adults are understood to be responsible for their own success and failures because these are assumed to be based on their own 'choices.'

There seems to be a commodification of adulthood under neo-liberal moral ethic that creates a precarious relationship between production and consumption for emerging adults, whereby the purchase of a car or a house might continue to signify productivity, wealth in terms of capital, power in terms of purchasing power and the prestige of knowing one's self as an 'owner' rather than a 'renter.' In this sense, the adult-child does graduate to guide their human capital in postmodern times. The difference is this human capital exists not outside themselves but is embodied within themselves. Sometimes they are their own 'workhorse,' so to speak, and it is unlikely that their children will exist for them as human capital in the same way that they did for the parents of agrarian or industrial families. This idea reminds of Foucault's quote that I have referred to elsewhere, 'I am the vehicle of my own liberation.' Indeed, this is an empowering concept but what

if buying a commodified version of adulthood is simply too expensive and renders one irresponsible by virtue of having made economically irresponsible choices? A degree is a twofold expense that is hoped to bring a return. First, resources are needed to purchase tuition and materials and then time and effort need to be expended in order to earn the degree. It reminds me of one of the participants who built student loans and earned a degree. Michelle, a young woman with a working-class background reflects and described her view on the cost and return of taking a risk on her education to become an employed adult. In her words:

[Michelle] Well I think there is a lot of pressure on kids...well kids...quote unquote..just to...well I think growing up is being delayed more and more because what people see as being markers of being a grown up like finishing school, getting married, buying a house, happen later and later like in reality it happens in your thirties rather than in your twenties. Just...so I think there is a disconnect between the babyboomers and the younger generations about when we should be reaching these milestones...So, I think it is a challenging time for young people because of the cost of living, the cost of houses, the cost of post secondary education really makes an impact on whether they can reach their sort of goal of reaching adulthood. It's a tough market out there these days to say that you have been able to achieve all that you can.

[Kelly] Do you think that impacts the way people feel about growing up and that transition to adulthood?

[Michelle] Yeah, because you hear about it all these kids who finish university, can't find a job and move back in with their parents. Like that is kind of well I wouldn't say discouraging but it is disheartening to...to think to some of them to feel like you have to move back home and it's like back in high school again, you can't find a job yeah so I don't know..

[Kelly] So how was it for you?

[Michelle] Growing up...?

[Kelly] Yeah.

[Michelle] It's not easy but I have always been very ambitious and very determined and so even though I did not chose the easy path, deliberately knowing that I would choose a path that would lead me to a lot of student loans, I

did so knowing it would result in a secure job and a career even more than just a job when I was done and a very portable one at that and so I saw it as the investment in myself knowing that I would be fine knowing that I would someday eventually pay off all my student loans and knew that I someday I wouldn't have to worry about it. It was sort of a conscious decision to choose a profession that I knew I would always be employable with.

This lengthy pathway to gainful employment makes the question of children an important one. As the individual becomes the driver and the vehicle and cart then children become accessories and a form of capital that is both socially productive but also economically consumptive. As I see it, children within postmodern society sometimes exist as what I would term a sort of 'consumptive cultural capital' rather than 'human capital.' Rather than acting as did the human capital or workers of the agrarian or industrial families, children living within individualized and technologized, post-modern families might very well act as their parent's status symbols but more importantly as a form of human, individual, and cultural capital. We might think of them as cultural capital in the first immediate sense that they exist as cultural symbols but also in the sense that they carry and produce cultural knowledge forward for future generations. I say consumptive because they both and at once they need to consume resources in order to live and grow and within the current society whereby their parents and grandparents are compelled to buy for them. Children in the sense of, human capital, will likely lay not only dormant but actively and exponentially consumptive before they ever act with enough productive potential to exceed their rate of consumption in order to create capital gain. In other words, it is important to understand that within a risk society children bring with them an undetermined cost of capital before they present a return on capital where the economy of their family of origin may be of concern.

When I consider Michelle's narrative this becomes very unsettling as the whole point for her to work so hard in school was so that she could then have a job and in turn help support a family. The question of time and resources is an important one because, as she explained, she now has a six figure student debt and has been trying to conceive a child and cannot. This case exemplifies for me the idea that the desire for family and work towards it still exists, and that desire falls in line with Smart's notion that family ties are still alive and well but what I see is that feasible means to create a family and sustain it can be quite difficult today. This question concerns the timing, biology and the economics of starting a family and to what degree we see the individual as responsible for their position vis-a-vis their family life is, I think, linked to whether or not we would buy into the moral aspects of neoliberal economics. I would say, yes, we were each to our own degree more or less 'free' to 'chose' our paths but in many ways we were blindfolded and marching ahead with an outdated map we had learned by rote.

The delayed workforce entry and stagnation in *McJobs* (Ritzer, 1998), maintain the emerging adult-child's status as their parents' 'consumptive cultural capital.' Metaphorically speaking and to return to Foucault's idea that we are our own vehicles of liberation, postmodern emerging adult-children are their own vehicles who might as well be stuck in neutral or even 'reverse' so to speak despite efforts to move 'forward' economically in life. Moreover, what direction constitutes forward is debatable as the projects of self development and projects of capital gain compete to produce a few wealthy agents. Having a child can be both a risk and a luxury. The degree to which a child acts as a favorable status symbol is variable. A child, in and of themselves, can be a status symbol in that they bestow upon another the social status of 'parent' and with this

the power to socialize. A child who is well clothed, fed, and housed is a higher status symbol. Still, it is the technologically accessorized, post-secondary educated, and well-travelled emerging-adult child that seems to exist as a higher status symbol. An equally well-cared, adorned and accessorized grandchild only upgrades this status symbol. Children are born to play a myriad of roles. Even with the interviews conducted, it was not all women who were so concerned with completing education, having a job, a monogamous relationship prior to having their children. It simply was not so thought out. Whereas other women had planned and planned carefully for several years. Women have quite variable ideas with regard to starting a family, what it symbolizes and what it should look like. Sometimes, their children are upon them before they really have time to really think about whether or not they are a risk or a luxury. As was the case with Cassandra who said:

Life made that choice for me really before I could even think. I mean living at home at the time. When I became pregnant I was 21 and by 23 I was married, with a new child, we moved in about 6 months after my son was born...and about two years after that we decided to marry. (Cassandra Case Study #7)

In another instance, Suzie explained that she had imagined a sort of 1950's style family but became pregnant in high school and so decided to give her child up for adoption:

My parents were very supportive. We did an open adoption and everything but that was sort of my crisis point when I realized...ok...this guy that I am with, he is not what I want. He is not going to give to me or provide for me the way that I am imagining being provided for and it is a good thing I did that because he is still the way he was but I had imagined that I would have a family in my mid-twenties...that I would do that kind of picturesque kind of thing...(Suzie Case Study #2).

Other times, they are still waiting and calculating for the 'right,' 'least risky' moment.

Sadly, sometimes that moment never occurs even though they so desperately wanted it to.

In any case, what a child generates for or costs a parent is variable in terms of identity, meaning, capital.

What we must keep in mind, however, is that this is a form of 'consumptive and cultural capital.' As a symbol, a child may be productive in the sense that it re-creates and re-establishes prestige or perhaps power in terms of the power to socialize to some degree but it, the symbol itself, nor the adult-child or grandchild, does not produce wealth in the sense that the earlier working children and grandchildren may have by virtue of their labour. In this sense, children can act as consumptive cultural capital within the current neo-liberal economic regime whereby the best version of one's self and the most economically productive version of oneself is the ultimate project. The irony is that the pursuit of one's best and self-crafted life and self is not necessarily a step on the path that will move one into a position where they are gainful of economic capital. Carole Smart (2007) is generally quite critical of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's Individualization thesis and analysis for it bears an economically pessimistic and bleak and socially disconnected future of life but what I will say is this: they at least acknowledge the unevenly changing reality of social and economic risks of social life. This is not to say that people might not try to engage in family life, or desire it, or that we will not find examples of familial-type ties, it is to say that these may very well be, in many ways, difficult and, in more than one way, costly to maintain.

Critiquing a psychological assessment of a social problem: Challenging the 'illusion' of being stuck

This point is at the heart of my critique of the QLC from a sociological point of view. It is not one's erroneously perceived, 'illusory' inability to leave their job or their

partner that fuels the 'crisis.' It is the very real economic consequences of postmodern modes of production as it manifests itself at the individual and micro-familial level.

Here, I draw again on Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's point number 6 in the

Individualization Thesis:

Your own life -- Your own failure. Consequently, social crisis phenomena such as structural unemployment can be shifted as a burden of risk onto the shoulders of individuals. Social problems can be directly turned into psychological dispositions: into guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts and neuroses. Paradoxically, enough, a new immediacy develops in the relationship between the individual and society, an immediacy of disorder such that social crises appear as individual and are no longer -- or only very indirectly -- perceived in their social dimension (2001:24).

Of course a QLC, as defined by Robinson or by Robbins and Wilner in popular literature, manifests itself at the level of the individual with exactly that: guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts and neuroses. However, I would argue that this is one of those situations described above by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim where a social problem is turned into a psychological disposition. Robinson may be correct with his four step model of the QLC in so far as anyone can leave their job or their spouse. They may even benefit psychologically speaking from doing so. What seems erroneous to me is to believe that this is not at least potentially without a real economic, social and/or political 'risk' within the framework of 'risk society' that Beck (1999) explains very well that we currently live within today. What I am suggesting is that their hesitation to leave their job or their partner may very well be a well-founded assessment of the risks more sociologically speaking. It seems that the concept of individualization brings with it the misunderstanding that we have the ability to behave with unbounded agency and in the absence of social structure. By my reading, this is not the concept of agency and structure employed by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim. It is not so much that I would refute

Robinson's analysis as it is that I would further qualify it and caution psychologists and social workers dealing with those who they deem to be presenting with a QLC to be reminded that psychological experiences and feelings continue to exist within a larger social framework. There is no guarantee that the dissatisfied cashier working at the big box department store will become 'happy' or 'psychologically well' by trading her cashier job at one store for what might likely be a lateral move to another cashier store at another store. We need here to take note of the macro-level halt on employment promotion that is created by the baby boomers longer stay in the workforce. By the same token, there is no guarantee that serial monogamy or the 'confluent' or 'contingent love' of an approximate version of the 'pure relationship' will be 'better than' the 1950's style 'romantic' and religious marriages (although Adams has well documented difficulties encountered by this form of marriage). These are 'risks' ensued by the actors of post-modern risk society. Whether or not leaving one's relationship or one's job necessarily results in increased agency, capital, the production of the best self and psychological peace is simply variable and easily debatable. Sometimes it probably does work out for the best and in favor of the individual who leaves their job or their relationship and sometimes it may simply be a trade for a different but equally difficult life. Still, other times it may be disadvantageous.

Second, I would suggest a backdrop of social shifts in education, work, reproduction and partnerships measured at the macro-level have a structural impact on the agency people have with which to navigate their own personal life course. This leads me to question Robinson's suggestion that those in a QLC are under the 'illusion' that they are 'stuck' in a given job or relationship. This to me sounds like a neoliberal discourse

embedded within a psychological model and assessment of what might otherwise be looked on as not a problem of the self but a problem of the social at a historically specific juncture. I would tend to give more weight to the lived reality of structural barriers that have long been part of work and family life for everyone but for women more particularly. I refer here to Beck and Beck Gernsheim's point #5:

In spite or because of the institutional guidelines and the often incalculable insecurity, the life of one's own is condemned to activity. Even in failure, it is an active life in its structuring of demands. The other side of this obligation to be active is that failure becomes personal failure, no longer perceived as class experience in a 'culture of poverty' (2001:24 point #5)

To imply that women can easily leave a job or relationship without risk and that it is an illusion that they cannot is to deny a 'culture of poverty' that some women already live within.

Further, I have noted instances whereby women have felt 'stuck' not on the inside of a relationship or employment status, rather they felt left on the outside of a relationship or higher more desired job statuses that seemed at the time unattainable for them in a real concrete sense rather than 'illusory.' This was the case with several of the women interviewed who attempted to educate themselves, gain a certain degree of capital, and enter into the 'right' type of relationship prior to conceiving a child. Other times, it may have been the frustration of working several low paying entry-level positions. Still other times, some women wanted marriage rather than serial monogamy but their relationships had not worked out that way: maybe they had not met someone to marry yet, or maybe they did marry and then determined they were incompatible partners. The important point here is that 'quarter life dilemmas' arise not only from being stuck within certain subject positions but when we take class and gender into consideration we see that it can

also mean being shut out of some subject positions, such as student, wife, mother, or jobs that are above entry-level positions. In some cases, it may be that women deliberately withheld themselves from such positions because they knew the subject position posed a risk to their personal lives and their ability to sustain themselves financially.

Take for example Cassandra's (Case Study #7) discussion about her separation from her partner and the many impacts this had on her process of 'growing up.' She describes being liberated in the sense that she pays the rent for her own home. However, she also notes how limited she is as a single mother when it comes to finances and extra time to pursue her education. She chose a path whereby she knew she would be financially limited but at least she would be in control. My aim here, is to acknowledge that the risks of ending the relationship were real and her challenges became different and weighty following her separation.

It was definitely a challenge. Definitely. It was not an easy road. I had married when I was 23 and the marriage lasted almost four years and it was a difficult marriage. It was not easy. I mean we were both probably...you know ...it was either too fast or too strong or whatever...at the time I did not know...I did not know anything about my children at the time. It was actually about a year after that I separated. I separate about roughly, I was twenty-seven and it was almost like one bombshell after another. I found out about a month apart from each other...So, I had to grow up fast. For the first time, I had my own place on my own because I had moved from home with their father so believe it or not by the time I was twenty seven was the first time, mind you I lived in the same area with my mother but it was the first time that I had my own place and it was almost liberating in a sense. You know I felt control over the bills and there was definitely that level of satisfaction but I mean it certainly had its ups and downs but I still believe that it was the best choice that I could have made for myself. I was much happier even though I was struck with certain blows but I didn't dwell on the bad part of it. It was like well what are you going to do next? And it was just like that extra bit of encouragement I could give myself and we have been going strong ever since. Like I said, financially things are always still difficult. You know you make do with what you have. So it was an 'up' and 'down' definitely in the twenties, at that age. I wouldn't want to live it again.

Divorce as 'Progress' and 'Social Maturation:'

For example, 'progress' and the emergence of adulthood might arise out of a divorce rather than a marriage because it allows the individual to personalize their life course and move toward what could be considered a closer approximation of the 'pure relationship.' Under past theoretical frameworks such as Eriksonian psychological theories or Parsons and Bales' (Ward, 2001) Structural Functional Theories of family life, a similar social situation might have meant, psychologically speaking that the individuals would be pathologized for not having sustained an intimate relationship and more sociologically it may have been considered an example of family breakdown or family 'dysfunction.' Under the current frameworks, divorce might represent a 'risk' one takes to achieve a new form of intimacy that aims to be free of coercive social constraints and more egalitarian in terms of power and resources than the stereotypical 1950's style housewife would have been offered under a 'conventional' heterosexual marriage. I will come back to this point about 'risk' and intimacy as I discuss Oliver Robinson's notion that the QLC can have positive impacts. One of my points would be that it wouldn't be a 'risk' if it invariably would produce a positive impact and this would be an important sociological critique of his theory. A second point would be that he is suggesting that the end of a relationship or leaving one's work promote social maturity. One of the participants, Chantal, described this process while talking about her own divorce:

Yeah, I would add is that what I was missing from my twenties is that because I transitioned so quickly from my family life to married life I didn't have a chance to discover who I was, my own personal identity, before trying to...bond with somebody else. So, I did end up doing that more in my thirties after I got my divorce and I think it was a huge factor in terms of my maturity and making my way to adulthood and because of societal pressures to make my way through the finish school, get married...I was in a hurry to get to that point, well when I

reached my thirties I got to the point where I was like who am I and what am I doing? and What does this all mean? So I guess a bit of an identity crisis in my late twenties and uh so in my thirties that has been my discovery and it's bringing me closer to my adulthood (Chantal Case Study #8).

In naming a moment that made her feel more 'grown-up,' Mary and Rachelle also pointed to their divorces as being significant to their growing up.

When I made my decision to divorce. I was like okay. This is it. I am making a decision for myself because it was a decision that went against everything that I had planned up until that point. Like I got married because I was nervous about being alone. He was with me, so I am going to marry him. It was just all these things that were expected of me and to divorce was just huge. So, that was my first real turning point because everything else was falling in line with expectations. This one was where I did an about face and I went in the other direction. This was a big one. (Mary Case Study #5).

Oh yeah, like getting married and buying the house that was a big deal. I was twenty. All my other friends didn't have that...and even ending the relationship was a big deal because I felt like I was pulling myself away from some type of dependence and becoming independent again. (Rachelle, Case Study #24).

Cassandra (Case Study #7) also described how her separation from her husband felt liberating because she had her own place for the first time and because she was in control of paying her own bills. She explained how she had to grow up really fast after the relationship dissolved. She did note that the separation caused financial strain for her household. I will come back to this case with a quotation when I discuss Oliver Robinson's 4 stages of the QLC.

While I have begun here to address questions surrounding the transformation of intimacy but what continues to be elusive is the answer to the question: 'What role does sexuality play in the fostering of intimacy and the re-construction of an adult self.'

Sexuality is likely the ultimate private and public expression of adult social self in terms

dynamics of social power and identity formation. I would see the expression of one's sexuality as the embodiment of the social structures and a site of agency. While I have in this dissertation grappled with questions relating to choices surrounding household composition, work, education, fertility and marriage, I think questions relating to how one chooses to express one's sexuality more specifically during the transition from adolescence to adulthood would be very telling of the processes and stages relating to growing up. This should be addressed more closely in future studies. It would require interviews with women who would identify themselves as not heterosexual. In the current study women were not asked to define their sexuality and they described only examples of relationships that were heterosexual monogamy or heterosexual serial monogamy with the exception of Carrie, Case Study #6 who said that she had expected to live within a more communal type household where multiple couples shared resources and sex.

Disruption: Confluent Love, Employment, Education Disrupt the Compartmentalized Continuum of Social Life

The shift from 'romantic love' to 'confluent love' influences at the familial level changes the order of personal life for women because to some degree confluent love requires employment of women, or at least her own pre-existing set of resources, so that women might be able to maintain their own cost of living and that of their children should the relationship dissolve. Employment in a job that provides flexible working hours for mothers and also a high enough rate of pay to accommodate for child care, usually requires post-secondary education. It may be that both partners have the same rate of pay and number of working hours or these may not be equal but for the

relationship to exist for its own sake a woman would at least need to not be economically dependent on her partner for the basic cost of her living and that would likely suggest that she would be employed.

The relationships we see among emerging adults may indeed exist as contingent relationships especially when juxtaposed against the romantic relationships whereby couples transitioned directly from their parents' homes to their new religious marriage. However, with the length of education and the low employment, it is unlikely that emerging adults would be each economically self-sufficient without the relationship and able to create the sort of relationship that exists only for its own sake and not for economic reasons that exist beyond its own scope. It could mean that partners are equally disadvantaged in that *both* partners need each other in order to share their limited resources in order to manage the currently rising cost of living. Thus, it would be important to understand that the serially monogamous relationships that we see in the lives of emerging adults today may be contingent but would not necessarily be examples of 'confluent love' as the relationship does not exist for its own sake but often for economic reasons. It might be, at least economically speaking that a coupling occurred within a household also in part because of the economic reality whereby it remains difficult to sustain one's self with food and shelter all by one's self as an individual.

The education of women changes the lock-step order of milestones to adulthood once thought of as a destination. The employment of women outside of their family home and the possibility of personal attainment and growth of wealth offers many new choices and possibilities for women who are afforded such options or who manage to create them for themselves. What type of work do I want to do? What type of

relationship do I want? and Who do I want to be? Of course, it is well-documented that women have historically worked outside of the home (Fox, 2001; Luxton 2001). However, for the families where women did not, the biggest choices no longer boil down to 'Who will I marry?' What changing this order does is highlight for us that 'growing up' is not the attainment of ordered stages but the processes that are negotiated across several interacting aspects of social life such as education, work, family and intimate relationships. Women do not experience growing-up as a compartmentalized progressive passing through each of these aspects. They now occur simultaneously, at different speeds or sometimes not at all. As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim put it: "Many Westerners could say: My life is not a continuum (2001:23 point #1)." The progression is not necessarily, high school education, courtship, marriage, motherhood, grandmotherhood. Rather variable combinations and ordering of, education, sexuality, work, and family can co-exist. Further, it is not necessarily a question of 'can I have it all?' It may be a question of 'Do I have to do it all?' or 'Can I have it at all?' or 'Can I have this without that?' and of course, "How?" Emily describes this shift from expecting stages to entering processes of social maturation. She also describes the different attitudes that she has encountered in cities or differing in type and levels of development:

[From Emily's Case Study #18] The timing of meeting certain markers and milestones for adulthood was discussed in relationship to Emily's feelings towards the timing and sequence of these in her own life. She highlighted two very important points: 1) looking at life holistically versus in a compartmentalized fashion; and 2) an uneven process of social maturation. In other words, she discussed the possibility of feeling like an adult in one area of life such as work but feeling like 'it just didn't seem to be happening' in her personal relationships.

[Emily] Well, I guess just because education did work out so smoothly, I was just confused as to why I wasn't marrying that person who wasn't even the right person for me. I guess I didn't see things as holistically as I see them now. They were compartmentalized as your questions are. It

was very odd for me...why aren't we getting married...It was very odd. It was just confusing. I thought...uhhh yeah, I guess that would be relationship-based. I just didn't understand why that wasn't because everything had been so clear and manifested itself exactly the way I wanted in terms of job and education so when I moved to [_____] and met a boyfriend I thought that is what happened and it just didn't seem to be happening so...confusion just uh yeah.

[Kelly] And with that confusion, was it upsetting, or was it...?

[Emily] Oh no! Very upsetting. Very upsetting. It was like "Why?! This isn't the way it's supposed to be"...at that point it occurred to me "well that's kind of strange. You've never revised your idea since you were twelve and you have gained an enormous amount of experience and knowledge and why would you stick to an idea that you had created during sort of an 'unknowing' time in your life."

[Kelly] And do you think that society sets up an order in general for these things to happen?

[Emily] I think in different scales of cities that happens. I think in terms of a small town like [the one I grew up in] that happens many of my friends stayed and got married and are much further along in their sort of relationship things or family life than I am at this point but in terms of [the larger metropolitan centre] where I lived many people there don't have their babies until their late 30's and have had a number of different relationships in that time until they found the person that they wanted to spend a longer period with and yeah I think the scale of the city influences that as well.

Temporal Culture Shock and Resilient Thinking

I think the difficulties that often fall under the label of 'quarter-life crisis' have a great deal to do with a temporal form of culture shock whereby women's expectations of their twenties were vastly different from the reality of their twenties because society changed so quickly between the time of their formative socialization and the time they were expected to and/or expecting to carry out anticipated adult roles. Some women

seemed to adjust more easily than others and perhaps this may have something to do with pre-acquired resiliency skills such as flexible thinking and positive thinking. For example Lucie described a very flexible type and positively adaptive form of thinking with regard to life events that did not happen in the time or order that she might have expected them to. She said:

I don't rattle easily. No...I guess... This is the way it's going to be. And then, at one point, I thought: "I am not getting married so this is good." (Lucy Case Study #3)

Mireille very clearly explained how her willingness to be flexible in terms of readjusting her timeline coupled with support from her friends and family was very important to her ability to cope with the changes to her anticipated biographic timeline:

[Mireille] I think that the timeline that I had anticipated was definitely linked to how society sees it and things changed with time and there were things that weren't necessarily anticipated and that certain things happened before and some things happened after. I view that as you can't predict everything that is going to happen in life so you can re-adjust with it but looking at it I don't feel as though I have had a failure because I didn't attain according to the time line. I feel as though things were different for me and for me this was the timeline that was appropriate.

[Kelly] Looking back on it, can you think of how you were feeling as you went through it?

[Mireille] So obviously one of the big things that is different is that I predicted that I would live with my boyfriend at the time and I had been with him for seven years, and I was engaged, and you know that whole thing, and uh so at that moment I found out that uh he had cheated on me, and at that moment it felt like a bit of a failure because it wasn't the structure that was in my head...But it didn't take long to realize "You wanna know what? Things happen for a reason and there is a reason it happened before we got married, and it's just readjusting my timeline and that is okay."

[Kelly] So you are comfortable looking at it today?

[Mireille] Absolutely.

Cassandra (Case study #7) also described this type of resilient thinking where she explains that her separation was a very difficult road but she chose not to dwell on that part of it. Instead she describes positive thinking about the future and a focus on what needed to be done most immediately because she had two developmentally challenged children who required her attention.

Other respondents relied on resilient thinking styles to help get them put things in perspective and remain engaged in their present lives.

Well, I am an early bloomer. I feel like I accomplished everything I was supposed to accomplish. I think I have done well for myself. I mean I had wanted to be debt free by the time I was 40 which hasn't exactly happened but it's close so I figure that's good enough. (Carrie, Case study #6).

I am not going to dwell on what things could have been. I am more in the present thinking well this is how it's playing out. I have to accommodate everything. I can't dwell on what could have been. I mean there is not much point in thinking about it. (Cindy, Case Study #26).

Chapter 12 Concluding Summary

The present study began with my experience and two books: 1) *Individualization* by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim and 2) Wilner and Robbins (2001) the *Quarterlife Crisis: The Unique Challenges of Life in Your Twenties*. Beginning with Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's work, I have attempted to re-contextualize a set of social problems relating to the rapid and uneven transition between modernity, second modernity and/or postmodernism and to challenge: 1) the notion that the QLC is necessarily an individual psychological crisis and 2) a set of problems of belonging only

to those in their twenties, uniformly and equally; and 3) that all women experience their twenties as an anxious 'crisis' rather than a set of challenges they face more 'positively.'

All women interviewed faced some challenges and dilemmas as they transitioned to adulthood but not all women described a severe crisis with a high level of anxiety. Some used words like stress, anxiety, depression, hard, challenging, disheartening, confused, rushed, scrambled, break down and crisis to describe life in their twenties. At the same time there were others who used words like liberating, becoming, opportunity, possibilities, hope, and happy. Importantly, a few explained that whether they were describing the experience or their reflection upon it made a difference to the way they would describe their feelings about it. In other words, they sometimes felt the dilemmas and challenges they faced brought them to a better place in life and in hindsight they saw value in the experience.

There was evidence that combining educational degrees with work and or family life was indeed challenging. Some of these challenges were: wearing too many hats at once; large student debt loads; feeling pressed for time. Many women started out working to meet milestones but then seemed to shift to new understanding of maturity that was in line with a process type of social maturity. This was particularly the case for women who had divorced. Some cases certainly fell in -line with Oliver Robinson's model. However, a more thorough gendered and class analysis of factors contributing to the QLC reveal that some women find themselves on the outside of relationships, motherhood, education and jobs and their 'quarter life' challenges and dilemmas revolve around the lived reality of this exclusion rather than their feeling stuck within a relationship or job.

When examining newspaper articles, it became clear that there was a changing age frame for emerging adulthood. Also, the time period during which the QLC might occur grew and was lengthened well into one's thirties. Further, shifts in attitude regarding emerging adulthood and the QLC were detected as time went on. It seemed the content of the articles became less dismissive and more informative and sympathetic.

On a more theoretical level, I have come to understand the challenges of emerging adulthood and the QLC as social problems that manifest themselves at the level of the individual. While I think the QLC exists for some, it requires contextualizing and it does not seem to me to be as universal as is presented through popular literature and self-help books. These are associated with the process of individualization much the way it is described by Beck and Beck Gernsheim. The advent of these problems of the individualized social as it manifests itself in what people are choosing to call 'the QLC' is historically and generationally specific in that we are witnessing a generation who live as hosts to competing primary and secondary socializations as they act out their adult lives in highly 'differentiated societies.' The challenges can be experienced either being constrained within or systemically exclusion from specific, often anticipated roles and statuses within society. Here, I build upon the work of Oliver Robinson.

We see bits of residual tradition relating to a narrow version of 'the family' that remain as reflexive action of second modernity takes over and life becomes 'multi-local' and poly-discursive, as daughters are re-educated within colleges and universities, as birth control becomes effective, widely available and encouraged, as women increasingly take on paid work that requires higher education, as women delay coupling and childbearing or even forego these altogether. We witness the 'disruption' of the bio-

social continuum. The choice of 'confluent' love over biblical or romantic 1950's style family life (even if it only existed as an idea) along with an increase in education pushes this disruption. That is not to suggest that family life no longer exists but it does mean that life, more generally, is no longer developmentally progressive in a straight bio-historical line across compartmentalized institutions. As Smart (2007) explains, the public and private become blurred as life becomes personalized. My understanding derived from both the individualization thesis and the personal life thesis is this: To say a woman has a personal life or even a 'life of her own' is to say: women exist to varying degrees and orders within and across the fluid or permeable domains of 'multi-local' social life.

With respect to the interviews on a more substantive level, it became clear to me more generally speaking that the concept of 'social maturation' itself was undergoing a re-definition. Responses relating to growing up circled around: 1) being able to support oneself economically; 2) being responsible for decisions regarding oneself or one's children; 3) Becoming or self-actualizing. Still, meanings and markers for adulthood such as graduation, getting a first full time job, buying a car and/or a house, getting married and having a first child were noted but seemed to be losing their status as necessary signifiers for maturity. Although, these existed at least residually or partially for many women until a life circumstance called them into question requiring a re-assessment of their significance within the individual's personal life. It was noted that much of the talk surrounding 'growing up' seemed to fit with aspects of neoliberal economic theories and discourses. Particularly the neoliberal moral ethic that suggests that people are personally responsible for the consequences of their choices. The idea

that we are responsible for ourselves economically, and that we are responsible for our choices and their impact as well as our own journey of becoming without much regard for the influence of social context seems, to me, to fit with the neoliberal moral ethic. I would challenge this line of thinking as problematic. Moreover, the 'transformation of intimacy' compels us to re-define and acknowledge a transformation in social maturity whereby less tangible, markable, everyday processes are becoming increasingly important to signifying a sort of contingent, in the moment maturity. As such, life events such as divorce were seen as providing an opportunity for maturity rather than expression of immaturity. Divorce was an avenue whereby women asserted their agency, made a decision on their own and for themselves and redefined 'progress' for themselves. In these instances, marriage dissolved as a signifier for social maturity.

I think we are looking at an 'experimental' or 'ethnomethodological' version of 'social maturity' whereby one is continually redefining their responsibilities and identities. We may never fully arrive as we would have if we believed the markers really could define us as 'grown-ups.' To borrow the words of some wise participants: "Things have changed and ya wanna know what? That's okay" (Mireille). "And so I could say I am on the road to it. I am not beside the road anymore" (Rebecca). "It's really not about 'getting there'" (Chantal).

I would agree, it's not about 'getting there' in the sense of arriving but it certainly seems to be about responsibly travelling a path of becoming and, in that sense, paradoxically, we are all still on our way socially as we arrive biologically. It's about the contradictions embedding in the corporeality of social maturation for women today. For many of us, even as we edge our way to our forties and beyond, we're still 'getting there.'

I suppose there are many ways I could feel about this journey but I will say this about my travels upon the pathways I have chosen: It is only in reflection upon a postmodern dawn, that I have realized how beautiful it is to be a woman when I might only ever be 'becoming.'

Changing the order and timing of social development on the individual psychosocial-level or at the level of family development has an impact on the taken for granted 'common sense' concept of 'growing-up.' I am suggesting that the meaning of growing-up is shifting, being transformed, in large part because women have had to adapt to unexpected roles and/or to playing well-established and expected gender roles in new ways. While some women did marry and have children, these varied in terms of age, order and meaning comparatively to the descriptions they gave of their mother's experiences. Having said this, my ability to generalize is limited because of the homogeneity of the women interviewed. Through the interview data it was found that in the absence or altering of the 'adult' role(s) that the participants expected to take on, they worked to redefine the meanings and/or markers for 'growing-up' for themselves such that an emphasis on age-related stages begin to give way to flexible processes of social maturity. One of the processes that women engaged in was this very questioning and re-defining of the meaning and markers of 'growing-up' for themselves. Indeed, I see this as related to the process of individualization. Difficult emotional feelings seemed to persist as women held onto romanticized notions of family life.

I suggest that the women did not always think of 'growing-up' as a static state or 'destination' after the completion of a series of stages. Rather, an emphasis on the processes and journey of growing up were also highlighted by respondents. Suggesting

that another type of becoming and growing had to do with taking on 'responsibility,' for themselves and others; 2) generating and exercising 'autonomy' in their decisions and actions; and 3) reflexively creating and expressing 'identity.' Women still gave some weight to markers such as finishing high school, getting married, making major purchases, and having children. However, many described feeling between adolescence and adulthood or feeling as though they shifted back and forth. Sometimes this was because they chose to, while other times it was because of structural influences that were external to them. Hence, the title *Getting There*.

I am suggesting that the participants defined adulthood as more than as series of social stages or a status of being. Adulthood seems to be thought of as contingent, temporary, and negotiable but it is not a social given based on a biological timeframe. This form of adulthood seems to require frequent and active re-inscribing between the social and the individual before the status takes hold more permanently. Further, I am arguing that there exist, particularly for women, social and economic barriers to attaining an individuated, self-sufficient, autonomous adult status and identity. With this in mind, I suggest investigating the social maturation processes engaged in by people who readily experience social barriers and disadvantages.

Where Robbins and Wilner described the overwhelming myriad of choices that women have to deal with today, I heard in women's narratives stories of limitations and constraint, even when opportunities appeared to exist. Interestingly, alongside stories of limitation and constraint I also heard resilience in the narratives of the very same women. Becoming responsible, autonomous and forming an identity represents not markers for adulthood but processes and this makes it seem like adulthood is equally available to all

participants. However, it was noted that class seemed to play a part in women's sense of agency. It was noted that class, culture and gender played a role in directing responsibilities. Some women with university level education and careers still wanted to be mothers but were often not because they did not have the very specific life circumstances that they wanted in place before having children.

Initially the project began with the question: What do women do when the anticipatory roles they were socialized to fill do not exist for them to take on at the time and in the way that they expected? Through this Dissertation I examined how women cope and navigate through their personal lives when these anticipatory roles do not exist to perform at the time and/or in the way they expected to perform them. We examined whether or not discontinuities between anticipatory socialization and the experience of living out roles in their adult lives, contribute to anxieties and a sense of paralysis related to timing life-style choices. The 'Quarterlife Crisis' was examined as a form of culture shock that is 'transmodal,' 'transtemporal,' and 'transepistemic.'

It is evident from newsprint data that ages attributed to the concepts of adulthood, emerging adulthood, and the QLC are variable. Further, the definitions for the QLC and advice regarding how to handle oneself in midst of a QLC are also discontinuous. Stages and processes relating to adulthood seem to be occurring at later ages and over time the attitudes expressed in newsprint articles towards the QLC seemed to be more sympathetic to the phenomenon.

The contribution that this thesis makes is a deeper understanding of the processes associated with emerging adulthood and new shifting definitions of social maturity.

From a theoretical standpoint, I set forth a competing definition for Generation X as a generation defined by multiplicity of identities rather than a lack thereof. In so doing, I have examined the concept of generation as a cultural field whereby multiple identifications with residual traditions and new ways of life can serve to construct a faceted or layered complex set of layered generational identities. Further, this research outlines what it is that people might do and how they might feel in the absence of roles that they were socialized to fill.

Further, through this thesis I have shown that emerging adulthood and quarterlife dilemmas can be shaped by gender and class experiences. Future research should examine the emerging adulthood, quarterlife dilemmas and social maturity from a cross-cultural perspective. Another area for future research could be to examine how changing the ages, stages and order of social maturity impacts stages of moral development. I say this because of the strong emphasis on responsibility and care that was present in the interview data as participants described their definitions of growing up.

Chapter 13 Preface to the Autoethnographic Chapter

The following reflection represents, in narrative form, my own answers to the questions I asked the participants. It will serve to further articulate my social location not only towards social theory in general but also more specifically towards the brief life-histories that I co-constructed with the participants. Further, it provides an elaborate example of a my quarterlife history in terms of: 1) Responsibilities and taking care of self and other; 2) Autonomy; 3) Identity work; 4) questioning and redefining; and 5) coordinating a personal life. This piece of writing is not meant to tie together the thesis. Rather, it is meant to offer one more illustration of the stages and processes that can be

associated with social maturity. I offer it not because it is more important than the other narratives that I have included. It is here so as to allow for a greater context to the take I have articulated vis-a-vis the narratives, articles, books, pop culture artifacts, etc.

Juxtaposed against my master's thesis it chronicles the closing of another chapter of my life. When I defended my M.A., I thought that surely I would find that piece of work more interesting in time. I feel the same about this chapter.

As many of the participants said, I think 'Growing up is hard.' It is a journey filled with laughter and tears, hard work and the escape of new types of play. Growing up is finding myself and my story among the many life stories that crowded my thoughts for so many years. Growing up was about remembering who I was, being who I am and imagining who I may someday become. Growing up was about acknowledging what I have to do to be responsible and take care of myself and my family. Ultimately, growing up has been about learning to read where reading is also writing. It is not so much that I have arrived at this destination of adulthood. Growing up is a matter of re-reading and re-writing myself such that a negotiation between the various socializations that I have encountered are re-integrated holistically. My life will not be a simple replica of the life my parents lived and nor will I ever be a past version of myself. Growing-up, in the sense that I continue to live it, is a more a matter of becoming than a matter of arriving. Rather, growing up means recognizing that I am home even as I am getting there. Hence, the ironic oscillation and 'strong reading' between the first and the last words included in this Dissertation: 'Getting there' and 'home.' Where 'getting there' is, both and at once, a past narrative about a destination and a new conception of a continual and

active process of becoming and where 'home' is both somewhere I try to go and something I become more immediately.

Chapter 13 Bird's Eye View¹³ An Autoethnographic Reflection

On Climbing the Ivory Tower, Emerging Adulthood, Marriage, Motherhood and the Construction of an Academic Identity

It is the duty of us, the founders, then, said I to compel the best natures to attain the knowledge which we pronounced the greatest, and to win the vision of the gods, to scale that ascent, and when they have reached the heights and taken an adequate view, we must not allow what is now permitted.

What is that?
That they should linger there, I said, and refuse to go down again among those bondsmen and share their labors and honors, whether they are of less or greater worth (Plato, Republic Book VII).

If you can imagine me 20 years ago, you would picture a nineteen year old girl returning to school after a quick trip home to recover from the whirlwind that is one's first experience of Frosh Week. She's sitting, sleeping on a milk-run bus ride between Cornwall and Lennoxville with a fresh paperback copy of Plato's *Republic* in hand. And so begins my coming of age, trek through emerging adulthood, out of Plato's 'Cave' and up the 'Ivory Tower' story. I went to an 'old school' and we read whole original classic texts rather than excerpts or textbooks as our starting point. When I tried to read that book on the bus, I fell asleep because although I could read the individual words, their collected meaning escaped me. It was not as though I thought I was somehow going to see the light by osmosis, with my eyes being comfortably closed, it was that I really was

¹³ This chapter was presented at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropological Society's conference at Congress 2014 at Brock University.

not sure what to do about not understanding what I was reading. As we arrived I awoke, and the woman beside me said, 'Did you get much of your reading done?' 'Not really,' I smiled sheepishly knowing she knew I had slept the whole way. 'This book is hard to read.' To this she replied, 'The best ones usually are,' and with that she was on her way.

What I didn't know at the very beginning of my academic career was that I would need to start over, and over, and over again. My father has often said that he sent me to university to learn how to think. I still think I knew how to think in the first place, but what I didn't know is that I would need to re-learn how to think, re-learn how to learn and learn new ways of knowing. I had no idea that I would need to re-learn how to read not only books but the world around me. Reading an original work without an introductory course is much different from reading a textbook and the language with which original works such as Durkheim's (1933) *The Division of Labour in Society*, Max Weber's (1965) *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* and Fromm's (1961) *Marx's Concept of Man*, for example, were written with. Gone were the days when I could get by without reading. I was the university student who would have to struggle with determination to learn and make the most of my education. Still, reading I disliked and re-reading was completely foreign to me. However, I have read Book VII several times because I was determined to 'crack' this philosophical code. I still re-read it on occasion, now with ease. It's my way of reminding myself of how far I have come and where I still have to go.

I was trying to pinpoint the moment I started climbing this Ivory Tower and I think it was the moment where I picked up Plato's Republic, just one more time. Before this, I was actually quite reluctant to engage with university learning. I started climbing the Ivory Tower before I even knew that it existed or had a name. Although, I had never

heard of Plato's cave, I started my journey from far below the surface, in the dark, amidst the shadows. I was fortunate to have a very enthusiastic professor who brought the allegory to life and he helped me understand. A few of Socrates' questions always stuck with me, 'Why did the prisoners react so violently to being told the shadows were not Gods?'

It is one thing to want to find the motivation to want to learn, it is quite another to pull these ideas into oneself. Of course I wasn't a prisoner in the same sense but I did share something in common with prisoners in the cave and that was that I was reluctant to actively learn. I was, at first, reluctant to pursue a university education at all. My parents were very excited for me to follow this path and take on opportunities that they had not had. I wanted to attend the college as they had but my mother insisted that I apply to university and if it didn't work out, then I could become a nurse, as I was considering. I didn't think I was going to get in and I didn't think it was going to work out but I really wanted her to be proud of me so I tried my best. So the journey began with a mother who pushed her reluctant daughter out of the nest to a new place where a wise man greeted her with an old story about people who were reluctant and scared to know differently.

I will never forget the first time I met a professor face to face. One of the last events of Frosh week used to be stand-in-line registration for classes where you meet your professors and ask to be admitted to their course. 'Have I chosen well?' I asked him as though he embodied more power and wisdom than Obi Wan or Yoda himself and I think I half-expected him to reply: "Chosen well, you have..." but he just nodded and said 'Yes.' Even registration was a different process that commanded a certain level of respect, symbolically and in a real sense too. I am from a generation who had to stand in

line for hours to ask each professor permission to be admitted into their course rather than a quick online sign up and this point of entry bore a lot of weight.

There were words that I learned in the Ivory Tower as I looked up at a beautiful red brick building we call the university. Some of these words were: to call into question, to problematize, normative, omnipotent, patriarchal, hegemonic, phallic, institutions, juxtaposition, structure, agency, abstraction, alienation, demystification, embedding, disembedding, ethnocentrism, wealth, power and prestige, division of labour and stratification, commodification, habitus, cultural capital, postmodern, reflexivity, recursivity, praxis, technopoly, to misread, to palimpsest, the culture of nature, fracturation and multiplicity and plasticity of the self, corporeality, individualization and of course, race, class, gender and sexuality, many words that ended in ism, ethnography, auto-ethnography, and my personal methodological favourite serendipity (known to me from my earliest education as God's plan and the work of the Holy Ghost). Moreover, I was astonished by the myriad of debatable definitions for these words. Granted, I had heard a handful of these words before but they were essentially redefined with regards to the social.

These words are more than the jargon of Sociology for it is with these words as stepping stones, that I climbed the Ivory Tower and as I did, I began to change and so did my perception of the world I saw around me. It was as though I had learned to read the world with new words in my mind rather than simply being able to read what others thought of the world via words they wrote on a page. It was at this point that I began to realize that reading could in fact also be writing; overwriting, that is. These were the words that coloured and shaped my sociological imagination and I can't imagine how I

would discuss motherhood today without these words. Without these words, I really can't imagine who I would be and how I would know myself, and motherhood within today's society.

In hindsight, I don't think I would have made it anywhere near the Ivory Tower if I hadn't been lead there by my mother's keen insight and foresight that perhaps nursing might not be the best fit for me in particular. She would tell me in various ways that today's hard work would pay off tomorrow, that my grades would someday be reflected in my paychecks. I think my mother wanted me go to university so I would be able to support myself and so I could avoid working shift work someday. Thinking way back to my childhood, I can also remember her telling me after hearing me sing a skipping song about who I would marry: 'Don't marry a doctor, become a doctor and marry who you love.' Today, I can recognize these as liberal feminism.

These were all fine and valuable lessons but what was unexpected was that I would learn so much more about how to live. For example, I was taught that entertainment is both free and freeing and that the things we have been taught to use to hold our attention, such as television, don't actually bring us the kind of relaxation and ease of mind that comes from the completion of a creative task. For example, pencils and a stack of paper can provide hours of entertainment that will leave us with a product and ready to rest. When you superimpose this upon the work ethic I have inherited from my father, you find a work = leisure equation. If entertainment is a creative project and motherhood is in my mind one of the highest and most worthwhile creative projects then I might never find myself bored again. The knowledge passed on to me from within the circles of the Ivory Tower has taught me has shaped what I know, how I know and who I

am and because of this my conception of family includes academic parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. The lesson about entertainment cannot be quantified because I don't think I have been bored since my children have been born. There is simply far too much to do and think about, to apply and to re-theorize now. I suppose this is the key to my interest in mothering and motherhood. I have the privilege to think about it while I wash the floor. Every task is not just a mundane repetitive domestic task. It is learning, applying, creating, and re-thinking our paramount task of socialization. Auto-ethnography makes the creative projects of marriage and parenting for me as a sociologist at least twofold.

I suppose you might say my story is one of a young woman who tried to live at least two lives, identities, goals, sets of friends, that she hopes to consolidate these here today. Many of my friends had become parents at around the age of 15 and 16 which meant that they were very busy between school and parenting and work and I was now a bit alienated from my own life as I had to start over. I can remember wanting to be a mother very early on but I knew it wouldn't work out at the age of 15 and I saw first-hand the reality of teen parenting so I chose a different direction for myself. I would need to find new friends because I changed schools our lives simply diverged. Although, I must say, I have always missed my first circle of high school friends and I have always wondered about their experience of education, motherhood and becoming an adult. I have always thought that should our paths cross again we would have so much to talk about.

Instead of starting a family, I studied families and parenting. Then a curriculum change at the University occurred and a Women's Studies program was introduced and I

belong to the first graduating class. It was incredible how once the material was directly applicable to my life experience as a young woman, I began to excel at this craft we call Sociology. All of a sudden, I had theoretical frameworks with which to make sense of my life experiences. At the same time, these frameworks began to make sense to me. On a new level, I could begin to make sense of the many young pregnancies that I witnessed and abortions that I secretly knew about. I have always been curious with regard to understanding the reflexive nature between motherhood and social circumstances. From a feminist perspective, there was not just a division of labour but a gendered division of labour. There was Marilyn Waring (1995) counting hours of unpaid labour and now power in relation to the division of tasks made sense to me.

Moreover, there was gender and that was not sex and this was new to me because before this time I had always equated them with each other. It was in reading Julia Wood's work that I came to understand how to re-frame my own educational experience as a gendered experience. It was with Charlotte Perkins Gilman's (1990) *The Yellow Wallpaper* that doctors don't always know everything and that some cures for 'hysterical' domesticated wives were likely worse than their experience of their ailment in the first place. It was stories like this one that reminded me to think carefully about the 'expert' opinions of those at the top of the Ivory Tower, particularly where the bodies and minds of women were the subject. With Gilman's (1979) utopian novel *Herland*, I was able to imagine for the first time a world that existed beyond the heterosexual normative version of the world I had always known. This story had me at least question what is a woman exactly? What *could* our families look like? Who would be a mother if everyone were a woman? How would we decide? What would my utopian world look like?

While I had been introduced to sociological frameworks as a high school student, it had been done so abstractly that I actually couldn't understand what the frameworks were and how to use them. I did not understand that the frameworks were to be applied to society, real people's lives, let alone my own life. Moreover, I did not really understand what was meant by 'a theoretical application,' until my second year of university. It wasn't until I read Jaggar's (1993) *Feminist Frameworks*, that I really understood what the differences between conservatism, liberalism, marxism, radicalism and various feminisms were and how to apply theoretical frame works to social situations. As I leafed through John Berger's (1966) *Ways of Seeing* I saw beyond the dichotomy between man and woman, sex and gender. I also began to see gender relations reproduced in the order of things, architecture, magazines, clothes, etc. It was Spradely and Mann (1977) *The Cocktail Waitress* that made me incredibly curious about methods and ethnographic work and legitimated looking and listening, systematically taking in my world and formulating my own analysis on it.

There was an important debate that further informed my thoughts on family life. This was the Judith Stacey (1993) versus David Popanoe (1993) debate and it had lead to heated debates among peers regarding family politics. A lot of what I was reading, for example Felicity Eldholm's (1993) 'the unnatural family' and other articles in Bonnie Fox's (1993) reader *Family Patterns and Gender Relations* were directly challenging my upbringing and my primary and secondary education. Jane Gaskell's (1993) work on the expectations of working class teenage girls with regard to paid work outside the home and unpaid domestic labour fascinated me because I could relate to it readily having actively chosen to avoid teen pregnancy and reluctantly started a university program.

The point that gender may be influencing my expectations for my future was an important point because I had not considered this before.

Still, at this time I was unsure if I would complete the degree and I figured soon after graduation I would get a job, get married and have children. On one hand, the curriculum made sense because it was applicable to me as a woman but on the other hand with respect to family norms other than those of the nuclear family. it seemed to be written about and for someone else. I still had a very 'normative' version of family life and work in mind for my future. In other words, intellectually speaking, my thinking was shifting regarding life partners as I read Giddens' (1992) work on Intimacy and the 'pure relationship,' family structure as I read Margrit Eichler's (1997) work on the social responsibility model and socialization of children as I read Bourdieu's (1990) concept of the logic of practice and Giddens' (1990) concept of recursivity. Both Fox's (1993) and Duffy & Mandell's (1995) compilation were opening my mind to the way that social structures had created inequality within families for minority groups but also how there were merits to many of the various family structures that do exist. My mind was open to various ways of practicing motherhood. However, in practice, I was expecting something much more conservative for myself. Moreover, I thought that as I would leave the university I would return home to the same world I had left, to then become a nurse, get married, and have children.

The thing about these words I listed above, is that once you know them, you cannot really 'unknow' them. It was something like what Alexander Wilson (1991) describes with regard to culture and the experience of nature. Once we have experienced all the technology of postmodern society, it is basically impossible to experience nature

'naturally' because we will always carry with us our knowledge of technology as we regard the 'natural.' That being said, my 'old' world was never going to look the same to me. Take something as simple as watching television: how do you ever just watch television again after you have listened to bell hooks speak on hegemony and the mass media (hooks, 2002). Beyond this, in a very real sense, the world was truly changing at a rapid pace. Technology and the more widespread use of the internet pushed the world to change a lot between 1994 and 1998 and by the year 2000, postmodernism had a strong hold on the world. Think about it, I was the last high school class to learn to type on a typewriter, the last university class to stand in line for registration and read full original 'classic' texts, and I belonged to the first graduating class of a Women's Studies program. There was a combination of me seeing the world differently but also the real fact that the world was different.

In just a short time, ideas regarding sexuality had changed significantly. Most of my high school teachers had been very dedicated and pushed our thinking but I can remember being very much misinformed on occasion by some of my teachers. Among these erroneous ideas were that: 1) gay people brought AIDS with them; 2) rape doesn't happen, sex happens because women want to have sex or it just wouldn't happen; and 3) the love between two men or two women could never be the same as or equivalent to the love between a man and a woman. The point is, I can remember very clear instances of sexist and homophobic information being passed on and while I would have known not to pass these particular ideas on to my children, I am not sure I would have thought as consciously about what ideas regarding gender and sexuality I would want to socialize my children with. Reading books like *Tough Guise* (2002), Kimmel and Mesner's

(2010) *Men's Lives*, Adams' (1997) *The Trouble with Normal* and Anthony Giddens' (1992) *The Transformation of Intimacy* has equipped me with new language and new discourses regarding gender and sexuality. While I recognized these statements as problematic, I was young, an adolescent, in a subordinate student position and ill equipped to respond to the statements. How much does it matter for a parent to know substantive sociological and psychological information and high theory about gender? When I think back to my friends who became parents in their teens, and myself who was quite paralyzed by the prospect of unplanned pregnancies, I think it matters greatly.

Despite their efforts to establish equitable relations within the Tower, I have always felt a certain nervousness around my professors. My relationship to educators as people of 'authority' had been adjusted by my professors. Learning within this Ivory Tower was different. I was allowed to call my professors by their first names but I couldn't bring myself to do so until I finished my degree and even then it felt awkward because I wanted to show my respect for them and I still had a naive take on their position in the world like they were Obi Wan, Yoda, or high priestesses and I was nervous relative to their higher status. We sat in a circle with our desks facing each other engaging in open, heated yet respectful debates. With each new piece we read and discussed, I climbed the Tower, seeing once again from a new vantage point. At the time, it felt as though every step I took towards my education and the career that I had not yet envisioned was a step away from my romantic relationship and motherhood but now looking in retrospect, I know these were all steps towards an informed and prepared version of marriage and motherhood. Then again, much of the reality of marriage and motherhood no one of us could ever prepare for. After all, how does one prepare for

'happily ever after' and 'I will love you forever.' Long before I prepared myself for marriage and motherhood, I was prepared for it by parents, teachers, priests. However, most of the positions I would read and engage with would stand in strong opposition to the socialization I received at home and also in the francophone catholic school system that I was educated within.

I graduated and I was immediately hired to work at a group home where I took care of developmentally challenged children and adults. I cooked meals, gave baths, cleaned toilets and other messes, I took clients on outings. For the most part, I enjoyed this work and identified with it as 'mothering.' I learned a lot from the very special souls we called 'clients.' At the same time, I was also accepted into an M.A. in Sociology program and so I decided to pursue this experience. This was quite different from what I had anticipated because I thought I would have a 'real' job, not a student job that paid about \$8.00/hour but I was, of course, grateful for the opportunity and I learned a lot. I had not anticipated furthering my education. I thought I would get married and have children after my B.A. -- or perhaps become a nurse. I wrote about what it was like to delay pregnancy instead of becoming a mother. I wrote about the other ways that acted out and conceptualized motherhood through working in group homes and providing in-home care to other mothers' children. I had experienced providing care for other mothers' children and I felt I had grown enough to be an adult and a mother. At that time in my life, I wrote of a new sense of self-respect for myself as a woman and a feeling of being 'ready' to mother:

Today as I look down at my twenty-four-year-old bellybutton with a newly found respect, I know that, given the right choices and opportunities, I am not cursed by the wrath of God but honoured and

privileged with the potential to carry and pass on a long legacy of the caring self (Landon, 2001).

As I summed up one of the chapters in my M.A. thesis with these words, I was certain I was ready for marriage and children, but that is not what happened. I started a Ph.D. and I played 'Wendy' to a group of boys who I considered lost and who eventually all found their way. I would climb the ladder to be a graduate student and part time professor and I would slide back down to be a front line personal support worker so I could pay for my climb back up the ladder. That is one of the most difficult parts of climbing the Tower. It is work to climb it *and* I had to work to pay to do the work to climb it. It was a bit like a game of chutes and ladders between the Tower and the cave where I would study and/or teach a course and then return home to work a frontline job within a group home and socialize with people who I thought very highly of (and still do) and who in reality had much less education than I had at this point. This is probably why the study of the everyday and the social construction of knowledge that was introduced to me through Berger and Luckman's (1966) 'typificatory schemes' was so intriguing to me because I was continually flipping between knowledge sets that were quite divergent and differentially informed. The disparity between the worlds did upset me deeply. I can remember crying to my advisory team when one of them asked me: What are you doing there? At the time, I don't think I could answer the question fully. However, in retrospect, I see I was unsure what to do in the absence of being a nurse or a teacher and wife and a mother. But was I lost? or was I simply doing exactly as I had been socialized to do via the only means I had at the time. In retrospect, I was mothering but in unexpected contexts. The opportunity to work as both a front line group home

worker and a part-time professor and to socialize within differing circles of friends between the place where I started out (in the cave) and the place where I was headed (the Tower) was actually me living out exactly what I had learned from Plato's allegory. Throughout this experience of 'hopping' from social location to another, I was living very different class identities but I think what was more interesting was that I began to 'dis-embed' and 're-embed' ideas from one context, re-juxtaposing the ideas so as to highlight discontinuities for myself and for others around me.

The interesting thing is that my first degree was completed instead of becoming a mother at an early age but with the second degree I completed because I didn't have a full time job and I was not getting married and/or having children either. The third degree started out much the same way as the second but during the Ph.D. I did get married and have children. Marriage and motherhood has both slowed and informed my progress. Marriage and motherhood require time, and so they did impede the speed of my written progress but they have also informed the final product. What would I write about if not to write about marriage and motherhood? Emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000) and the quarterlife 'crisis' (Robbins and Wilner, 2001; Robinson & Wright 2013) that occurred in my life because I could not be a mother at the time I wanted to? In my reasoning for completing these three degrees we can see a shift in my experience as an emerging adult and the uneven pathway to adulthood that I have taken. As I wrote a paper entitled: 'The pregnancy In/experience' I described how not yet being able to have children when I had expected that I would was like interrupting or halting the operation of the habitus matrix. Now, having become a mother and an academic I feel that I am operating with more than one habitus or a matrix that has been torn and re-patched because my primary and

secondary socialization differ so greatly. So often, my thinking and acting has felt 'jammed' as Irigaray (1993) might say.

One of the most valuable lessons that I learned from reading Giddens' (1992) work, is that intimacy requires risk but so does life within postmodern society. I can recall one of my classmates, asking her, what we should do if we get it wrong and the message we were given was that we would need to risk again.

Motherhood has already taught me a lifetime's worth of lessons that I have only just begun to unpack. For example, having my son made me realize just how much time I had had before he was born and just how much I was actually capable of doing and producing in a day. He has taught me to economize time and work quickly so that I might savour my time with him. Also, he made me realize for myself that motherhood does not ensure adult status in postmodern society. My daughter has taught me that careful risks can be so beneficial because had I not tried again she would not be here to compel me to be the strongest role model I can be.

Before having my daughter, I carried a child whose body had a large tumour that filled his chest to the point that he would grow very little or no lung tissue. I was told this anomaly would be incompatible with life outside the womb. Advances in science gave me the gift of pursuing one of three choices, 1) to deliver an infant that would die outside the womb because he would not have lungs; 2) to terminate the pregnancy by week 22; or 3) explore expensive American surgeries that involved removing the fetus from the womb, operating on him, and returning him to the womb to continue growing for the remainder of the pregnancy. I was told, this last option was not available in Canada and I was also told that a lung transplant would not be available. I weighed these

options as my baby kicked me within my womb. Because I can read these now, I read medical journals about CCAM survival outcomes and I watched the House (Season 3 episode 17) 'Fetal Position' of CCAM operation where the fetus was removed from the womb for operation. Not that I thought television was reality but this situation seemed so rare that I took in any information I could find.

I was so unprepared to face a 'choice' like this one. Moreover, I saw it as an expression of my personal identity. I learned that decision making for someone with a 'fractured' postmodern identity can be very intense (and perhaps I have thought about it more having studied postmodern identity through works such as Giddens' (1991). Carrying and delivering the child represented for me being Catholic, and maternal. Terminating the pregnancy represented a medically informed option that some feminists had long fought for and it eliminated maternal risks if the fetus were to die in uterus. I also saw terminating the pregnancy from another angle and that was a disregard for life and therein not a feminist choice ... not an eco-feminist choice. While the 3rd option could have represented a consolidated choice, it simply looked very risky and I was afraid my first son would be left without a mother and that my husband would be left without a wife. My re-socialized postmodern faceted self is not simply indecisive, I view from several angles and I engage in reflection and reflexive thinking. It takes a lot of time but I didn't have a lot of time to ponder this decision. Not acting, would be in and of itself the decision if that is what I would choose to do. This was the one instance in my life where I could not seem to negotiate between these identities to make a choice that I could reconcile across all the facets of my self. This choice would be the one that would push me to 'grow-up.' Of course, the greatest dilemma was that I was going to lose

my child. That was a given, as it was explained to me. Beyond this, my identity seemed to be at stake. I suppose I thought I was going to have to hand back one of the masks I had tried on in adolescence in favor of another one. It looked to me that if I chose the early induction, that would end my Catholic identity.

I, being very introspective, thought about this choice over and over. It seemed so unfair to me that this was happening because I had planned and waited so long to make sure everything was just right before having my children. It was unfair because I had taken care of so many other mothers' developmentally challenged children and it seemed like there was nothing I could do to help my own. Really, it was just such an unfair loss because I wanted him so much and he was, in fact, alive in my womb.

What I can tell you is that I met him for a few brief moments, I told him that I loved him and that I always wanted him and I held him until he was gone and then I held him longer than that. I had never known before this that a moment in time can be beautiful and horrifying all at once. I didn't know that a face could smile, while a mind could scream. I never imagined that this would be part of my journey through motherhood. Motherhood, as I knew it was about gaining and abundance, not losing. Instead, I was about to learn that motherhood is more about alternating between holding on and letting go. I knew right away that something was wrong because I wasn't crying. I said to the nurse, 'I haven't cried yet.' She quietly told me that I would when it was time to leave the hospital without my baby. She was right. Only, it took even a bit longer than this but once I started crying I just couldn't stop.

The other thing I can tell you is that it took a team, a community to bring me back from this place. I have no shame in telling you that I saw doctors, a psychologist, a

psychiatrist, a social worker, a priest, even a bishop to help bring me back from this place. It just took so long to process everything. My advisory team and the Sociology department have always been very supportive of parenting and of this time in my life in particular. I can remember repeating the words "It's just that ... It's just that..." over and over but I could never quite put into words what "it" was. Today I could tell you that it's just that too many thoughts were scattered at the surface of my mind and I couldn't grab one fast enough to articulate it nor was it easy to say what I needed to say out loud. If I could fill in the blank with two of the many racing thoughts were "It's just that he was so beautiful and I wanted him," and "It's just that I don't know who I am anymore because the person I thought I was would never have made the choice I made."

Intellectually speaking, the experience of the loss of a child has taught me a lot about how the mind works, how to be resilient, and how to live with 'fractured' identities. One thing that I experienced during this time of high stress was that it seemed as though every idea I had ever had flooded to the surface of my mind such that I was unable to concentrate or even use these ideas functionally because they were so fleeting or repetitive. It was as though I had started to search for ideas that would make all this make sense and I couldn't find it. Moreover, I had disrupted all the ideas in my mind. These were all kinds of ideas, characters, quotes from papers I had read, nursery rhymes, stories, theories, songs, re-juxtaposed lyrics, new lyrics, etc. I have always had 'thought floods' while brainstorming but this was different because it was incessant. I was incapable of turning it off.

The most effective way that I was able to deal with these ideas circulating in my mind was to write down the ideas and 're-order' my thoughts. I re-strung bits of these

words together to make 'poems' or 'mad lyrics' as a friend once called them. The quality of these poems or thoughts mattered much less than the process of detangling and settling my mind. I never worried about if the poems were going to be 'good' poems. The last time I had encountered 'nonsense' like this, was when reading Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons* and *Masterpieces*. The process of writing them down reminded me of the lessons taught to me by one of my mentors through the works of Gertrude Stein. The collection of these tidbits were to me a masterpieces because they were the means through which I changed the way my mind was operating at that time. What you will see is a few words on a page but to me they are a shorthand to other ideas, thoughts, papers stories and because of them what I know is a very organized, thoughtful, peaceful mind.

My mother would say, "Just change your mind. That's what your grandmother would say." The problem was my mind had changed and I was now unsure how to use it. I just started writing down random words and I think it was the word juxtaposition that saved me. I remember thinking, "for now, it doesn't matter what words you choose, just grab them and create a new juxtaposition." Re-juxtapose the words, reorder your thoughts, your mind has changed. I had literally spent a lot of time meditating and placing these thoughts into imaginary filing cabinets in my mind because our whole class had been taught how to do this in about grade 5 to help us retrieve information for tests. It was like my filing cabinets had been emptied and all memories were fleeting.

The point is dislodging the thought from my mind and re-organizing externally on paper allowed for a re-ordering and re-prioritizing of thoughts within the mind. It was a long process but ultimately writing was what re-settled my mind. When I was encouraged to put down the pen, it was hard because I could barely respond to say: "I

have to write all this down or it's going to be hard to hear you over how loud my thoughts have become in my head." Further, I was not sure how people would take that statement, if I would be judged and stigmatized for it. It seemed like people wanted me to stop writing because to them it may have looked like 'I was losing my mind,' to this intense focus on writing 'nonsensical' lyrics. However, it felt more like I was 'saving' my mind and creating a new order and an external backup so to speak. It sounded like non-sense to others but to me each word represents a larger idea or a 'node' sets of ideas. Some people keep photographs, I keep words and this is one I will keep 'Disruption.'¹⁴

Motherhood and losing my child created a mess in my mind but my motivation and dedication to 'clean-up' my thinking and consciously be in the moment is also motherhood. The drive to re-order my thinking and to choose to be happy while I forever stomach this loss is because I want to show my children what resiliency looks like. This comes from motherhood. I think losing my son the way I did forced me to look at who I am and who I have been as a daughter, a catholic, a wife, a mother, a friend, a student, an academic climbing the Ivory Tower. Ultimately, it was as though I was turned inside out with all these facets of myself reflecting each other, highlighting the ways in which they each contradicted each other. Feminists have long said the 'personal is political' and on one hand it seemed that my personal choice would reflect my political stance and in a public way if I told people my experience. On the other hand, how would I live with discrepancies between my personal choices and my public positions if these differed. Moreover, what were these exactly? And now how have they changed?

¹⁴ Disruption is a word that I learned while doing work in the advertising field. For a full description see the TBWA website: <http://www.tbwa.com/disruption-media-arts> . The concept is explained by Jean-Marie Dru and Lee Clow. They explain that 'disruption' is not destruction it is creation. I would use this concept in creating 'disruptive' juxtapositions.

The personal being political makes every choice feel that much more daunting to me who has been socialized with conflicting discourses. It takes so long to explain each contingency and process of how everything has come to be. Every choice from, going to school, to getting married, to choosing to have children, to choosing to terminate a pregnancy, or have an 'early induction' feels like it is going to be a public expression of political position and sometimes either a transgression, or expression, of faith and I took my time making all these choices because I was keenly aware that it does in fact matter that I have re-inscribed a normative lifestyle and I am acutely aware that it does gravely matter that I chose an early induction. It is with the question: 'Did I do something wrong?' that the identity oscillation begins to turn. With all these different angles with which I can view my major life choices, it actually becomes more difficult to evaluate them because I can see them with all the colourful words I listed above or I can see them as 'good' or 'bad choices' for which I will be rewarded or forgiven with a rainbow. I cling to the words: 'Learn to be patient with yourself.' The words of a priest who visited me in the delivery room. It seems to me I still have a long way to go before I will truly understand how I am going to relate to the words 'forgiveness' and 'perfection.'

While before this experience I would have tried to turn myself such that I would reflect the appropriate face in the appropriate context, it seems now more beneficial to be transparent in all contexts regarding my conflicting feelings given situations. No one moment ultimately defines us nor are we the sum of all our moments. With this, I return to my earlier discussion of the word to 'palimpsest.' I recognize myself now as a wife, a mother, and an academic but also as an adult. My current notion of adult is not one that is static in the sense that we arrive at adulthood and this is it, an adult we will be forever.

We continually re-write ourselves. I see adulthood as something that we must re-inscribe for ourselves daily albeit within the constraints of the existing social structures. For me, growing up has meant becoming one unitary consistent person within my home, with my friends, and here as I grasp for a perch on the Ivory Tower.

As we become teachers, mothers, professors, we pass on knowledge and continue to learn. Socrates was wise to suggest to Glaucon to return to 'the cave.' Please know how grateful I am for this opportunity to hang by this perch from one hand. If I hold on only by one hand it is because the other remains extended waving to those who continue their climb. I fear not their grasp or their weight for I have slid down this Tower many times before from the status of Part-Time Professor to that of Personal Care worker. An interesting thing happens when one climbs up and slides down the Ivory Tower continually. Our eyes begin to re-adjust more quickly, as Socrates suggested they would, creating the kind of ideological oscillation described by Wilden (1986) and with that movement a new discourse is born. It is one that extends merit to both kinds of knowing, caring, teaching and becoming but holds even higher the ability to know and be both and to question the 'Good.' Why? It is this very oscillation that not only turns the Ivory Tower on its head but spins it such that all knowledge is continually called itself into question. This practice of re-examining local and expert knowledge sets is especially important when not just 'motherhood' but 'parenthood' and 'family' are the subjects of study.

I suppose the achievement of tenure, has never concerned me greatly because if there was one lesson I held onto, it was the idea that comfortably clinging to the nest at the top of the Ivory Tower was counter-productive to the project of 'knowing.' If I am

without tenure today, it is perhaps because it did not occur to me to make it my ultimate goal. The method, as I saw it through the earlier lens dialectical reasoning was to continually 'ascend' and 'descend.' It is perhaps, because I continue to hold on without regret to Socrates' word to Glaucon:

'...But you we have engendered for yourselves and the rest of the city to be, as it were, king bees and leaders in the hive. You have received a better and more complete education than the others, and you are more capable of sharing both ways of life. Down you must go then, each in his turn to the habitation of others and accustom yourselves to the observation of the obscure things there. For once habituated you will discern them infinitely better than the dwellers there, and you will know what each of the 'idols' is and whereof it is a semblance, because you have seen the reality of the beautiful, the just and the good. So our city will be governed by us and by you with waking minds, and not, as most cities now which are inhabited and ruled darkly as in a dream by men who fight one another for shadows and wrangle for office as if that were a great good, when the truth is that the city in which those who are to rule are least eager to hold office must be best administered and most free from dissension and the state that gets the contrary type of ruler will get the opposite of this (Plato, Book VII 520b-521b).

I was re-socialized by those within the Ivory Tower not to 'hold' ideas and to think of 'power' as potentially exponential rather than finite. This postmodern 'marxist' feminist has kept her feet firmly planted in front-line production of care while reaching to understand the highest theories. So I didn't make my way to tenure track position by the time I was 30 and it is unlikely to happen before I turn 40 . The object of the game was never about tenure and holding on. Instead, much like being a mother, it was about holding on and letting go. It was about taking careful risks, and chutes and climbing ladders over and over as we seek liberation from oppression for ourselves and all others. Between the double vision and dialectical reasoning of Plato's allegory of the cave and the postmodern spinning of it, I am a mother who shares knowledge and an academic who 'mothers.'

My parents gave me the gift of a first class liberal arts education that today I am truly grateful for. In the beginning, I didn't even want to go to university, I was barely able to get my applications in, and I could have just as easily gone back to sleep the morning we were set to leave for this adventure. Come to think of it, they were always waking me up to go to school. I had no idea where I was headed but I know I have my mother to thank for pushing me from the nest and my father to praise for encouraging me to keep flying. So today, both and at once, I am a married mother and an academic and like a Raven off the perch and a phoenix from the ashes, I am reminded of the Sarah McLaughlin version of an old Beatle's song I listened to too many times while I wrote this dissertation, I am reminded of this song when I tell you: I was '*only waiting for this moment to arise*' (Lennon-McCartney, 1968).

She is Home
A Painted Poem
by
Kelly Landon Ruest

*Because she's a Picassoed Rembrandt,
A Mona Lisa and a Leaning Tower of Pisa,
A Mary, a Madonna,
A Montgomery, an Atwood and a Gertrude Stein
Caught Dali's time,
She's a Frida Kalo – Uh Oh! She's lost her halo.
And, she hopes you'll find her latest masterpiece
More tasteful than her off-coloured pallet.*

Mirrored in steely stares,
From her friendly foe,
She found herself,
Still and standing,
All by herself,
Without skin and bones,
A soulless mind,
On frozen stones,
And shards of glass,
Slippers and slivers,
In blood and clover,
A barefoot warrior.
With her pockets full of posies.
Husha! Husha!
We all fell down,
In sand and ice,
Without swords and flags,
Under a starry night,
All because,
Her baby lived,
And never cried,
While her heart held the ocean tight,
Inside – lies, prisms in her eyes,
And as the daddies cried and cried
Her smile was sunshine on the moon.
God called her son a carpenter, a sailor and
After the rain,
When she remembered why,
She couldn't really kiss him goodbye,

He wrapped her in His rainbow ribbons.
And He left her still and standing
Among lost boys, mice and merry men,
Juggling apples and arrows,
Spitting bullets and tasting blades,
Stitching shadows in the night.
With rings on her fingers
And thimbles on her toes.
She's a barebacked beauty
No one really knows.
A Parisian child on a carousel.
Sipping love,
A potion poured,
Over castles made by hand.
Her moat runneth over
With her matrix afloat
Melted, just in time
And chocolate and cheese.
Don't look her in the mouth.
She's a gift horse,
thoroughbred,
A king's horse, a mare and a man,
A stallion.
She's a Dali,
A pony,
A pinto,
A palomino,
A Trojan theologian,
She's a high horse
And horseless headman
With her disintegrating tale
Of her name
And her mane enchained.
She *is* the matador!
With her rap and her cape
Wrapped in a bow.
Her dress is black but her suit is red.
She's charming, a young wizard
Entertaining pirates and witches
With her cotton candy kisses
And candy apple wishes,
As spiders and snakes
Storm her magic-eight-ball brain.
She's drawing the wheel of fortune,
From a house of gypsy cards.
Aces and hearts!

She's hitting the deck hard,
 Tumbling down the rabbit hole
 Still, she's full of grace
 But she's tripping on memories in the night,
 Did someone say 'A black jag ate a doe
 As she once fled from winter snow?'
 She's cloaked in death,
 And nature's glow:
 A trophy on her head,
 Warm and soft, a snug hug.
 Laughter quiets courtyard chatter.
 She's on the ledge but her life's got edge.
 Her three monkeys had a great fall.
 "See it!" "Hear it!" "Speak it!"
 She's all yoke and shells at the ball—
 With her heart in her head,
 And her head in her hands,
 She thinks she knows it all:
 Not a brick but the wrecking ball
 A mighty mole,
 And mortar in the wall.
 She's patchwork:
 A scared hare, livin' in a lynx of fur:
 Her mothers reflected, refracted.
 She's everything and nothing
 Without her kitchen sink
 And hound at her heels.
 High heels. What heals?
 Something else.
 Pixy left posies on the stones;
 Petals on the battleground.
 This mother's tongue's,
 Bubblegum.
 Hot pink on stony stairs.
 With sand in her hair
 And her breath in the air,
 Haa, haa, haa, haa...
 This mother's tongue,
 Was licking wounds.
 Her breath,
 Her voice,
 Were choking on the tide,
 The only sight,
 The only sound
 When there was an audience
 Yet no one really was...

Around.
Still and standing
All by herself
She was found:
Paint on her pallet,
Blood on her tongue.
Lion's in her throat,
A rising roar
Wading in the basket
Of her untethered heart.
Bats and eyelashes!
Her cavern's in flames,
Star-crossed lovers,
Ensnared in blame,
A web in her brain,
A drain,
In her voodoo navel,
Where the truth is a slice
And a peach is an orange
And pair o' Docs –
Hope in
Pandora's box.
Still and standing,
All by herself,
She was found
An artist,
Unshackled,
Bedazzled,
A halo
Hallowed,
Hooked in the wings,
Of wolverine teeth
The only sight,
The only sound:
Her invisible canvas,
Hinging on the frame
Of her inaudible jaw,
Clenched,
Her head bowed, weeping,
In pompous humility
With her heels clicking
And her diamonds spinning
She called love home.
And rose again,
A phoenix from ashes!
As daylight broke,

Her eyes donned the stars and
The ravens billowed from her sight like
Smoke into the moon.
“An ark! An arc!”
The angels cried and cried
And the woodland faeries soared to her side.
As the butterflies,
Oh so becoming...
Danced around her head
And a lady bug left kisses,
Honey...dew... on her nose
As she wiggled her toes
In her dirty old boots,
While her fingers brushed her lucky clovers
And her hair swept the mystic floor,
Of a darkened wood,
And all that was mossy green
Began to glisten and glitter,
Golden,
With her tears and His promise.

And so begins,
The story of how
She became
The brush that painted
Milk weed whispers in the wind:

His love is home.
His love is home.
His love is home.

Never again,
Would she be found:
Still and standing
All
Alone,
For once again,
She *is* home.

She is the castle:
The fortress
La Citadelle.

She is love
And
She is home.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Individual Interview Schedule

Individual Interview Schedule

I am going to ask you three types of question about going to school, working, and family life, and lifestyle questions. First, I will ask you to think back to when you were in your final year of high school and tell me about your expectations for your twenties. Second, I am going to ask about what actually happened during your twenties. Third, I am going to ask you to look forward to the future and make some predictions about your future.

Let's think back to high school first.

What grade were you in the year before you left high school?

Note: Verb tense may vary according to Generation X or Generation Y respondent.

EDUCATION

Did you think you would graduate high school?

Did you graduate from high school?

How old were you when you graduated from high school?

Did you think you would go on to do some sort of post secondary education?

Did you think you would go to college or university?

How old did you think you would be when you finished your schooling?

Are you still in school?

Do you think you will be going back to school at any point during the future?

What would you return to school to learn?

Why would you go back to school?

EMPLOYMENT:

During your last year of high school, what did you think you would be when you "grew up?"

Describe the type of job you thought you were going to have at 25?

What type of job did you have at 25?

What job did you think you would have at 30?

Briefly list the types of jobs you held during your twenties?

What is your job title today?

What job do you think you will have at 40?

What job do you think you will have at 50?

HOUSEHOLD AND PARTNERSHIPS:

Who did you live with during your final year of high school?

If you were still living with your parents, at what age did you think you would permanently move out of your parent's/guardian's home.

If you were not living with your parent's/guardian's, at what age did you move out from your parent's home?

Who did you live with following living with your parents?

Did you think you would get married?

If yes, at what age did you think you would get married at?
Did you think you would live with a partner?
At what age did you think you would live with a partner?
Did you think you would get married after living with a partner?
Did you think you would live with friends or roommates?
At what age did you think you would live friends or roommates?
Is there an age that you expected to stop living with friends and roommates?
Did you expect that you would live alone at some point during your twenties or thirties?

Who did you think you would be living with at the age of 25?
Who did you live with at the age of 25
Who did you think you would live with at 30?
Who do you live with currently?

Who do you think you will be living with at 30?
Who do you think you will be living with at 40?

CHILDREN:

Thinking back to high school did you think you would have children?
At what age did you think you would have your first child?
What age did you have your first child at?

SOCIALIZATION:

- 1) Describe what you think your parents' lives were like during their twenties.
- 2) In what ways did you think your life would be similar to your parents' lives?
- 3) In what ways did you think your life would be different from your parents' lives?
- 4) In what ways has your life been similar to that of your parents?
- 5) In what ways has your life been different?
- 6) What were your favourite television shows when you were growing up.

Meaning and Feelings:

Complete the two biographic timelines.
Compare the two time lines.

Discuss the two following questions:

- 1) How did you feel about life events that did not happen at the time you expected them to happen?
- 2) Please complete the following sentence: Growing up is.....
- 3) Can you describe a moment or moments that made you feel more 'grown-up' or more 'like an adult'?
- 4) You are legal and adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like a 'grown up?' Do you feel like an 'adult'?

Appendix 2 Focus Group Interview Schedule

Focus Group Interview Schedule:¹⁵

1. Cards will be placed in a haphazard way on the table with the following words written on them:
 - Educations
 - Children
 - Marriage
 - Employment
 - Self Development
 - Social Clock
 - Biological Clock
 - (Blank Card)

Women will be asked to discuss any connections they between these words.

2. When you left high school what did you think your day-to-day life would be like following the completion of a secondary school program? Think of this in terms of 1) education; 2) employment; 3) personal relationships; and 4) having children.

Prompting questions:

- What type of job did you think you would have?
 - Did you think you would be single? Married? Dating? Co-habiting?
 - Did you think you would have children soon after your first degree?
3. Thinking back to when you were getting ready to leave high school what lead you to foresee your future in this way? Where did your ideas about your future come from?

Prompting statement:

- Peers? Media? Teachers? parents?
4. Is you day-to-day life exactly as you expected it would be? Who is your day-to-day life similar or different from your expectations or what you had planned your life to be like at this age in terms of: 1) education; employment; 2) personal relationships; 3) having children.

¹⁵ The focus group questions were not administered as it was found that I was able to yield sufficient information to analyze via the first round of interviews. I have kept these questions as I think they would still make an interesting starting point for a second subsequent study. It may be interesting to return to the original participants with the current analysis 5 to 10 years following the original interviews and ask them these questions to inquire how their perceptions and interpretations of life events may have shifted or remained the same.

Prompting Questions

- Do you have the job you thought you would have?
 - Are you single, married, divorced, cohabitating as you would have expected?
 - Do you have the number of children you expected to have?
5. Recently, I heard an acquaintance make the following statement about age: “30 is the new 20” and “40 is the new 30.” Even “50 is the new 30.” Have you heard statements like these before? What do you think about the statement? How do you feel about these statements?
 6. How important are specific “milestone” ages to you?
 7. Are some “milestone” ages more important than others? If yes, which one’s are most important? What make these important?
 8. Do you think there is a difference between milestone ages for men and women? What are they and why?
 9. Do you think these are similar or different from what past generations would have experience?
 10. What does self-development mean to you at this stage of your life?

Excerpt on interpreting data taken from the methodological section of my Master's Thesis:

How will I go about analyzing my data more specifically¹⁶?

This depends on the nature of the data collected. However, there generally exists the following aim.

I want to peel away at the layers of discourse embedded in people's talk but I also want to read onto them my own re-visionary interpretation in order to produce a rich and layered analysis. I am looking at both what is behind the account (genealogically) and what I bring to the account (interpretively). In other words, I think at some moments I "step back" from data while at other moment I "step into data."

My reasoning for deconstructing someone's voice is to understand the frame and contextualize the voice within a specific time and space social continuum. It helps to understand where they are coming from. My reasoning for interpreting someone's voice as a sociologist is to re-frame this voice, to re-contextualize this voice amidst other voices in order to show the relationships that exist between the voices and the macro social. As for the 'reality' behind the voice, I deal with this in two ways. I will use the 'mis-read' and 'strong read.'

Before explaining Bloom's concept of the misread and strong read, it is important to keep in mind my ontological and epistemological stances. Experience of phenomena as I see it, is pre-reflective as it can be in Bourdieu's terms. It exists outside language. However, I think we almost immediately bring experience into language. We read or apprehend a "literal" account (my concept of the "literal" is also epistemologically located in that even our "literal" readings may be diverse and located – we are more likely to agree upon what something is than what something means). We may often "mis-read" phenomena or "literal" accounts of phenomena (the language unfortunately has a negative connotation in that it reads as a "wrong" reading. By my reading, Bloom does not intend the mis-read to mean a wrong reading rather it is simply a reading that is other than the reading intended by the author. A strong reader, that is, one who produces a "mis-read"¹⁷, is one who revises. By misreading and revision, Bloom means the following:

Like my earlier books, *A Map of Misreading* studies poetic influence, by which I continue *not* to mean the passing-on of images and ideas from earlier to later poets... The strong reader, whose readings will matter to others as well as to himself, is thus placed in the dilemmas of the revisionist, who wishes to find his own original relation to truth, whether in texts or in reality (which he treats as texts anyway), but also wishes to open received texts to his own sufferings, or what he wants to call the sufferings of history... What is revisionism? As the origins of the word indicate, it is a re-aiming or a looking-over-again, leading to a re-esteeming or a re-estimating. We can venture the formula: the revisionist strives to *see* again, so as to *esteem* and

¹⁶ This section regarding data analysis is taken in whole from Landon (2000)

¹⁷ An example of a misreading and strong reading can be found in Julia Emberly's (1997) discussion of graffitied Greenpeace ads.

estimate differently, so as then to aim “correctively.” In the dialectical terms that I will employ for interpreting poems in this book, re-seeing is a *limitation*, re-estimating is a *substitution* and re-aiming is a *representation* (1975:3-4).

The use of Bloom’s concept of the mis-read also sits well with the theoretical epistemes employed in the analytical phase of the research process. Prado writes: In offering philosophical redescrptions Foucault aspires to be what Harold Bloom calls a strong poet—a thinker who redefines himself or herself in new terms, who invents new metaphors, and so provides a new vocabulary for the rest of us. Strong poets are the creators of new logical spaces wherein fresh thoughts can be thought and familiar things redescrbed...They are the innovators who enable us to accomplish things not previously imaginable in our old vocabularies (1995:49).

These “mis-readings” are important because it precisely these divergent accounts of what using new vocabulary allows us to generate rich meaning and understand that is as close to collective knowledge as I think we can get. This is similar to Smith’s (1999) argument about the need for multiplicity in voices. We can produce what Bloom calls a “strong reading” through reflexive discussion about the relationships that exist between the literal meaning and the misreading.

The production of a “strong reading” has three parts that follow the thesis, the antithesis, and the synthesis of dialectical reasoning. However, epistemologically located within a time of hyper-modernity, my use of Bloom’s “read, mis-read, strong read” shifts from the original use of the concepts as he outlines them.

“A trope is a word that is used in some way that is not literal; a figure is any kind of discourse departing from common usage” (Bloom 1975:93). The use of tropes and figures becomes important, even necessary in the analytical stage, if we aspire to become “strong poets,” who engage in “strong readings.” In a discussion about my use of Bloom’s “mis-read” I was asked if the use of his concept as a method would be considered linear logic or dialogic. Given a state of “hyper-reality,” and heightened modernity where images, texts, knowledges are embedded and dis-embedded, this sort of dialectical reasoning becomes “multi-lexical” and multi-literal in nature. Again, I will draw on Giddens’ (1990) concepts of embedding, disembedding, and re-embedding. At this epistemological point it is conceivable that we might try to create tropes of tropes to infinity. With this type of post-postmodern hermeneutics I understand it to be futile to search for the exact original meaning of the ‘first’ meaning, which is in keeping with Gadamer’s concept of hermeneutics:

But we may ask whether what we obtain is really the *meaning* of the work of art that we are looking for, and whether it is correct to see understanding as a second creation, the reproduction of the original production. Ultimately this view of hermeneutics is as nonsensical as all restitution and restoration of past life. Reconstructing the original circumstances, like all restorations is a futile undertaking in view of the historicity of our being. What is reconstructed, a life brought back from the lost past, is not the original...Similarly, a hermeneutics that regarded understanding as reconstructing the original would be no more than handing on a dead meaning (Gadamer 1989:167).

One analytical method through which lively meaning can be derived from the past is through excavation and genealogical methods from a Foucauldian perspective. Michael Donnelly (1986) outlines three practices involved in utilizing genealogy as an analytical method. These are: 1) Making the past unfamiliar; 2) Highlighting breaks and discontinuities; and 3) Problematizing concepts. Foucault (1971:369) describes the process by stating: “Genealogy is grey, meticulous and patiently documentary.” While the recording and documentary aspects of genealogy as an approach seem to be perhaps rigid and disciplined, there seems to exist a thinking space that is quite open to the potential for a “mis-read” or a “strong read” given the epistemological positioning of this type of analysis.

Given my goal to produce a “performative” and “interpretative” “mis-reading” or “strong reading,” I ask the following question: *What will be my role and the role of the participants at the point of analysis?* This depends on the nature of the question and the type of data collected. With the current project in mind, I want to offer women the opportunity to engage dialogically with my analyses. With respect to this question I will engage in a dialogue with the ideas set forth by Katherine Borland (1991). Borland writes “To refrain from interpretation by letting the subjects speak for themselves seems to me an unsatisfactory if not illusory solution” (Borland 1991:64). I agree that researchers should be allowed to interpret the myriad of voices of the co-produced data. I am suggesting that we might open up the exchange of ideas so that we do not simply gather data on others to fit into our own paradigms once “we are safely ensconced in our university libraries ready to do interpretations” (Doucet 1998). I am arguing for interpretive teams that include: a principal researcher, i.e. the author, and a collaborative group of researchers and participants. “For Foucault as for Ludwig Wittgenstein, language is never private but its public “games” are irreducibly plural in form and function” (Faubion 1998). To go back to the concept of the trope one more time, I think it is necessary to invite multiple “players” into the use of language games as a methodological practice. Sometimes this could be in the form of a discussion with respondents about the analysis but other times it may be left up to the reader. Fine examples of these figures and tropes exist throughout Zadie Smith’s philosophical novel *The Autographman* whereby she purposefully invites the reader to quite literally and figuratively “read onto and into” her text. The following is an example of a sentence from Smith’s (2002:39) work: “All of a sudden they run at each other once more and if you have a better expression than *like thundering elephants* insert it here [].”¹⁸ My interpretation of the philosophical concept behind this sentence is that it resembles Descombes’ (1991) interpretive text. Stylistically, this is the writing of Lincoln and Denzin’s (2003) “Seventh Moment.” Further, Smith’s stimulating juxtaposition of religious texts and ideas, with popular culture and contemporary philosophy over the course of a storyline has sent me as a reader to these “original” texts and biographies not only in search of their many meanings but in order to give them meaning.

¹⁸ Blank space left in the original text written by Smith.

Appendix 3 Poster

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN LIFECOURSE STUDIES

We are looking for women from Generations X and Y
to volunteer to take part in a study of

EXTENDED ADOLESCENCE AND PATHWAYS TO ADULTHOOD.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to participate in *interviews and/or
focus group sessions*

Your participation could involve approximately 1 to 3 sessions,
each of which is approximately 30-60 minutes.

In appreciation for your time, you will receive
\$15.00.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study,
please contact:

KELLY S. LANDON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
CARLETON UNIVERSITY
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON
Email: klandon@connect.carleton.ca

Appendix 4 Informed Consent Form (Individual)

Informed Consent Form (Individual):

I _____ understand that I have been invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Kelly Landon. This project is being conducted as a partial requirement for the completion of a Ph.D. Degree in Sociology at Carleton University. The Supervisor is Dr. Alan Hunt, also from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University. He may be contacted at:

Dr. Alan Hunt
Supervisor
Department of Sociology
Carleton University
D 791 Loeb Building
ahunt@ccs.carleton.ca
phone: 613 520-2600 ext. 2591

This is a study related to women's lifestyle choices during their twenties. The procedures for the study will include individual interviews, a focus group interview, and potentially a follow-up interview. The topics and questions that will be used for the individual and focus group interviews are attached. The individual interview sessions will each last approximately 30-60 minutes.

I understand that the social and emotional risks to participants are above minimal. I understand that I may feel some great discomfort in discussing my personal life and challenges. I understand that I will not be forced to answer any questions and I may stop the interview at any point. I understand that the interview questions may cause negative and/or positive feelings to surface depending on my past and current life circumstances. I have been given a copy of these questions to review prior to participating in this study (Please find them attached to the information letter). I understand that participants may not benefit from their participation in this study.

Anonymity will be assured via the use of pseudonyms. Quotes from participants' responses may be included in the final report but will not be attributed to participants. The data will be kept for 30 years for the purposes of future longitudinal study. Only the researcher, her Committee advisor and the transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality statement) will have access to the raw data. The raw data will be kept on a removable memory stick and kept under lock and key.

The data will be destroyed in 2040. A final report for this study will be presented to the university community, and the results may be written for publication or conference presentations.

I understand that any information given will be treated as confidential by the researcher within the limits of the law, the transcriber and the Advisory Committee (i.e with the exception of information disclosing a serious attempt to self-harm or a danger of serious immediate harm to another person).

I understand I may withdraw my agreement to participate at any time during the study and have data withdrawn. Should I exercise my right to withdraw I will/will not give the researcher permission to use the data I have provided to that point.

A summary of the research findings will be mailed to the participants who indicate interest in receiving this information.

I understand that my signature in no way constitutes a waiver of my rights. It is merely documentation that I was informed about what the research would entail, and, on that basis agreed to participate.

I have been provided with the letter of information and a copy of the interview schedule. I understand the researcher will give me one signed copy of the informed consent form and she will retain one copy for her records.

This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or questions about this study or your involvement in it please contact the Committee at the Following address:

Antonio Gualtieri
Chair
Carleton University Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services
511 A Tory Building
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON
K1S 5B6

Tel: 613 520 2517

Kelly S. Landon Ruest
Department of sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive

Ottawa, ON
klandon@connect.carleton.ca
613 520-2600 ext. 1433

Participant's Name	Signature of the Participant	Date
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Kelly S. Landon		
Researcher	Signature	Date

Appendix 5 Letter of Information
Letter of Information:

Letter of Information:

Dear Participant,

My name is Kelly Landon and I will be conducting a research study as a partial requirement for the completion of a Ph.D. Degree in Sociology at Carleton University. The Supervisor for this project is Dr. Alan Hunt, also from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University. He may be contacted at (613) 520-2600 ext. 2591.

Dr. Alan Hunt
Supervisor
Department of Sociology
Carleton University
D 791 Loeb Building
ahunt@ccs.carleton.ca
phone: 613 520-2600 ext. 2591

This is a study related to women's lifestyle choices during their 20s. The procedures for the study will include individual interviews, a focus group interview, and potentially a follow-up interview. The topics and questions that will be used for the individual and focus group interviews are attached. The individual and focus group sessions will each last approximately 30-60 minutes.

The social and emotional risks to participants are above minimal. Participants may feel some great discomfort in discussing their personal life and challenges. Participants will not be forced to answer any questions and I may stop the interview at any point. The anticipated risks to participants are above minimal. The interview questions may cause negative and/or positive feelings to surface depending on past and current life circumstances. Attached is a copy of these questions to review prior to participating in this study. Participants may not benefit from their participation in this study. Participants will be given \$15.00 for participating in this study.

Confidentiality is assured within the limits of the law for participants of individual interviews but not for participants of focus groups. This researcher and the Advisory Committee will have full access to the data. The interviews will be transcribed and

the transcriber will have access to the raw data. The interview data may be analyzed by a research team in the future for the purposes of a longitudinal study.

Confidentiality cannot be assured to participants who take part in the focus group sessions because of the presence of other participants. Anonymity will be assured in the final reports via the use of pseudonyms and quotes will be not attributed to participants. Quotes from participants' responses may be included in the final report. The raw data will be kept in a filing cabinet under lock and key. The data will be destroyed by shredding and fire in 30 years. Only the researcher, her Committee advisor and the transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality statement) will have access to the raw data. The raw data will be kept on a removable memory stick and kept under lock and key.

Participants may withdraw their agreement to participate at any time during the study. Should participants exercise their right to withdraw they may or may not choose to give the researcher permission to use the data they have provided to that point.

A summary of the research findings will be mailed or e-mailed to the participants who indicate interest in receiving this information. A final report for this study will be presented to the university community, and the results may be written for publication or conference presentations.

This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or questions about this study or your involvement in it please contact the Committee at the Following address:

Professor Antonio Gualtieri, Chair
Carleton University Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services
510B Tory Building
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON
K1S 5B6
Tel: 613 520 2517

Kelly S. Landon
Department of sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON
klandon@connect.carleton.ca
613 520-2600

Kelly S. Landon

Researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix 6 News Articles Reviewed

- Adulthood starts a little later for some. (2010, Sep 18). *The Spectator* Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/751412825?accountid=9894>
- Aster, A. Z. (2001,). A journey toward adulthood: Toronto edition. National Post
- Barmak, S. (2010, Sep 05). Why 30 is the new 20. *Toronto Star* Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/749550033?accountid=9894>
- Clark university poll of parents of emerging adults findings released: Parents and their emerging adults rank 'being responsible for yourself' before money and marriage as key to becoming an adult. (2013,).
- Clark university poll of parents of emerging adults findings released: For most parents, back-to-school send-off means saying goodbye to their BFF. (2013,). PR NewswireR Newswire
- Harris, M. (2013,). 'Because I'm the parent, that's why!' the power struggle with grown millennials. Postmedia News
- Irvine, M. (2003,). How old is an adult? perception evolves upward. The Charleston Gazette
- It's called life, kids: Final edition. (2001,). The Vancouver Sun
- Linde, C. (2011,). Marriage is not the ticket to maturity, adulthood. The Vancouver Sun
- Marshall, J. (2001,). A whole new generation: 'emerging adults': National edition. National Post
- MARTHA IRVINE, A. P. w. (2003,). Growing up: Notions of when true adulthood begins are shifting. Columbian
- McKenna, N. (2007, Sep 28). Players of urban games delay adulthood. *Kamloops Daily News* Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/358401501?accountid=9894>
- Owens, D. (2013,). The new 20s: Growing up slowly: Kids are taking longer road to adulthood. - 'emerging adulthood' trend can confuse parents and the child. Dayton Daily News
- Pomerantz, S. (1998,). The myth of adulthood. Daily Gleaner
- Saccone, J. (2002,). QLC: Many youth suffer a major emotional meltdown when it comes time to make big life decisions: Final edition. Times -

- Sexton, J. (2014,). Yes, millennials, you're allowed to grow up. *The Ottawa Citizen*
- Smith, L. (2001,). 'Emerging' adults define new demographic: Neither adults nor adolescents, young people between the ages of 18 and 25 are less prepared for independence than their parents were: Final edition. *Edmonton Journal*
- Smith, L. (2001,). Young adults finding home nest's a comfort: Final edition. *Calgary Herald*
- Southey, T. (2010, Aug 21). Boot our young out of the nest? oh, grow up. *The Globe and Mail* Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/746253725?accountid=9894>
- Steinfels, P. (2007,). A challenge for churches: Adulthood takes its time. *New York Times*
- STEINFELS, P. (2007,). Tired of being a teenager? try 'emerging adulthood'; between 18 and 30 .reshaping the meaning of self, youth, relationships': Final edition. *The Gazette*

Appendix #7 Interview Data: Case Studies 1-27

Note: The following case studies have been reconstructed from the interviews with each participant. They are provided here to give the reader a thorough context so as to maintain a relationship between the part and the whole where 'data' was 'cut' and 'coded.' I think there is value in reading the collection of narratives in that you can draw a sense of the way women's lives are ordered, re-ordered and coordinated throughout their twenties. Beyond this, the case studies could be useful for subsequent analysis for future studies with the same participants. They provide a profile for each participant and for the most part I refrained from embedding the analysis in the case studies. The analysis is provided in a discussion of themes generated from the interviews and the case studies and engagement with theoretical frameworks relating to individualization, personal life, structure and agency and a call for an extension to Robinson's model of the QLC.

Case Study #1 Lisa - Married, Mother, Investments Banking

"Yeah... so I didn't give it a lot of thought. I just knew that I was going to work and I knew I knew how to work and that was all I was going to do really...I knew nobody was going to take care of me. "

Lisa was born in the late sixties and she was in her early 40s at the time of the interview. In her final year of high school Lisa lived with her parents and she had been accepted to study business at a university across the country out west. Everyone wanted Lisa to do very well in school, as she would have been the first one in her family to attend university. She would have required OSAP in order to attend but because she was overwhelmed with the pressure to do well she chose not to pursue her education at that time. As a recent high school graduate, she was intimidated by the much larger classroom society that a university education would present her with. In retrospect, she admits that she wishes she had gone away to school.

Lisa lived on her own for a year but then moved back home. She was working for a trucking firm and was laid off from a job where she was making approximately \$12.00 per hour. Finding herself in the unemployment line, she was disheartened to learn that

she would be facing a pay decrease of about \$5.00 per hour as most minimum wage jobs at the time paying only an hourly rate of \$7.00.

Lisa had just married and bought a house about four or five months prior to this lay off. Her sister-in-law had tapped into some government funding for unemployed people seeking to be educated. She was not in the same field as her sister-in-law but she asked if she could apply this funding from this program to a business or accounting program and they agreed. She had enough funding to make her mortgage payments and her tuition. Lisa became very determined never to be in this position of being at someone else's mercy twice. She graduated at the top of her class and when her unemployment checks stopped her employment checks started coming in. She had looked for work early in February to ensure that she would have work as she finished school that spring.

Many different positions filled Lisa's resume throughout her twenties. She had coop jobs, a paper route, she babysat, worked at a car dealership and in a large department store. She did factory work and clerical office work. Lisa worked in various positions at various banks and also did accounting. She describes that progress for her was not about reaching goals but instead about mastering something and taking the next steps with that. For example, if she managed accounts, she would then want to manage bigger accounts.

Lisa was asked to think back to her last year of high school and recall what type of job she was headed for. She recalls not thinking beyond the idea that she would go to school. She also recalled that she did not have a lot of guidance or discussions with adults about what she would eventually become when she was older. She didn't give a

lot of thought to what type of work she would be doing but she did know she that she knew how to work and that she was going to work and that was all she was going to do.

Lisa frequently compared her life to her parents' lives throughout the interview. She explained that her parents didn't complete post secondary education and that her mother had not completed her grade 12. She said her mother didn't have the confidence to work outside the home until she was in her 40s and she was from a generation where she expected to get married, stay home and her husband would work and support her. They were young parents. Her mother was a stay at home mother, and her father did not work a lot when she was younger. She described him as not very serious. She quickly saw how things within her household improved as her father worked more she grew a bit older. Lisa said that economic hardship in her early childhood was very influential to her work ethic. While Lisa may not have given a lot of thought to who she was going to live with and what type of job she was going to have at twenty-five. It was clear to her that she was going to work.

At the end of high school, Lisa was not thinking about whether or not she was going to get married and at what age. Although, she did say that that hope is always there so she expected to get married. When Lisa first moved out, she had no real plan and she knew she could always return home so that allowed her not to worry. She lived with a couple of her mother's sisters.

Today, she talks frequently to her children about planning and making decision that are well thought out. She discourages this type of living in the moment and has made it clear to them that she will support them if they are actively planning and wholeheartedly learning in school. Lisa expressed seeing planning as key. Her

understanding is that 'if you have a goal then the goal could change and may not happen but if you don't set one you won't get to it.'

Lisa also lived with three other people across the country and then she moved back home but things were very tense and she felt she needed to move out again. At this time, she lived with a co-worker who was in the midst of a separation. Again, she moved back in with her parents. This time, it was because she had met her husband and now she needed to save money for the marriage so they both moved home with their respective parents. At the age of 23, Lisa married her husband and they have remained married. She describes this as being the natural progression of things at the time: "You know you get married and you buy a house and you have a family."

In retrospect, Lisa thinks she may have had a family sooner if she had not lost her job. She was 27 and 28 when she had her children. These children were expected and Lisa explains that had she not had them by the time she was 30 she was not going to have any children. It was either have them by the age of 30 or not at all. Further, Lisa says she knew very well that it would have been unacceptable for her to have a child out of wedlock. Lisa explains: "This was our sex talk: 'Don't do it.' That was the only conversation."

A few Thoughts in Lisa's Own Words:

When asked think of a moment that made her feel more grown up Lisa replied the following:

Oh boy the minute that you have kids. I mean you've got something that is looking at you that's all you. That's huge! I mean you talk to people about what you're afraid of and I worked with a woman who was pregnant at the same time I was and she was afraid of delivery and I thought...they have been giving birth since caveman days...for me giving birth was not an issue...thinking when...what

made me afraid was that then I was going to be responsible for that person and have a huge impact on their life and that's was it.

When asked to completed this sentence: Growing up is.....

Hmm I want to think it is the taking ownership of your own happy and way and path and it is realizing that you have a direct impact and influence on everything around you and how you react to everything that is going on and recognizing that the other person has a reaction to your thought or words, reaction or non-reaction because I like a non-reaction is as much of a reaction as a non-reaction so yeah it's knowing it and realizing and then taking charge of what you can control and driving your own satisfaction. Where you want to be what you want to work for and then being flexible enough to realize that it doesn't happen just so there is always a piece that then again with all of the change to the path that you foresee I look back today every step set up the next without knowing exactly that it's coming..kind of with knowing, kind of without...And that there is not necessarily a right or a wrong way to get there. and I try to talk to the kids about that...it's like plan think and know that it's all good...there some good here. It's not perfect...find it.

Lisa had some mixed feelings regarding whether she felt like a growing up. She was asked the following questions: You are legal an adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up? to which she replied:

Nope! No ah (crying) parts of it yes and I don't know that I believe that we are ever quite there.

You're always learning and you can't get quite complacent that life is going to just work itself out because it doesn't. It requires effort and that is the part that is supposed to be good and that is the part that is supposed to be good. It's the effort. Not a lot of people see that so it makes it difficult. I am married to a person who thinks it's just going to happen, it's just going to work itself out and I'm like no...It isn't! Jesus! And don't get me wrong he has some of that good quality where the kids will draw from each piece so they won't worry like me or not at all like me. A piece that says plan and a piece that says have some fun...some middle ground. But for me it's not about is it ever done...I hope not. I hope to be sixty and have the ambition to look forward and 80, to whatever it is that I am doing. Am I there yet? (Laughing)

Case Study #2 Suzie - Married, Mother, Esthetician and Waitress

"I wanted to be a housewife. I didn't want to work."

Suzie is a woman in her early forties and who was born in the late sixties. Her mother and father divorced. She grew up with her mother and stepfather and they raised her. She describes her family of origin as being very 'Beaver Cleaver.' She recalled that she wanted her family to be just the same only with a quieter household. Her mother did not work and she did not attend a post-secondary education program but she did strongly encourage Suzie and her sisters to pursue their education and she pressured Suzie to 'do great things with her life...go to university or travel the world.'

Suzie became pregnant in her final year of high school. She decided to give the baby up for adoption in an open adoption. During the interview, Suzie was asked whom she thought she would live with following her parents in their family home. Her expectations and experience are best described in her words.

I didn't know who I would be living with. I didn't know what I would be doing. I ended up moving in with a co-worker for a few months and then I got my own place. Well I had imagined...I wanted the traditional picture with the husband who would be the sole breadwinner and it would be very beaver cleaver. It would be that kind of household but at the time when I was finishing high school, I was not dating anyone like that. I had... in my last of high school...I got pregnant and I put the child up for adoption and it was interesting because I had the baby and then I moved out of my parent's house about a week after that. My parents were very supportive. We did an open adoption and everything but that was sort of my crisis point when I realized...ok...this guy that I am with, he is not what I want. He is not going to give to me or provide for me the way that I am imagining being provided for and it is a good thing I did that because he is still the way he was but I had imagined that I would have a family in my mid-twenties...that I would do that kind of picturesque kind of thing...

I didn't see myself living dependently with friends for very long. I wanted to be independent and then dependent...lol...I wasn't actively seeking a husband I was actively seeking meaning, and a meaningful relationship. I was actively seeking

*meaning for myself because I didn't know what i wanted to do. I knew I wanted to be a wife and mother but how am I going to do that...I was dating some losers.
[laughing]*

Suzie was asked how she felt about life events that did not occur at the time she would have expected them to occur. She described that her first daughter was her 'crisis' and she described how this crisis prompted her direction in life. In Suzie's words:

Well, if it hadn't turned out how this did...because we have been re-united. She is wonderful. I made a good choice. I had a lot of years between where I was worried that I wasn't going to be able to have kids because I was going to be punished because I threw her away right...I gave her up but when I was in at the college I had to write a paper about 'your crisis that prompted your direction.' She was my crisis. She forced me to go in the direction I did because I was very wishy washy I was having a good talk and so she influenced a lot because my husband knew me at the time. There was no secret, my family participated and we have had a successful reuniting.

Going back to the direction that Suzie took after giving her daughter up for adoption, Suzie explained that she did graduate at 18 and tried to go on to college but her grades were not strong enough at the time so she ended up 'hanging-out' instead. She did not have any plans and she didn't know what she wanted to do. Suzie did end up pursuing her education but this was later in her thirties. She went to the college and became an educational assistant.

In discussing employment, Suzie expressed that she had no interest in working outside the home. She said, "I wanted to be a housewife. I didn't want to work." Her mother wanted her to do all that she had not done. That is, go to college and work. Her mother had taken some courses at the college while she was raising her children. Suzie said she, "didn't know what I wanted to do...I was pretty sure I didn't want to work...I wanted to stay home."

Suzie did end up getting a job at a donut shop and she also worked as a waitress in a restaurant and this was where she met her husband. Suzie held other jobs throughout her twenties. She worked mainly retail jobs but she also worked as a nanny and found this interesting. When her children were young Suzie stayed home with them. Later in her thirties, Suzie did find work as an educational assistant but because of cutback she was laid-off. Currently, she is back to waitressing and giving manicures to help fund her daughter's university education.

Suzie did use the term 'crisis' to describe her early pregnancy and transition from adolescence to adulthood in so far as it helped her focus on a direction. First earlier to help her cope with the adoption but later to help deal with what she termed to be 'peri-menopause.' She also discussed accessing therapy and psychiatric care that included medication. She was surprised to learn from her mother that there was a history of mental illness relating moods and depression in her family and says she has been open with this with her own children.

In responding to the question: "Complete this sentence: Growing up is..." Suzie replied the following:

I am still waiting to feel like I thought I would feel when I was an adult. I remember I always equated it with...[Pause]I remember waiting for the bus and all the kids got to sit at the back of the bus and they were all so cool you know it was those older kids. The bus I took carried from kindergarten to high school. So I was seeing high school kids and I was like I can't wait to be in the back. It is going to be so cool it is going to be so awesome. And then, I am in the back of the bus...this is stupid. It's not what I thought it was going to be. Just being an adult is learning how to do everything in moderation. Learning how to have your fun in moderation. We still participate in social activities to a great degree but it is all in moderation.

Suzie was asked to recall moments that made her feel like a 'grown-up.' To this, she added:

I feel pretty grown up when I can go to the liquor store and nobody makes a face at me. And I can buy alcohol anytime I want. I can drink anytime I want.

When asked "Are you there yet? Do you feel like a grown-up?" She replied:

I don't think I am there yet. It's like 40 was way older than I thought it was and then I became forty. My mom is 60 and that doesn't seem as old as 60 used to seem. I think there is also a generational thing there because my in-laws are older because of their physical health. They have more in common with my grandmother and there is just a 10 year difference between them and my mother but they are more like my grandmother. But I think you're as old as you feel I try to be more mature than my children and I have said when I grow up I want to be more like my daughter. [laughing] I try to be mature and responsible.

Case Study # 3 Lucie - Manager and Mother

"And then at one point I thought...'I am not getting married so this is good!'"

Lucie is a woman born in the late 60s and who was in her mid 40's at the time of the interview. Her father was raised on a dairy farm and he knew he was going to live and work at home. Lucie's mother was still living at home when she was married. She went directly from her parent's (Lucie's grandparents') home to the home she shared with her husband. Imagining what their lives were like during their twenties, Lucie says "I would think they were more serious...They were very employment driven whereas I wanted to do things...I wanted to travel the world."

She graduated high school at the age of 17 but decided not to go directly to college or university because she was unsure of the direction she wanted to take. She said she was ready at that time to do any particular thing and hadn't thought out what she wanted to do with her life.

She thought she might want to work in schools but then she was discouraged by a guidance counsellor and she pushed that idea aside. She recalls wanting to work at that time. She wanted to do more and she was doing bookkeeping and small retail jobs here and there. In her early twenties, she thought she would marry early in her early twenties. She recalls thinking to herself: "I am going to meet someone. I am going to settle down and I am going to have my children young."

She moved out of her parent's home at the age of about 19 or 20. Not long after, her younger sister moved in with her. They lived together until her sister married at which time she decided to live with some friends. When her friends finally moved out, Lucie decided it was time for her to live on her own.

When she was 22 she decided to go back to school and she took administration accounting at the local college. Lucie did work in the accounting field for several years but today she is a supervisor in a social service type office. With respect to her working career, she sees herself moving forward to positions of higher rank, in the same office.

Lucie had anticipated that she would have her children around the age of 25, 26, of 27. However, she had her first child at the age of 37.

In her own words:

During the Interview Lucie was asked if there was anything about her parent's lives during their 20s that she saw as being more difficult or easier.

I don't know that it was more difficult, I guess when you are in the life you are in then you don't know anything different than the life you are doing. And I don't think it was...well of course it was difficult because they worked on a dairy farm so it was difficult and they had small children and I am sure it would have been more difficult.

No, it wasn't easy I think I thought it was going to be a lot easier with a perfect picture. I am going to finish school and find my job and it's going to be happy forever. Well, that didn't happen so I went back to school in my twenties. I guess when I went back to school in my twenties I had been working part-time and now I was living off little money and going to school so I guess that was difficult.

Lucie described a very flexible type of thinking with regard to life events that did not happen in the time or order that she might have expected them to. She said:

I don't rattle easily. No...I guess... This is the way it's going to be. And then, at one point, I thought: "I am not getting married so this is good."

Lucie described moments that made her feel more grown-up . These were mostly related to independent decision making and economic responsibility

I think when I bought my first house. That I thought: I did this on my own. You know I don't need anybody. I felt the same when I bought my first car. I went to pick my own car. Even when I went to go back to school in my twenties. I chose what I wanted to do. It wasn't you know you should look at that or you should do this. I picked my course. I signed. I paid it.

Lucie was asked to completed this sentence: 'Growing up is.....' She respondent with the following:

[Lucie] Growing up is....challenging.

[Kelly] How so?

[Lucie] oh you know because you never know what is going to get thrown at you. You wake up and you know people around you have died or circumstance happens...you know.. you just don't know what is going to happen when you wake up.

Lucie was settled on the idea that she now feels like an adult. This centered mainly around her role and responsibilities as a mother.

Yes I do. I guess when I have two little ones that I have picked up from school and we are worried about making supper and we are worried about home work ...reality hits.

When asked if she had anything further to add to the interview, Lucie proceeded to discuss a shift from a focus towards building a sense of belonging within the group to a more intensive focus on the self because her friend group began to dissolve as marriages solidified. This process is described here in her own words:

[Lucie] The only thing I can think of is: to be accepted as kid and that follows you into your twenties. I find that leaves you in your thirties you don't care as much. The older I get...Oh my God I have wasted a lot of energy in my twenties.

[Lucie] And you know having the right friends to go out with in our twenties because a lot of my friends weren't married in our twenties. We were going out we were having fun.

[Kelly] At what point did you realize that part about not worrying about what other people think?

[Lucie] People started leaving for marriage or job opportunity, the group falls apart and then you have to look at you.

Case Study #4 Sandra - RN, Manager, Married, Mother

"I never thought I wouldn't have kids but I don't remember thinking a lot about it."

Sandra was living with her parents near the end of high school and at that time her parents were going through a divorce. She had intended on going to college for an accounting program in the Fall but she took some time off school to adjust to her parent's divorce and refocus. She chose to work for the school board for a year.

She took the developmental service worker program at the local college. Sandra worked in an institution for a few years but decided to go back to school at about the age of 25 because she no longer enjoyed her job. This time, she became a registered nurse which was quite different from the career in accounting she had considered when in high school. At this point, Sandra works for an agency managing the clinical practice of other nurses. She sees herself maintaining this career.

When Sandra first moved out of her family home she had jobs and roommates to help her, economically. Sandra hadn't considered living alone at any point. Although,

she said she didn't think about it much, she did end up marrying her husband just before she turned 25.

Sandra described the process of growing up and the discrepancies between her original plan and the way her twenties actually played out as being very comfortable. Without giving many details, Sandra did state that the more difficult aspect of her growing up had to do with her relationship with her father. Sandra described what she thought her parents' lives were like during their twenties:

I think it would have been different. I socialized a lot with my friends I socialized with people at 'get-togethers' and things with people and I am a very active part of that. It's not just my husband's friends it's not just my friends. My mother wouldn't have had that when she was in her twenties it would have been my father's friends and a lot more of you know getting together to drink. My mother wouldn't have had such an active role in having friends.

She was asked in what ways did she think her life would have been similar to her parents' lives. She didn't really think they were similar at all, stating:

I don't draw a lot of similarities I must say because I am nothing like my mother and my husband is nothing like my father....we were much more...quite honestly I don't see a lot of similarities.

Sandra was asked to describe a moments or moments that made her feel more "grown-up" or like an adult. She replied:

I had all my children and I was done having kids, my kids were getting a little older so I was like ooh I am making that decision for them. It was easy when they were babies but when it was planning which school are they going to go to or they are gonna do this, am I going to enroll them in hockey....so it was making decisions for their life.

Sandra completed the sentence: ' Growing up is.....' noting that the transition from adolescence is both a process and meeting a series of milestones. She also described that she was into her mid-thirties before she really felt like a 'grown-up.'

Ooh growing up is...well, I really think it's well to truly grow up it is a process type of journey. You can't just jump to the end and expect to do that well, to now be a grown up and now have experienced all those little things along the way. It is important to you know for teenagers to experience some things that there are not supposed to maybe until they are 19 as long as it's done in an open way with the parents or the parents to about it and they have been given the information you know it's part of the learning process as long as they have been taught about it first. Growing up is a process and you have to hit certain things and certain milestones and experience things before you can totally say you are grown up. I would say that I didn't feel that I was grown up until I was probably about 35.

Case Study # 5 Mary - Teacher, Re-Married

"I was stagnating, stagnating and then broke free and shot forward or backward depending on how you want to look at it but I was definitely moving at a much faster pace."

Mary was in her late 30's at the time of the interview. She is from Generation X. Mary was adopted by her parents who immigrated to Canada before they adopted her. She described her upbringing as 'old-school European'. They provided Mary with a Christian upbringing. Mary explained that her parents worked very hard to extend a life full of privileges to her. For example, Mary was taught that her role was to be a student and that the remainder of time was for her own relaxation. Her parents gave her a car, her university education, and paid for a large portion of her house when she first married. Mary did not hold any jobs until she was hired as a teacher.

In thinking back to her final year in high school, Mary reported that not going to university was 'not an option' for her. Furthering her education was not just a privilege but also an expectation that was placed on her by her parents. At that time, she was living between her boarding school residence at a Quebec CEGEP and her parents home.

Mary had originally thought that she would go into medicine to be a pediatric doctor. She was finished school earlier than many (at the age of 16) because she received her education in the Province of Quebec. She recounted how she found it difficult to tell

her father that she didn't want to go to medical school. She knew he held medicine as a career in very high regard and had worked hard to be able to pay for her education and she didn't want to disappoint him. Mary wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps and become a teacher. Her father did accept her choice to pursue her degree in the field of education.

In Mary's words:

I was blessed not to have to work. It made a big difference like I watched even the students that I taught in the past, I watched them try to struggle to keep the job and do the school work and it is just very difficult and I am just very thankful that I didn't have to go through that.

Mary did go on to complete her studies in education and during this time she lived with roommates and also her partner. Mary was immediately hired after graduation to become a teacher. She continues to work as a teacher. When it came to education and employment, Mary describes that she has never had any difficulties. Mary experienced 'roadblocks' in her personal life with respect to her intimate partnership and her desire to have children. Mary described this 'roadblocks' more as catalysts for personal growth rather than simply impediments to her transition from adolescence to adulthood.

In Mary's Own Words:

Mary was asked to describe a moment or moments that made her feel more "grown-up" like an adult. To this she replied:

When I made my decision to divorce. I was like okay. This is it. I am making a decision for myself because it was a decision that went against everything that I had planned up until that point. Like I got married because I was nervous about being alone. He was with me, so I am going to marry him. It was just all these things that were expected of me and to divorce was just huge. So, that was my first real turning point because everything else was falling in line with expectations. This one was where I did an about face and I went in the other direction. This was a big one.

In completing the sentence: 'Growing up is.....' Mary added the following:

Wow...growing up means attempting to make dreams come true, realizing that they may not, realizing that they may change and realizing that there may be some dreams you never even realized that you had. And disappointment and dealing with things and not being quite as idealistic it is being more realistic.

You are a legal adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up?

No I don't. I am not sure why. I still feel ...maybe it's the kid thing because we just did get married and we are in the process of buying a house so maybe it's the kid thing or maybe I will just wake up and go oh..I'm adult. 'cause I know my age and I don't think I am being unrealistic about my age but modern medicine being what it is 40 isn't what it used to be but I've got the grey hair now so I think it slowly coming but I think it is going to be a process this time. I don't think it is going to be I am going to wake up and go oh.

Mary closed our interview with the following remarks about the process of growing-up:

[Mary] I think it was fairly gradual except for the divorce. The divorce was the time I kind of went ok this is me. Because of the way I was raised, I was always in a shelter in some sort of way and then to be removed from that sort of shelter, was when I realized yeah okay this is happening and this is my life now so it has been an interesting process but it has been gradual. You know like some people go oh it was that at that point that it happened. But for me it was a lot of points but that is the way I was raised like my parents, I am adopted...so people go 'oh when did your parents tell you?' And I knew it was just always in the conversation so that is sort of how from day one I have just been evolving into adulthood it has always been evolving not a...

[Kelly] Do you see it as a straight line or do you see yourself going forward or backward?

[Mary] It is a straight line, it is not the same speed. There are times when I definitely stagnate and there are times when I definitely will most likely get caught on something and then you break free and then shoot forward. It's that sort of idea for me and that is sort of what the divorce was like for me. I was stagnating, stagnating and then broke free and shot forward or backward depending on how you want to look at it but I was definitely moving at a much faster pace.

Case Study # 6 - Carrie (Self-Employed Massage Therapist, Mother, Divorced and Now Common Law Partner)

Like when most of my friends hit 30 ... they sort of said 'Oh my God, I don't know what I want to be when I grow up, I don't have a car, I'm not married. You've got those things...You're so with it!' You know?

While in high school, Carrie didn't feel like she was going to be able to complete high school, not because it was too difficult for her academically but because she found it very difficult emotionally. Although she describes her parent's relationship and family home as 'stable and loving,' Carrie left her family home early. She recalled having strong feelings at this time as she stated: "I really thought I was going to be dead before the end of high school. I was kind of surprised that I wasn't sooo...." She went on to describe the later part of her high school years.

At first she spent half her time at home, and then the other time as a live-in nanny. She really wasn't enjoying school and classes so she took a coop placement at a school for developmentally challenged children. She worked for a woman who was a student with a developmentally challenged child. She worked as a nanny while the child's mother was at school.

Carrie never thought she would live alone and said this was not her personality type. She described herself as someone who forms relationships 'pretty easily.' She always assumed she would be living with someone she was having a relationship with. After high school Carrie traveled through Europe and lived with some roommates before returning to Canada. Upon her return, she lived with a partner and some other roommates. When this relationship dissolved she said she lived alone but still shared a kitchen and bathroom with others who were 'like roommates.'

Carrie didn't anticipate getting married or having children because she wanted to travel and she thought 'the world was too messed up to have kids in.' Although she didn't really have a plan, she thought she would live in a 'communal marriage' as she described it:

...I didn't seem to have a plan but I figured I would always live with other people because it seemed to be the most sensible way to live. (Not necessarily in a partnership or marriage but maybe.

I also thought that I would live in a communal marriage. Like as in a group of people who are all living together and all sharing resources and expenses but who are also having a romantic or a physical relationship.

She recalled, however, that her friends always thought she would be first to marry and have children and she was. She married at 19 to a man she described as 'the wrong person' and she divorced two years later. She became pregnant at the age of 25. She met a partner that she continues to live in a common law relationship with.

Carrie wanted to be either a physiotherapist or to work in the field of psychology and counselling. She pinpointed the age of 30 as the time in her life when she would have anticipated having her career sorted out. She explained this in her own words showing a flexibility in thoughts regarding her goals:

I just thought that by 30 I would have it all sorted out and I would be working in my field whatever it would be. 'Cause when I was a kid I wanted to be a physio-therapist and then I went through a time period where I wanted to be a psychologist. I think massage therapist is a fairly good combination of those! (laughter)

Carrie was employed full time before she was 18 years old and she completed her education by the age of 23. Carrie worked many different types of jobs before becoming a self-employed massage therapist. She worked as a nanny as she travelled through Europe. She worked in a bakery, on farms, planting trees and selling crafts in an art

store. Carrie worked door to door for environmental groups and as a telemarketer and in the phone sex industry.

Carrie described the idea that she thought her parent's generation actually had more time to decide what they wanted to do with their lives and when they did it all fell into place easily. Whereas, what she has experience from watching her friends is that it has taken her friends longer yet it seems like they actually have less time to coordinate and activate their career and family lives if they are to be 'with it' as she describes it by the age of 30.

[Carrie] Well, it seems to me that my parent's generation baby-boomers they were living in a bit of a golden age of possibilities and opportunities. You know my father was able to be very undecided about what he wanted to do and what he wanted to be and could just sort of float through life. My mother as well and then when they made a decision it just sort of fell into place for them and I think that it was just a little bit harder for my generation but still possible to kind of do that but now it seems even harder it seems like your time period of not being able to know what you want to do or not being able to pursue it is getting narrower and narrower. It seemed like baby-boomers had until they were 30. It seemed like my generation had a little bit less time than that. Like most of my friends hit 30...they sort of said oh my God, I don't know what I want to be when I grow up, I don't have a car, I'm not married. You've got those things you're so with it, you know.

[Kelly] So you had friends who had difficulties with those things?

[Carrie] Yeah most of my friends didn't have those things by the time they were 30. They felt like they were supposed to have them.

Carrie seemed to be less tied to the idea of buying a car or a house. She grew up in the country but was never really concerned with owning a car because she always felt she could borrow her parent's car. She figured she would buy a car when she needed one and did so for 3 months while she was in Europe. She hadn't really considered owning a house when she was younger. 'It wasn't really on my radar' she said. She did purchase a house in her late twenties but was quick to point out that she didn't really 'own' it the bank

did. Carrie had the goal of being debt free by the time she would turn 40. She said she now owns her house and has come close to achieving this goal of being debt free.

In Her Own Words:

When asked how did you feel about life events that did not happen at the time she expected them to happen? Carrie replied:

Well, I am an early bloomer. I feel like I accomplished everything I was supposed to accomplish. I think I have done well for myself. I mean I had wanted to be debt free by the time I was 40 which hasn't exactly happened but it's close so I figure that's good enough.

Carrie was asked to describe a moment or moments that made her feel more "grown-up" like an adult. She said:

Well, I probably pretty well thought I was grown up at 17 'cause I wasn't living with my parents and I was paying my own way so probably then you know I left Canada and lived on my own in Europe at 18 so that made me adult by anyone's standard even though I wasn't legally able to drink in Ontario.

Carrie was asked to completed this sentence: Growing up is..... She had the following to say:

well this is pretty funny because I had this friend and she said growing up is paying your own bills and having food that is rotting in your refrigerator. And I think that, that answer sums it up very nicely.

Adding a few final points Carrie expressed the following:

And I think there is another aspect that is about self-actualization but I don't necessarily think that self actualization happens when you are an adult but for me personally you know...

Case Study #7 Cassandra - Divorced, Mother, Retail Worker on Long Term Disability

"Hey! What the Hell!? Let's see what happens!"

Cassandra is a 38 year old mother of two boys with special needs. She grew up in her mother's home after her parents separated when she was young. Her mother found a new partner and together they share a child, Cassandra's sister who is 10 years younger. She notes that her life and her mother's life are very similar. In fact, she was unable to pinpoint any differences between her life and her mother's.

Cassandra lived at home with her mother until she was 21. She had started the Teacher's Assistant program at the local college and became pregnant during this time. She did continue her education and living with her mother throughout her pregnancy. However, about 6 months after the baby was born, she moved out of her mother's home and in with the father of her child. She, then found it very difficult to concentrate and focus on her studies at the time as being a mother and working retail part-time so she decided to leave the college program.

Cassandra married her husband at the age of 23 and they had another son. She continued to work retail jobs but the stress of work, mothering, and her relationship seemed to take its toll on her, as she described. Her relationship did dissolve and they separated when she was around the age of 27. Cassandra noted that she shares with her mother a similar attitude towards partners. She said they both had little tolerance for 'nonsense' from the men in their lives, "It was straighten out or get out!" as Cassandra phrased it.

Renting her first house after the divorce was a big part of growing up for Cassandra. She was in charge of and in control of paying the rent and bills. The apartment itself was significant as it represented a space of her own. She did still live within her mother's neighbourhood but it was enough of distance and separation for her to

feel on her own and responsible for her own household and finances. She recounted that she derived a great deal of satisfaction from that first feeling of independence.

While Cassandra did not attain a college diploma she did say she learned a lot on the 'difficult' road that was her twenties. As a mother she would need to focus on and dedicate her learning in a new direction. She explained that she figured she had learned more from her 'walk through than through life' than she could have learned in any textbook. Actually, learning how to mother was one of the ways in which Cassandra described growing up. After her separation from her husband, Cassandra learned that her boys both had special needs. Her eldest son is diagnosed with both a neurological syndrome and a learning disorder and youngest son is diagnoses with a developmental disorder. Interestingly, what motherhood and her walk through life taught her was about the concepts of 'norms' and 'normalcy.' Beyond the practice of everyday life and the tasks of parenthood, Cassandra said that being the mother of boys with developmental challenges " ...really opened my eyes to all the different types of how things are not normal and [that] it's okay."

Cassandra did try to go back to continue her studies via online courses but again she was unable to focus so she left that aside for a while. Currently, she explained, she is on a medical leave because she has an anxiety disorder. She described that she may have had this disorder all along and that it was inhibiting her progression and interaction in life but that she is "struggling" with it today; meaning that she is trying to overcome it. She is trying to write and she is taking a certificate program in creative writing. Writing was suggested to her by her counsellor and she does find that it is a great outlet. She was quick to comment that she is from a family of writers and that this is really what she has

always wanted to do. Describing herself as not fully grown-up, she said this is where a lot of her great stories come from. "It's more fun to imagine my own world," she said. It would seem that the writing project, in part, chronicles who she has been but also allows her to become who she wants to become: a writer.

"Learning who you are as a whole individual," is what growing-up was really about to Cassandra. She describes herself as an adult in terms of herself personally and as a mother but she says that there is a 'piece of the pie missing' for her growth in terms of her career. Now that she has tried to do things as she thought "normal society" saw fit, it seems she is almost starting over career-wise because it did not all come together the way she had planned and hoped anyway. She notes a shift between her early 20's when she was fixated on what should happen, to her late 20's where she focused on what needed to happen. Today, she is describing a new shift where she has become more focused on what is good for her at this time and on becoming who and what she wants to be: a writer. Then she summed up with the punch line from a joke she heard about transitioning from doing everything the way you are supposed to taking on the new attitude of "Oh! What the Hell!?! Let's see what happens!"

A Few Highlights in Cassandra's Words:

Cassandra described how studying was difficult with a young children but now she is currently working on some online courses. This step means a lot to her and as she explains, she does not see it being the last of her education.

Well, currently, I am doing an online certificate program. So far, so good, I am going to finish it. It is for professional writing... I have come into a time in my life where I have realized what my true passion is and what I would really like to do with myself and it is based around fiction writing but I mean there is such a large world of writing I am certain that after this certificate, it is going to branch out into another area of writing courses.

Cassandra was asked if there was anything further she would like to add regarding her education, her twenties and her transition to adulthood. She outlined the value of her informal education as a mother to two children with special needs.

Well as far as education, the as ... well as far as an education goes, I have two children that I found out a few years ago that they were both special needs. There was a whole new level of education that I had to focus myself 100% toward. Uh so I mean if I really wanted to pursue that particular area, I would probably be a good candidate but then looking at some other courses. As far as anything to graduate from (Shakes her head no)

Cassandra had a very specific and new direction for her employment during her 40's:

Writing. My ideal position in the world today is to write fiction. It's more fun to make up my own worlds (laughing)... I guess I never totally grew up but I guess that's where a lot good stories come from.

When Cassandra was asked if there was anything further she would like to add with regards to her work-life and the transition to adulthood, she highlighted the overwhelming task of juggling, a marriage, children, a job, and what was possible an anxiety disorder at time. In her words:

It was very easy for me to get a job in retail. I mean they hire pretty much...I mean you don't need any real specific experience. I found it difficult staying with positions there was either this level of stress or I have an anxiety disorder that I found out a few years ago and look back on in then it maybe had something to do with it. But I was battling being a mom with two very young children and I actually separated when they were young. It made for the ups and downs. You know you try to go back to work and you burn out and you know I had to stop and re-focus on what is most important...you know... being at home with my kids...you know... absolutely necessary in a lot of ways.

Cassandra described the challenges she faced with being faced a pregnancy as a young college student. She describes the path that this event lead her to take. Notice the limited

sense of agency that she describes at this time as she begins her statement with "Life made that choice for me...:"

Life made that choice for me really before I could even think. I mean living at home at the time. When I became pregnant I was 21 and by 23 I was married, with a new child, we moved in about 6 months after my son was born...and about two years after that we decided to marry.

From an earlier age, Cassandra had always planned to have children. Still, she says she was 'surprised' faced with her first pregnancy:

Well the first one was a surprise. I think everyone wants to grow up and get married and have kids but it didn't exactly work in that order for me. We tried to do what we could but I mean the partnership between us didn't work out and I was better on my own two feet with the two of them.

Cassandra had much more to say about the challenges and liberations lived throughout her family life and her twenties:

It was definitely a challenge. Definitely. It was not an easy road. I had married when I was 23 and the marriage lasted almost four years and it was a difficult marriage. It was not easy. I mean we were both probably...you know ...it was either too fast or too strong or whatever...at the time I did not know...I did not know anything about my children at the time. It was actually about a year after that I separated. I separate about roughly, I was twenty-seven and it was almost like one bombshell after another. I found out about a month apart from each other...So, I had to grow up fast. For the first time, I had my own place on my own because I had moved from home with their father so believe it or not by the time I was twenty seven was the first time, mind you I lived in the same area with my mother but it was the first time that I had my own place and it was almost liberating in a sense. You know I felt control over the bills and there was definitely that level of satisfaction but I mean it certainly had its ups and downs but I still believe that it was the best choice that I could have made for myself. I was much happier even though I was struck with certain blows but I didn't dwell on the bad part of it. It was like well what are you going to do next? And it was just like that extra bit of encouragement I could give myself and we have been going strong ever since. Like I said, financially things are always still difficult. You know you make do with what you have. So it was an 'up' and 'down' definitely in the twenties, at that age. I wouldn't want to live it again.

Cassandra did think that 'society' does expect a preferred order to meet milestones as she explains here:

Yes, I think we are given an ideal of what normal is. Basically, you know, and I actually have friends that have managed to do it this way, but it's you know you complete high school and you continue post-secondary education and exactly the way I based this on an ideal and I really think society wants that picture perfect the white picket fence idea. I think that's just a...

As Cassandra compared the two timelines, she expressed her initial disappointment and how this changed as her life continued.

How I felt? I felt disappointed as I went through it. I mean, it wasn't the plan. Right. But I think now I...you need the different for myself because you grow from it and I am almost grateful for it. I mean I am grateful for it because I hadn't planned children right away but I am a big believer that things happen for a reason and I can't imagine my life without them. Everything, I do...they were my anchor they were my focus and I really grew as a person through them, in a sense and I have learned more through that walk through life than I would have through any textbook.

There was a main theme throughout Cassandra's experience of motherhood that pushed her towards adulthood. This was about learning *how* to mother two children with special needs and accepting that things are not always 'normal' and that this is okay. In Cassandra's words:

Yeah and that would be learning, having to learn how to be a mother to my two boys and succeeding in doing so. That was the big turn over it wasn't just focused. I looked at the world completely different. Before, and I will explain: My older son has _____ syndrome and _____. My younger son is [has a special need] and yes I had to learn feed them and consequence and all the mothering stuff but the thing is it really opened my eyes to all the different types of how things are not normal and it's okay and I became a more compassionate person to anybody. I mean when I was in earlier in my 20s I would rarely speak to somebody if I didn't know them. Now, it doesn't matter who they are if you smile and say hi to me I will strike a conversation. I don't care. You know. I am more accepting of many that I don't know and I think it was more just realizing that it's no big deal if uh you know if things don't go the way life says it should.

Cassandra described growing-up as: "Learning who you are as a whole individual." Although I am not sure if she realized it at the time, Cassandra was able to pinpoint that her most of her current anxieties and the challenges with growing-up that she said she had left to do were encompassed within the same aspect of her life: her employment.

[Cassandra] Part of me, as a person yes. I do have my struggles. Like I said, I am fighting with an anxiety disorder that I prefer to stay home.

[Kelly] But you're here today.

[Cassandra] I'm here today and you know it's okay and I know that I can go out for small spells I'm terrified of going back to retail. I think that is one of my biggest, biggest fears right now and I've always had that need where I'm, I am...I am definitely there when it comes to being a person an individual, a mom in that area but as far as finding that career aspect for myself, no, not yet and I don't feel...you know... There is still a slice of pie missing for me...and you know..by doing these writing programs and stuff, I take an extra step towards that every day. So I am getting there.

Cassandra was asked if there was anything further that she wanted say or if she had any words to 'sum up' her thoughts on her twenties and growing-up. She had the following insight to offer:

[Cassandra] Again my twenties, my age is, it was a big mix of emotions. I mean the early 20s was: okay I'm gonna make this the way normal society says it should be and then it wasn't working that way and it was like I had to switch and it was like more towards the end of my 20s I became a robot in a sense where it was just forget what you think is supposed to happen and then focus on what needs to happen and I guess that's just the best way to um you know up..you know it really was you know...I really wouldn't want to have to do it again, my 20's. I am happy where I am. I am more relaxed more comfortable person within my space I don't mind stretching out of my bubble a little bit so it is something...but I may have had that the whole time and just not known it and with battling the kids and divorce and retail you know and not knowing maybe...

[Kelly] That's a lot.

[Cassandra] It's a lot. so I just kinda had to... by the time I was 27, 28 I had to stop and put priorities in focus and I think that is what kind of led me out of my twenties and put me to where I am now which is better. Really.

[Kelly) The writing is a good outlet.

[Cassandra] It's a fantastic outlet but I come from a family of writers and it was...you know...I was stalled I did do a couple years of therapy or a year of therapy and she was the one that kind of pushed me because it was still that, again going back to maybe, what society says is it's not a realistic goal right? But again it was much easier than I would have said in my 20s... 'well screw what society says I've gotta do what's good for me' and then it will be complete for me... it's kind of hard to pinpoint an actual feeling while I was in my 20s. It's a little bit easier now...there is a joke that I saw that is really true...you go from a point in your life where you say 'Oh I shouldn't say or do that' and then you kind of transition to 'Hey! What the Hell? Let's see what happens!' and that's where I am now. [laughing]

In this last quote, Cassandra summarized three phases of perceiving how she would 'act' in relation to the social norms: 1) she aligned her life choices as closely as she could to normative practices; 2) she did what she had to do to survive, pay rent, raise her children, 3) she is now taking a risk on what she wants to do in order to 'complete' her transition to adulthood and exploring becoming a writer.

Case Study #8 Chantal - Police Officer, Divorced

***"This path has been a very crooked road"
"...and it's about discovering the Truth of that...It's really not about getting there."***

Chantal is a GenXer in her late 30's who grew up in Ontario but moved to the province of Quebec. She lived with her parents who were married and started their family early. Her mother had her sister at the age of 18 and by 25 had all her children. Chantal hadn't really thought much about having children when she was in high school

but she said she knew if she would have them she would have expected to have them in her early twenties.

As she had expected she would do, Chantal moved out of her parents' home as soon as she was finished high school at the age of 16. She lived with roommates who were her friends. When Chantal thought back to high school what she wanted and expected was to travel. She wanted to see the world but she took a different path. She studied at several different programs.

Chantal described how her "path [to adulthood] has been a very crooked road. She has taken a series of different educational programs attempting to find what interests her through trial and error. Chantal spoke of her frustration with not having one-to-one teacher guidance with respect to career choice and post-secondary educational programming. She has worked in several different positions. She has married and she has divorced.

Chantal attended a business commerce program for one semester but didn't enjoy it so she dropped out, took a semester off. From there Chantal went back to take a 3 year diploma in correctional techniques. She did a few semesters in a Social Work program but felt that she was just repeated what she had already learned so she dropped out. She took a few courses by correspondence and then finished a university degree, a B.A. in Criminology through distance education. During this B.A. she had even taken a year off work to complete a laboratory analysis diploma to see if the sciences interested her. At this point, Chantal does not see herself returning to do another degree type program. However, she would take courses for professional development.

Chantal's work-life has been somewhat more stable as she worked for several years with the same company. Before even starting her post-secondary schooling, Chantal was hired to work in a warehouse that was founded by a member of her extended family. She worked for this company for twelve years moving from one position to another in various departments of the company. She enjoyed this work and was part of the company for 12 years while working on her education.

Today, Chantal works as a high ranking police officer. She recalled from her childhood that her mother never allowed her to watch violent television programming. Her mother was also very much against guns and violence in general. Chantal saw this as influential on her career pathway in law enforcement.

Chantal discussed milestones and was able to list the order that she felt society thought she should progress through those milestones, but she didn't seem to necessarily think this was what growing-up was really all about. While Chantal did go to school, hold a job, buy a car, marry a man, and buy a house, she said that wasn't adulthood for her because none of those things were really on her 'list' in the first place. Moreover, she didn't really think much about buying a house. Buying a car, a house and getting married all happened at about the same age, between 23 and 24.

At the age of 25 she started to re-evaluate her life and consider the things she hadn't done rather than the things she had. She started thinking about her own list rather than the list society had prescribed for her. Travel and cross-cultural experiences and learning were on that list. She also noted that she thinks that the short transition from her life with her parents to her life with her partner, did not give her adequate time for forming her own self-concept and it ultimately lead to an identity crisis in her late 20's.

At the age of 38, Chantal admits that she still does not feel like an adult. She is currently struggling with the next direction in her life. She does plan to do some traveling in the next few years but she doesn't know if she wants to continue with her position as a police officer or if she would rather travel and learn. In the last part of our discussion about the transition to adulthood, Chantal refers to the old saying: "It isn't about the destination. It's the journey."

In a Few Highlights in Chantal's own Words

Similarly to Arnett's concept of the 'winding' road, Chantal described her 20's as being a very 'crooked' path:

[Chantal] For me the path has been a very crooked road and I felt like I didn't have a lot of guidance at all to try to figure out what I was suited for and what I would enjoy doing as a career in terms of following education to obtain a career. So for me that was really difficult

[Kelly] What did you do to figure it out then?

[Chantal] (Laughing) I'm still trying to figure it out. I tried different things. I spoke to some counsellors at school. I did some interest based tests to guide me but in terms of services at school, or teacher student contact, there was very little and just I felt very misguided...while I was doing my bachelor's degree by distance I took a year off work and I did a second diploma to see if I had any interest in the sciences so I took a one year diploma in laboratory techniques.

Chantal was 'struggling' to envision the type of employment she would see herself doing throughout her 40s and 50s. She had the following to say about work and the future:

I am actually kind of struggling with that right now. I am actually not sure. Ah I anticipate doing some traveling within the next few years and hopefully it will give me some opportunities to experience some new cultures and whatnot elsewhere. In what capacity I will be working? I don't know. Or I can just stay here and continue in the path. I would likely say that I would stay with the _____ Police Department and just maybe find new positions within that organization.

When prompted to with the question: Is there was anything else she would like to add regarding the transition from adolescence to adulthood in regards to work-life? She noted that she had felt very ill-prepared for the transition:

In terms of job applications, at that time in my early twenties, I always found it intimidating to apply for jobs and again I didn't feel like I really had much support or guidance with how to complete a resume or apply for a job or interview skills or that kind of thing. I didn't feel prepared for that transition.

Chantal gave the order that she thought was prescribed by the society at large for meeting the milestones and adulthood markers. They are as follows:

Finish high school; obtain an education; obtain a job; buy a car; get married; a house; and have a kid.

She said society thought people should get married but that she never anticipated getting married and yet she did. Chantal described her inner conflict regarding her life-choices and the timing of them:

Made me feel like, like I was doing something wrong, like a, almost like I was a failure because I am not following in the footsteps of what society says you should do. There was a conflict within me because uh..there were times that the things I was doing were not in line with who I was or what my values were. Everybody around me was doing it so you get kind of caught in the trap of you know how things are supposed to be, I guess.

Chantal listed how meeting certain markers that she considered traditional made her feel like she was more grown-up but it was more than this, it was seeing how her education applied in her career.

When I bought my house. That was a big deal. It made me feel like I was growing up. When I completed my bachelor's degree that was a big moment for me. Obtaining my job, my current job, and after having gone to school and applying my education to my career. That was a, a big moment for me as well.

When defining 'growing-up', Chantal described two important aspects: 1) responsibilities and 2) identity and knowing oneself. She completed the "Growing-up is...." sentence by saying:

Growing up means maturing and taking on responsibilities It means developing and getting to know yourself.

Chantal described not feeling like an adult yet and actually not being completely certain what adulthood means. To the question: You are legally and adult but are you there yet? do you feel like an adult?

No (while exhaling quietly) No! (repeated and much louder) I am still not sure what it means. No I don't feel like I am there.

Describing feeling rushed to meet markers for adulthood and ultimately having an 'identity crisis' in her later twenties, Chantal added the following to her interview questions:

Yeah, I would add is that what I was missing from my twenties is that because I transitioned so quickly from my family life to married life I didn't have a chance to discover who I was, my own personal identity, before trying to...bond with somebody else. So, I did end up doing that more in my thirties after I got my divorce and I think it was a huge factor in terms of my maturity and making my way to adulthood and because of societal pressures to make my way through the finish school, get married...I was in a hurry to get to that point, well when I reached my thirties I got to the point where I was like who am I and what am I doing? and What does this all mean? So I guess a bit of an identity crisis in my late twenties and uh so in my thirties that has been my discovery and it's bringing me closer to my adulthood.

Post-Interview Conversation With Chantal:

Once we had completed all the formal interview questions. Chantal had one more question she wanted to ask me so we decided to turn the recorder back on to resume with a short but very insightful open discussion period:

[Chantal] Okay so just one more question: What is the purpose of your study?

[Kelly] Well I am picking apart what that means,-- adulthood, for women. And today, there is an extension to adolescence in that when people go off to school a lot of times they can stretch-out their adolescence. And then I am looking at what is the impact of that extended education onto the concept of someone's self as an adult because where some people might have a short education, if they were to get married quickly after that and let's say they may have a two year diploma, and if they were to get married, and have their house, all those markers, if they were to happen quickly, then they might have a very different pathway to adulthood than someone who goes to school for a long time, who delays or doesn't even get married, or gets married and divorced...There are so many different pathways and yet we still have this concept, this norm that you outlined before of what we think that transition is going to be like and yet there are so many different pathways. And so, I am looking at how for some women that transition can be very difficult, there was a book that was written a few years ago called QLC where some women described this actually as a 'crisis' where they are struggling to put all this together without...

[Chantal] "The pressure to do it all in your twenties...Have kids, get married, go to school."

[Kelly] and some people have that path..

[Chantal continuing her last thought] "...have a career.."

[Kelly] "Some research has noted, Jeffery Arnett will discuss that concept of 30 and what the age of 30 meant and what the age of 40 meant and uh if we don't do it in that order and within that time, what will that be like.

[Chantal] Okay. What the consequences will be?

[Kelly] Right. Some people might describe that as liberating and some people might describe that as producing a lot of anxiety and I am looking at what is it that causes the differences.

[Chantal] For me, I think my milestone was 25 as a teenager I thought this is what I want to accomplish by the time I was 25. And for me I think that when 25 hit and I hadn't done the things that I wanted to, I had done a lot of things, I had gotten married, I had bought a house, but those were never really on my list. I wanted to go and see the world and I never took the opportunity to do that. So 25 was my re-evaluation age I would say.

[Kelly] For now I have titled it "Are We There Yet?" But I think when I write up the final report, having done several interviews at this point. "I think I am going to call it "Getting there..."

Because there are some women who say yes I feel like an adult and a lot of women who will say no there are still things that I ...there are still pieces that I ...

[Chantal] But isn't it like the saying 'it's not about the destination it's about the journey?' and it's discovering the truth about that. It's really not about getting there.

[Kelly] Exactly! So, is there this space that you get into where you are like an adult? and then you know...some will describe feeling like an adult and then they move backwards. For example, they will move back into their parent's home. And, what is that like?

[Chantal] Yeah, I know, I wouldn't want to do that!!! (Laughter)

[Kelly also laughing] So that's it!

[Chantal] okay! Thank you for the explanation!

[Kelly] Thank you!

Case Study # 9 Shelley - Divorced, educational assistant & real estate agent

You know I started out with all the wants of being an independent woman but I still want to be a wife and a mother and how can you mesh that all together?

Shelley is a GenXer who was born in the mid-1970's and Shelley was in her late 30's at the time of the interview. She lived with her parent's during her final years of high school. Her parents were married during their mid twenties. Her mother was 23 and her father was 27. Her mother was a stay-at-home wife and mother and her father took a full time job at a local plant when he was about 18. Shelley said that she anticipated getting married and having children but also says that she hadn't pinpointed an age for that to happen at.

Shelley had anticipated at least 5 years post secondary of education. She graduated high school on time and she anticipated going to college. She wanted to go to university to study psychology and become a social worker but her grades were not high enough. She anticipated completing a 2 year college diploma then a 3 year university degree. She first took an educational assistant program and attained this diploma. She did not finish her university degree but explained that she is only short 3 credits. She also took courses to obtain a real estate licence.

Currently, Shelley is working as an educational assistant and part-time real estate agent. She noted that nothing turned out as she had expected it to. She says she made the choices that she thought were best for her at the time but also said that 'hindsight is 20/20, of course.'

In Her Own Words

Shelley described what she thought her parents' lives were like during their twenties:

I think my parents...I know my mom lived at home until she was married. She got married at 23. My Dad 27. I know my dad started a good career at [a local plant] like at 18 or 19. I think they were in a better financial position in their younger years. Yeah, I would say they were in a better financial position. I think, I think just the expectations of a wife and mother at that time were a lot more straightforward than for women of my age. You know I started out with all the wants of being an independent woman. I still want to be a wife and a mother and how can you mesh that all together? So I think that that probably created more stress.

She was asked how she felt about life events that did not happen at the time you expected them to happen. In hindsight, she reconsidered her first plan:

I liked my original plan best [laughing] I think that would have been a good plan. I look at the kids thing specifically and I wish I had kids younger. I know I wasn't ready and I wasn't in the right place but it would be ...you know I would like to be done having kids now but I still would like another one so...I am getting older so there's that ...I don't feel that this is really realistic you know.

[Kelly] While you were going through it how did you feel about it?

I know that that my original plan was it is constantly in your mind growing up ...These are the milestones I think I should have reached and I haven't. That's definitely part of the thought process along the way.

Describe a moment or moments that made you feel more "grown-up" like an adult:

This past weekend was for me like the biggest 'oh my god' I'm an adult we took our little ones away for the weekend and we have never done a family vacation we have never done that. They have never even had a sleepover anywhere. We do a family bed at home and leading up to going away and my husband grew up on a

farm so they didn't do a lot of family vacations so I even said to my mom oh my god I am like the adult I am responsible for everyone. I have to make sure I don't lose anyone.

Completed this sentence: Growing up is.....

Aging. I remember realizing a few years, 10 years ago actually I still think I am 18. I remember realizing. That people don't really grow up they just age. So you know if you were an asshole in high school then you are probably just an older jerk now. Growing up also means responsibility.

You are legal an adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up?

No not at all [laughing] I think it goes back to what society predicts this line should look like. You know because I haven't done things in order and I haven't done things by the dates. I think a lot of that feels like ...you know I don't feel financially secure. You know I don't know that that ever comes for anyone really. I guess not meeting these goals leaves you feeling like you are not there yet.

Is there anything further you would like to add?

I think that my original plan is sort of what lead me into marrying the wrong person. And then trying to do a course correction at 30. I think had there not been that pressure to follow that line cause I was on that line...I just didn't have the right person with me. [laughing] I think that that is why I am set back farther as far as society says I should be on my timeline of major events and course correcting at 30 ...a few years engaged and then I feel like I am set back a little bit.

Case Study #10 Sky - Single, Native Woman, Librarian

"I am a whole different person when I am not around here. "

Sky was born in the mid-1970s and was in her late 30s when she participated in the interview. She grew up with an elder sister and a younger brother on a native reservation where they lived together with their parents. Sky felt she needed to grow up very quickly and had a shorter childhood because her mother fell ill and she had to help

her father run their household. She helped with groceries, cooking and cleaning. She says she 'still feels a lot of regret that she did not get a childhood.'

Her parents married young, as was the custom in her family. Her mother was 16 and her father was 18 and they had dated for two years prior to their wedding. They waited until Sky's father was in his 30's before they had their first child, Sky's older sister. Her mother was a housewife and her father was the only worker outside of the home. Her parents were two of the eldest children in each of their very large families. Her father came from a family of over twenty children and her mother was from a family of over 10 children. Sky also noted the early age at which teenagers tended to have their first child in her community, 'There were only 3 of us in my whole 8th grade class that didn't have any kids in high school.'

She lived at home as a young teenager and then an opportunity to attend boarding college arose and she took it. Sky had her own vehicle while in boarding school and she recalls that her father, especially, wanted her to be different. When she went off to school he would tell her, 'Don't come back. Stay there. Don't come back.'

Going to university was always something that Sky had in mind from an early age because she was counselled and prepared for it by her teachers at the boarding college she attended. During the last part of her senior year, she met with a college guidance counselor weekly to help match her to the schools and programs that might best suit her interests and aptitudes. Sky gained early acceptance in January to the program she would be pursuing in the fall. She chose a school that reminded her of her own high school as it was surrounded by water but it was four hours away from her home. She

lived in a dorm for the first three years and then she moved into a townhouse with a bunch of friends in her senior year.

Sky recalled that her first real relationship began when she was 17 years-old and continued through to her senior year in university. Sky had anticipated that she would live with a partner and have 3 or 4 children. Following, university, she did live with a new partner but they did not have any children and the relationship has now dissolved. Currently, Sky lives on her own in her own house.

Sky had intended on becoming a human rights lawyer and expected to see herself in this role at the age of 25 but it did not work out that way. When her mother died during her final year of university, she returned home to help her father once again. She was twenty-two when she returned home to be with her father. While Sky did graduate, she did not continue on to pursue her earlier goal of human rights lawyer. Sky was able to find her first full time employment within 6 months of graduating and bought her own home shortly after starting to work. She worked as a parole officer and also as at the local library. She is currently considering pursuing an online Master's degree in library sciences by accessing a scholarship that will help pay for her tuition.

In Her Own Words:

Sky was asked to describe a moment or moments that made you feel more "grown-up" like an adult. She described an incident where her grandmother chose her to impart important information on to her family. She describes this here:

When I was a junior in high school, [17 years old] my grandmother was in the hospital and I was really close to her and she kicked everybody out of the hospital and I was there on my lunch hour and she told me she couldn't have anymore aunts and uncles she was going to have a hysterectomy I think she was 82 or 83 at the time. My grandfather had been passed away for a good ten years. I felt pretty

good you know. She kicked four of my aunts out five of my cousins, my father she kicked them out of the hospital room to tell me that she wouldn't have any more, that I wouldn't have any more aunts and uncles.

Sky was asked to completed this sentence: Growing up is..... and she replied making reference to challenges of being from a smaller community:

Growing up is...hard...it's hard where I come from. Because you're not just living with your parents, you are living in a community where everyone knows you and with my big family. My father is from _____ and my mother is from _____ and no matter where I went in [where my father was from] somebody knew who my father was. So even if I was trying to get into trouble or do new things with my friends, I was always in trouble.

Sky has felt like an adult for quite some time and she explains how her mother's illness and death has propelled her to adulthood by compelling her to take on added responsibilities to help her family. Sky was asked: You are legal an adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up? She replied the following:

Yeah, I felt that for a long time. When I was a senior in college, my mom got real sick and she had cancer and the doctor gave her 3 months to live and I was the one that was still in school and my mom died 3 months to the day from the time the doctor said she would. So my last trimester, I was at school for three weeks and one of those weeks was to take the finals. When my mother died, I had to make the decision was I going to go work for the law firm in [the United States] or was I going to come home and help my father. My father had never lived alone. That's when I thought I was growing up, because I was giving up what I wanted to do to come home and take care of him.

All my friends at school were like 'Why are you doing that? Why are you doing that?' Because that's the way things are done where I live. You put your elders first, he is my father. To this day, my friends don't understand why I am still here.

I am a whole different person when I am not around here. I am more carefree. I take my chances and I feel like I am making just my decisions. When I'm here I feel like, well if I decide this, who is it going to affect? What's the consequence? Who is going to get hurt if I do something?

Case Study # 11 Shannon - Mother, E. C. E., Hat-maker and Common Law Wife

I mean I knew that my twenties weren't gonna be for being married with children...I mean there is a part of your mind in the background that is like...I guess I want to... but I never put that pressure on like this is my dream and what I want.

Shannon was born in the mid-1970's and she was in her late 30's when she participated in the interview. She self-identified with Generation X. She grew up with both her parents and her younger sister. Her parents married in their early twenties and Shannon's mother was 28 when Shannon was born. They had their full time jobs and Shannon explained that her parents knew early-on what their full time career paths would be. Shannon, on the other hand said she knew as a teenager that her life would not be that way.

She lived with her parents until about the age of 21. She had anticipated moving out earlier but it took her a long time to complete her high school education. She thought she would leave home at about 19 or 20 when her OAC's were over. She can recall being in her 5th year of high school and still being short a number of credits. She decided to complete her high school at the alternative school and begin her college education first as a mature student. She took a business credit with a friend who 'made her take the course. '

Shannon was asked if she was still in school. She replied to following:

I graduated I mean my post-secondary career is long and varied so I ended up going to take graphic design at [a college in an urban centre] and I took that for a year and then I went to England as an au pèrè and then, when I was there, I decided I wanted to go to art school so I went to the [] College of Design and I was there for three-and-a-half years and then I hit my thesis and I was like, 'yeah I don't really feel the need to do a thesis, so that was the end of that and then I took a few years off and I moved back to [my home town] and then went to

[_____] College and I actually graduated from early childhood education, so I was 31 when I graduated. That's the long answer to that short question.

Shannon and a friend moved off to a major urban city together to start a new life. She says she never thought she would get married and she describes it this way: "I mean there is a part of your mind in the background that is like...*I guess I want to...* but I never put that pressure on like this is my dream and what I want. I was never sure that I wanted a family." Still, she never doubted that she would one day find a partner to live with. She says it would depend on the stage of life from which she was looking forward. As a teenager, she would have thought that she was going to meet someone earlier but by her late teens and early twenties she knew it would happen this way and she would be more likely to find herself in a romantic relationship in her thirties.

As a teenager looking forward to her future, Shannon had anticipated that she would have a great design career by the time she was twenty-five. In the meantime, Shannon had several types of jobs to help support herself financially during her early to mid-twenties. For two consecutive summers Shannon interned at a museum. She worked at a movie theatre at an art house, a second-run type movie theatre. Shannon also worked at a daycare very briefly. She chose to pursue a material arts and design course in a larger urban city. She wanted to do more hands on work with textiles rather than computer design. By the age of 25, Shannon was actually living in an urban centre and she was making women's hats. She worked as a millinery assistant and she admits this wasn't as glamorous as expected but at least it was still creative work. At that point, she couldn't really see where she was going to go from there but she still had hopes to one day have her own studio. However, as a 25 year old looking towards her future goals she became more realistic about the financial challenges posed by attempting to become an

independent hat maker. By 30 she said she was sure where it was all headed so she ended up dropping out of the material arts and design course. Currently Shannon is a stay at home mom and she hopes to return to the workforce in the future as an ECE or working in a licensed daycare. She still maintains a home business where she sells her own handmade jewelry.

Shannon was asked to outline how her life may be similar or different to that of her parent's lives during their twenties. These comparisons are described here in her own words:

I mean other than now I am kind of married in quotes with biological children and I wasn't sure of that that, that was going to happen but it did..that I think is the only... I mean that I have the pair bond and then the children, but I mean it has come in a whole different context.

In a lot of ways...like it seems like my parent's generation, well just speaking of them...she ended college but she got her job at 19 or 20 and then she just retired at 63 so worked at the same place for 43 years. And my dad retired early but he went to college for engineering and he got one job with the government and then he retired and I know that that is never going to happen in my life being as I am in my 30s still haven't worked full time at a career so to speak...and just that everything is later as well. I mean I knew that my twenties weren't gonna be for being married with children.

Shannon was asked about what types of cultural influences such as television, books, movies have influenced the way she may have expected or experienced her twenties. Shannon then explained how she moved to an urban centre in order to engage with a cultural lifestyle that would have been unavailable to her in the smaller city where she was raised:

Well I guess I was really into music and more artistic creative things, so whether it was through movies or television or magazines at that point, because the internet wasn't really that prevalent. Well, it didn't exist when I was 15. Well, I am sure it did but not for me...but I always saw that...I guess.. it was at that point, it was considered a more 'bohemian' lifestyle and I kind of always aspired to that and I wanted to work in a movie theatre with like movie nerds and I knew that

wasn't going to happen here in [my home town] so I knew I was going to have to move. I don't know if that answers the question.

Also, I knew that there was a difference about the way people grew up in small towns, as opposed to the city, like a lot of some of my friends by the age of 19 or 20 had already had their first child and were somewhat, I don't want to say stuck but were geared to that lifestyle like my parents had so the girl that I ended up moving to [an urban centre] with ended up getting pregnant at 21 and got engaged and married, living that ideal that was more like our parent's lifestyle so I don't know if it was the culture in terms of what social cues but so for [my hometown] it was still kind of the norm to have children early and to get married early so that's why I moved to [a larger urban centre].

Shannon thought she would go to school and finish her education by the age of 24 and find a full-time job at this time. She anticipated having children in her 30s. She expected to have children but had specific ideas surrounding this. She did not foresee marriage in her future and she expected to be a renter forever. In actuality, Shannon moved out at 21, found a full time job at 27. She chose to cohabitate with a partner at the age of 21. She also graduated and gave birth at this age. At 33, Shannon moved into a house that her mother has purchased in her name but Shannon pays the mortgage.

Shannon was asked to compare the two time lines she outlined regarding her expected trajectory to adulthood and the actual lived trajectory. She had the following to say:

No, so throughout my twenties I suffered from depression, so there was always a thinking things would never happen and instead of not worrying about it and thinking things will never happen. I was just sad about that....And just, I think living in [a larger urban centre] as a single person there was a bit of loneliness. There wasn't a lot of pressure, I would tell myself it will be fine if it doesn't happen but there was always a fear that it wasn't going to happen. So there was some mixed emotions for sure about some future goals.

I wish I had enjoyed it more now that I see that ya I am going to have a family and I am going to have a partner. I feel more secure about myself and I wish that

I had enjoyed the 20s when I didn't. uh sorry. I feel so sad about it...sorry...Just thinking back to the time and how I felt. You know you just wish you could tell yourself don't worry so much. (crying)

[Kelly:] Do you feel relieved now?

I ... yeah... I guess I do. You know my career never came about the way I wanted it to but I guess it was not as important as I initially thought. More 'comfortable' I think is a word I would use and comforted as well. I mean as busy as I felt then I realize how much time I had and so I feel busier now more than then. Not busy as in stressed out just fuller more engaged. (Smiling)

Case Study #12 Carly - Stay-at-Home Mom and Wife, Does Clerical Work for Husband

I guess I could have been thinking about going to school, you could say, but I wasn't.

Carly was born in the late 1970's she was in her mid thirties when she participated in the interview. Carly recalls a difficult childhood and adolescence. She has a sister who is two years older and a brother who is 10 years younger. She was living in foster care during the later years of high school. She said she had hopes of finishing high school on time. However, her daughter was born and she said that changed everything for her.

Carly hadn't anticipated having children until her twenties but it didn't happen that way. Her boyfriend was older than her and he had tried to have children before and could not, so he thought he was infertile. Soon after she became pregnant. Carly delivered her daughter during the winter and she attended school almost up to the day she was born. At 17 years of age Carly moved out of foster care to start a new life as a single mother. After her daughter was born she tried to do some correspondence studies, but she said this was just too challenging with a newborn and it didn't work out for her. Carly did manage to graduate from high school later in life when she was in her early 30's.

Carly lived with her sister for a short while when she was 19. She said this didn't go very well and it didn't last very long. She didn't help with groceries or cleaning so Carly's mother helped her out by buying food. She said she never wanted to live with other roommates because she likes her privacy. Carly described how she wanted her child's childhood to be different from hers:

Well, it was when we were young we were with family a lot because she was out partying or sick or whatever happened so we were with our family a lot and I remember saying whenever my daughter was born I remember thinking when I had my daughter that there was no way in hell I would let them grow up like that because they are my responsibility not somebody else's. That's one big difference like if I party I always make sure my kids are taken care of too...So it was different a lot because I wanted to be there for my kids more than everybody else was because they are my responsibility.

Despite her desire to raise her children differently, two of Carly's children spent time in foster care. She had a son with another partner who was unfaithful to her. She also described that he had substance abuse problems. She describes dating many men during this time period who had substance abuse problems and it came as a disappointment to her when she lost her two oldest children:

I kept telling the one I was dating to go away or whatever and he still kept coming and there wasn't only him there were other guys. For some reason, that's the only type I seemed to be attracted to and they took them from school so that was another big thing in my life. And then I remember fighting to get them back. It didn't work obviously, well my daughter is here every other week. We get along well and my other son well, we still don't get along. It made me more conscious of who I dated. I didn't want to date anyone other than [the man who is now] my husband...It just made me more conscious of the sort of men out there and the way they are. It left a big impact because my kids are raised by...somewhere else.

....Well when I lost my kids I went to counselling and that is when I learned why I was attracted to the kind of men I was because when I was younger and mom was always out partying I needed someone to love me and pay attention to me and it didn't matter who it was.

Carly had a son with another father. She described a difficult time and turning point during her life when she lost her own children. She never thought she would get married and she says neither did her husband. At the age of twenty-five, Carly married. She had never wanted to get married because she said many of her past partners were unfaithful or had substance abuse problems. She admitted that she thought she could help them but that never worked out. Ultimately she chose to leave him, seek therapy, and choose a new partner who offered more stability to her and her children. Today, they are married and she has a third child, a son with him. They live in the home her husband purchased, and they have renovated it together. They also share a car. Carly spoke proudly of her marriage while comparing it to her mother's many marriages:

My mom was married 3 times and none of them worked. I was only married once and it lasted. My marriage is probably longer than my mom's three put together. so...

That being said, Carly did have at least significant relationships, one with each of the fathers of her children.

Carly was asked to compare her expected timeline to her actual timeline and talk about how she felt about the order of things. Carly had a lot to say and I listened very attentively as she reflected on all that happened during her twenties. In the beginning and the end of her reflection, she talks about how it would have been easier not to go through most of it but that she wouldn't be the person she is today or be partnered with the one she refers to as 'the good one' if she hadn't gone through all of it.

Carly's mother passed away when Carly was 22 and her mother was 40. Carly spoke at length about the passing of her mom. Carly described always visiting her mother, even secretly while she was in foster care. They had a very special relationship,

particularly as in the last few years before she died. Carly figured her mother was expecting that she would soon be dying because she had written each of her children letters. Her mother died from a complication during her surgery. Her name and number were listed on the contact information form at the hospital and Carly noted that this was because she was 'like the only stable one you know you can always reach.' Carly called to check on her mother and she was informed of the complications. Her mother was on life support and Carly and her sister were responsible for making the decision of whether or not to keep or her life support. They chose to take her off life support and her mother passed away.

The death of her mother, loss of her children, loss of pregnancies, and learning to leave partners who are abusive and to chose a supportive partner have been meaningful to Carly's growing up.

After losing her mother, Carly had her fallopian tubes untied and she has tried to have more children with her husband, but she has had several miscarriages and spoke at length about how emotionally difficult this has been for her. They did have one son together. She has tattoos to commemorate her miscarriages and she continues to write in a journal and spoke fondly of how he reminds her very much of her mother.

On one hand Carly can recall wanting to be a lawyer when she was younger. However, on the other hand she never really thought specifically about the type of job she would have during her mid-twenties. She did know there were some types of jobs that she would rule out for certain such as any job in the medical field because she would never want to work with blood. Carly wasn't really certain that she would want to go back to school again. She said she might consider obtaining a bookkeeping certificate so

she could help her husband with his business. This way he would not have to pay for an accountant and perhaps she could also be a bookkeeper for other employers also.

Carly didn't really think of her efforts during her twenties as 'work' she said these were:

Not really working but helping my husband. So I didn't get paid but helping my husband. He owns a [construction type] service. So I answered the phones, ran to the bank for him, if they were working in town I would run and bring them drinks or whatever if it was a hot day. Stuff like that. I would go to the bank as well.

She had worked for a while as a telemarketer but she said she didn't really enjoy it. At the time of the interview, Carly was suffering from sciatica and was waiting to see a specialist for her arthritis because she was in a great deal of pain. Carly explained that there were many jobs that she wanted to do but that she really couldn't do now because of the pain she is in. She wanted to obtain her PSW certificate but she knows that she won't be able to lift.

Carly was asked to describe a moments or moments that made her feel more "grown-up" like an adult. She spoke of giving birth to her daughter:

I guess when I had my daughter because you have to. You have somebody else depending on you. It's not just you. You're not living for you anymore because you have that little child who is depending on you.

[Kelly:] Were there some ways that you didn't feel as grown up?

Well...that's a hard question because my life wasn't easy at all. I guess not really since I kind of raised my brother since I was 10 because my mom was out partying a lot and I think the only thing different about moving out on my own was that I had my bills to pay and you know that kind of stuff there was no major difference but...

[Kelly:] Were your twenties what you expected them to be...

Well, until I met my husband...well actually we met and then we went out for 13 months and then we broke up for two years and then we got back together and now we are still together, but in between that whenever my kids where gone to their dad's for every second weekend then that was my party time I guess you would say to go out with my friends and enjoy it all. I guess I could have been thinking about going to school, you could say, but I wasn't.

Carly was asked to completed this sentence: Growing up is.....She spoke of her daughter not similarities between herself and her daughter who is now the same age she was when she gave birth to her.

Hard! (laughing) My daughter and I were talking about that yesterday. 'Cause well she is 17 now and well she stays here and she stays at her boyfriend's, but the more we are together the more we don't get along because we are a lot alike. So yesterday we're talking and I said so when I get her baby bonus I give it to her and I said 'well you'll manage. You know you need your groceries your... you manage what you need to do with it.' She was like 'I didn't think growing up was going to be this hard.' I said 'Yep! I told you it was not going to be that easy. You don't depend on everybody else to do everything for you anymore. You've gotta do it all yourself. Yeah...you can't depend on mommy and daddy. It's you.'

Case Study # 13 Laurie - Married, Nurse and Mother

Laurie was born in the late 1970's and she was in her mid-thirties as she participated in the interview. Laurie grew up in a rural setting where her mother did a great deal of homeschooling with her and her siblings. Her mother and father were married young and had four children together. Their house was given to them as a wedding gift. Her mother was a stay at home mother. They grew a large garden in the summer and had many children over to visit for play days because they lived far from each other.

Laurie was living at home, with her parents and her siblings at the end of high school. She had expected to move out of her family home at about the age of 22 or 23

but she never anticipated moving out alone. She expected to move out with a partner. She actually moved out at the age of 20 because she was pregnant. They bought a house together and were married a year after they had their son. She reported that she knew she would be a young mother. She knew she would be in her early 20s when she had her children. 'It's kind of the family thing to do,' she said.

She spoke extensively of how growing up in a rural area shaped her youth and her view on the world while describing herself and her friends as being very 'naive' when it came to drugs and sex. However, she explained that they had cars and jobs and in some ways were more grown-up than those she met from the city. They spent Saturdays shopping in malls found in the closest urban city, with money they earned from their jobs. She noted that her perception was that there were lower rates of teen pregnancies and that drugs in her country school were unseen.

[Laurie] It's different in the country. When I meet people in town it's like what? I find the way people talk is different. Well like when I was 16 my parents bought me car so I could get jobs. Whereas, in the city, none of my friends had cars. You know and like we had our own cars and it just seems like kids grow up faster or you mature faster than in the city.

[Kelly] How does the car impact that?

[Laurie] Well, I had more freedom and I was a grown-up faster. Like I was 16 and I had my own car I did have little odd jobs here and there and but none of my friends in the city had cars but my friends in the country had cars.

[Kelly] Did your friends in the city have jobs?

[Laurie] Yes but the car wasn't even a thought. Whereas we were shopping in [the closest urban centre] on weekends. We were doing different things because we had our own vehicles and we had our own money. Out in the country, where I went to school, not one person dropped out and there wasn't even any teenage pregnancy and I don't understand and I come to town and people I meet now and I am like what? Yeah, we are more naive.

[Kelly] Who is more naive?

[Laurie] We are in the country

[Kelly] More naive but more grown-up?

[Laurie] Yes we are very naive in the country. Like when I met girls from the city and I hung out with girls from the city and the things they have done and the things they have seen it's like what...you don't see things like that or here, things like that in the country.

[Kelly] Things like what?

[Laurie] Like even the drug use. The teenage... Like I never have rode on a city bus and I have never even been in a taxi. It's just different things like. It seems like my friends were cousins but in the city these kids were exposed to so many different things. Things you would only see or hear of in the movies and in the country you like What!?? You saw drugs? What?

In high school looking forward, Laurie saw herself becoming a stay at home wife and mother and expected to find herself in these roles by the time she would turn twenty-five. She also said she had thought of studying in a secretarial or dental hygienist program. Her mother was a great influence on her choice of career path. Laurie explained how she came to nursing as a career path:

It was my mom who actually chose this. She said 'you would be a perfect fit for this' and at first I didn't want to and then I applied and then I got accepted and so I thought okay. So basically my mother chose this career for me. I am a registered practical nurse.

Laurie has always worked as a nurse. She worked part-time, two days, per week at a nursing home in the countryside and stayed home with her children the rest of the week. Then, she wanted to try something new so she applied to the hospital. She started working at the hospital on a full-time basis three years ago. Laurie expects to

continue doing nursing and remain in this position for the remainder of her employment career.

Laurie was asked to think about her expectations for her twenties and compare these to her lived experience of her twenties. Laurie expected that she would have her first car (because she had it already in high school), get a college education, find a full time job, and move out with a partner, marry and have children early in her twenties. In actuality, everything happened very quickly. She already had her first car at 16, she obtained her education, had a child, moved out, bought a house, worked as a nurse and married between the age of 19 and 21.

If there was anything about growing up that surprised her, she said it was marriage. Re-adjusting their roles within the family to accommodate for being a working mother was difficult because it meant re-thinking traditional gender roles. Laurie was doing all the cooking and cleaning type jobs but once she started working, even part-time, she expected her husband to assist her with those tasks because her time was required for paid work outside the home. Laurie explained this as she was asked to complete the sentence 'Growing up is...' Her response highlights the impact of changing work patterns and gender roles on the feelings associated with growing-up or becoming a man, becoming a woman:

[Laurie] Hard. I thought it was fun. Nothing surprised me. Oh you know what surprised me...it was marriage. It surprised me. We have been together 15 years and everyday it's something new. No lol but it's just that...That I have found difficult and a lot of my friends have said that. A lot of my best friends have said our parents made it look so easy as in couples and it's not. You know what I wonder too, like my mom was a stay at home mom and all my friends mom's were stay at home moms too and it was almost like the women were a little bit more passive or something or like the husband brings home the check so they did everything. Whereas women nowadays are like no you're going to help do the dishes, you're going to help do things and so it is always like this

struggle. And sometimes my husband will say it's almost like I am 'de-masculating' him because you know and I find a lot of my friends and that is where a lot of the arguments come in because a lot of women are working part time and so they still have a say and the men are like well no...Whereas, if you look at back in the day with my mother she never expected my father to do anything because she was a stay at home mom.

[Kelly] And before you were married, did you expect that he would do those things?

[Laurie] Well I thought, no I thought I would be a stay at home mom and I thought I would be cooking all the meals and looking after the kids and that I would want to. Well then what happened is we got married and I was working part time and then the kids came along and I am still working and then it was like no you can help with the bath, you can help with the homework, and then it's always this constant struggle. Now that the kids are older it's easier because we have a routine but I know a lot of my friends that is there biggest complaint and it is almost like women are more boisterous than before.

Laurie explained that her life was not entirely different from her parents' lives but that what was driving the differences had to do with current economic realities that her family was faced with in order to keep a house and provide for her children in the way that she perceived was expected in today's society. She explains these differences here:

Only difference was that my mother did more home studying and we didn't do. I have done some home studying with my kids but not as much. We do plant a garden but not as big as my mom. We did live off the earth a bit and we have been trying to do, do a bit of that but not as much.

Money, it's harder to manage money. Like my parents they had a house given to them so my mom was able to stay home. Whereas, I had to continue working to make ends meet along with my husband's income and pay for the kids so I find back in their day. Like I say I would have loved to stay home and raise my kids different but due to the fact that kids want different things like they want clothes like their friends have and I found that kind of different. And in my kid's classes all the parent's are older. I am the youngest parent and therefore when they are older they seem more established whereas we had just bought a house, we had just bought a car, so I had to continue working to provide so my kids could maintain the same as the other kids in the class. Whereas my parents didn't have

that like home made clothes. That's what we grew up with. It's not that it isn't acceptable. Whereas, my parent's didn't have that. Like we had second hand clothes that's what we grew up with. But my kids..it wouldn't...it's not that it's not acceptable they still do get second hand clothes but you still need the modern...And I tried not to but it does impact the children. And like my mom had an old beat up car when she stayed home whereas your children don't want to be seen in an old beat up car so you have to ... and it's for the kids...

She compared her the two time lines:

Yeah I did. But the other thing is I never moved away so my family was always right there. Now I know my friends who moved away they had a harder time so I was more sheltered through all this. My parents are right next door and our even any apartment or house that I rented they were only 5 minutes away. They were right there. So when I had my child my mother was always right there helping me so I never had to cope on my own. My mother was there and so for babysitting purposes my mother was there. My family was there. I have never had to take my children grocery shopping. Like, I have never had those scenes where the kids are crying in the grocery store because my parents are right there.

[Kelly] And for your friends, did they have children but they moved away right away young?

They had a falling out with their family so they didn't have that. And I hear it all the time you're so lucky ..you don't have to...and I think. without having that extended family it does have a hard time coping. It is harder to cope.

[Kelly:] So I just want to go back to the order we were discussing.

[Laurie] Well kind of. I would have preferred to be married and then have a child but that was fine. Things happen and we still waited a year to make sure so we were a couple living together with a baby and then we got married. I don't know if it was fine with the family but it was fine with me. It didn't have any impact on my experience.

Laurie was asked to pinpoint a moment or moments that made her feel more "grown-up" like an adult.

Well, yeah, when you have your children or when you sign your kid up for you school. When you sign your kid up for school you're like 'Oh yeah! I'm signing a kid up for school!' I had to sign my kid up for high school this year. Yeah, when you are taking them to the doctors. When you get your first pay check but you

know you're right. When I was in high school I don't think I considered myself an adult.

Laurie was asked if she felt like a 'grown-up' at this point in her life. She began by saying she did feel like an adult because her mother says so because she is married but then refers to feeling like a grown up because she makes decisions for herself. Her response:

Yes.... Well my mother was always telling me you're an adult now because you have two kids and you are married. Yeah by the time I had my daughter and you have to make decisions for yourself and make decisions... Yeah I guess maybe 25.

Laurie gave the following response after she was asked if there was anything further she wanted to add:

We were always told we were Generation X. I guess it was English media that first started telling us this I don't know... But I still kept in contact. My graduating class was only 40 so we still keep in contact. Not many moved far they are still all in the area.

Case Study #14 Julie - Divorced, Small Business Owner

"I envisioned greatness but I didn't expect it."

Julie is a woman in her mid thirties from Generation X. Julie was still living with her parents as she concluded high school although she had moved out of her parents home for a brief time around the age of 16. Her mother was a full-time stay at home wife and mother. Her father was a construction worker and began working as soon as he was finished high school.

Julie left her parent's home at the age of 18 for a marriage and life with her new husband. This marriage lasted 15 years. Two years ago she and her husband separated and she has a new partner with whom she currently lives.

Julie expected that she would get married and did so early on. She knew she wanted to complete high school and move on to post-secondary education. She anticipated having children and she thought she would be able to find full time work and maintain a job. Julie completed a Health Care Aid course at a local college which meant that she exceeded her parents high school educations. Although she excelled at the course and was given great recommendations from her professors, she actually didn't enjoy the field and was disappointed in the system. Although she said that she have loved to pursue a degree in psychology or perhaps become a veterinarian, she admitted that this wasn't an option for her for economic reasons. She knew she could not afford the tuition and living expenses and did not think there was adequate governmental assistance to help her complete this endeavor.

From Julie's adolescence, she "envisioned greatness but didn't expect it." Describing herself while laughing, Julie said:

"I really didn't have a clue. I was kinda lost in my twenties. This is what it came down to: I expected to be able to get a job and hold a job and live the normal middle class lifestyle."

She described herself as struggling economically to make ends meet during her twenties. She worked several part-time jobs that added up to approximately 60 hours per week so she could support herself and her husband. She worked her way up from the "bottom rung," as she put it.

Here are a few of the many examples Julie described: She progressed from working as a chamber-maid to a front-desk clerk to an assistant manager at a hotel. She progressed from working as kitchen staff to kitchen closer to a hostess at a local chain restaurant. Julie worked as a telemarketer and was promoted to assistant manager. She started as a sales clerk at a store and became an assistant manager.

Today, Julie owns her own business out of town.¹⁹ She enjoys the flexibility and freedom of working for herself and does not see herself working for anyone else in the future. Although, she might consider working for someone else if it was within the same field. She would consider taking professional development courses to keep her knowledge in her field current but she would not pursue a degree program at this point. She wants to see herself retire during her 50's.

Julie did not have children and she continues to contemplate whether or not she will someday have children. Her main reason for not having children at this times is that she is enjoying her life as it is.

Julie did not seem particularly concerned with when she should or would make major purchases such as a car or a house. She said she only recently learned to drive and she

¹⁹ Julie's business name and line of work are not included in order to protect her identity.

did not really want the work involved in maintaining a house. Her and her former husband did own a car, at one point, because he could drive and she noted that it was a modest car.

Julie felt as though she would prefer to have someone else take on the aspects related to home ownership rather than to have to do that for herself.

A few highlights in Julie's own words:

When asked if she had anything further to say about work life during her twenties, Julie had this to say:

Tough, I found my 20s difficult. I hit a lot of walls because I didn't have a college [in a desired field] or university degree. Unfortunately, I went to school to become a health care aid and aced it. Literally, I came out with a 98% overall and great recommendations from all my teachers but I hated it, literally. I couldn't stand it and the way the system was being run and I just didn't want to be a part of it so that never panned out for me and so I looked for other options and literally I would have to start on the bottom rung and work my way up somewhere and so it took a lot of time and so I would say I definitely think the education factor played for me.

As an adolescent, Julie did think she was going to have children in her earlier marriage.

However, she did not and when asked if she was still considering having children, Julie reported the following:

...to this point in my life, I still don't and I still I guess, I debate that because part of me always wanted to have kids and part of me enjoys my life the way it is and I'm selfish but so I don't feel that bringing children into that type of environment would be a good idea.

When comparing her expected biographic timeline and her actual biographical timeline, Julie said her feelings would be based on the temporal perspective from which she was looking at the events:

If I were looking forward at it I would have thought: wow, I'm really off track and very unsatisfied or disappointed that I hadn't reached any of the things that I would have wanted to...but looking back I think it is all perfection. I think I have

come a long way and I have developed a lot. It may not have always happened as I wanted it to or intended it too but I am quite happy and satisfied with my life.

Julie was asked what growing up meant to her and she began by saying she grew up very quickly and she had a very short childhood. When attempting to define moments where she felt more "grown-up," Julie pinpointed her age perspective as being very significant to deciding what moments or events could be defined as "growing-up." She notes a shift in defining given markers as meaningful to growing-up:

I think, again, I think it would be my perception. If I were looking forward I would definitely think it would be my completing school and post-secondary all these would have been indicators that I was on the right path the right course but looking back at them I realize they were just things and points in my life that have occurred but do they make me who I am today? No. So...

Julie was asked to complete the sentence "Growing up is....." She replied the following:

Coming into your own. Sovereignty. Yeah, I think it's taking care of yourself. I mean being able to function in society and contribute to society I guess

At this point in Julie's life she feels as though she is an adult and made this clear by concluding the interview with this last statement:

I do. I do. Although I love to cherish my inner child. I am contributing to society I am a teacher all the things you would list as an adult.

Case Study #15 - Michelle - Pharmacist and Wife, Wants to be a Mother

In reality, I went to university and then I went to university again and then I didn't meet my husband until I was 29 and now I am [in my mid-thirties] and we have been trying to have kids for two years and haven't been able to yet. So it is very different reality than what I was picturing for my early twenties.

Michelle was in her mid-thirties at the time of the interview and she was born during the late 1970's. She grew up with her parents who were married at a young age. Her mother was 19 when she married Michelle's father and by the time she was thirty years-old she had children. She was a stay at home mom and did not go to university, she went to the local college for a short time and didn't graduate with a diploma. Michelle's father remarried so as Michelle explained it, "he had had a life and he had had a career and so it was a bit different for him..." They were fortunate, Michelle explained, they were frugal and the housing market and interest rates were favourable for buyers. Her parent's lives during their 20's were both different from the life Michelle lived.

Michelle knew she would be graduating high school and pursuing a university education. During her final years of high school Michelle thought she would become a scientist and that she would be working in a lab at the age of 25 and that she would continue progressing in this career. She obtained a biochemistry degree and today she has a degree in pharmacology. Today, Michelle works as a pharmacist. She says she would go back to university to obtain further degrees or specializations.

Michelle knew she would be living with roommates during university. She pictured herself being finished her studies after her first degree, working and getting married at the age of 25 or 26. She was asked if she thought she would live with a partner before getting married but she couldn't recall thinking that part through but she

had pictured being married in her mid-twenties. In any case, she said she knew she would never live alone because she knew she would not be able to afford it. Although, she said she would have liked to live alone. She did co-habitat with a partner during her mid-twenties. She describes her households here:

Ha...like I said I had roommates throughout all of university basically. I am grateful now that I never have to have roommates again. [laughing] but you know it's part of life. And yeah, I did live with somebody in my twenties briefly and that was an interesting experience. And I had...partly what was interesting about that too at the time is because I was living in [an urban centre]. My father... they are from [my smaller home town], my father, he would actually stay with us a few days every week because he was working in [a city on the outskirts of the urban city] at the time. So that made for an interesting situation. He was just staying with us for us to help him out and him to help me with rent and so on.

When asked about the types of jobs that she held during her twenties Michelle described it as all 'kind of complicated.' She worked at a lab in a co-op type placement associated with her university program. She worked as a quality control technician. She worked in a lab for a bank note printer. She did basic science research in a developmental biology lab for 8 months and these were all co-op work terms. In between her degrees, Michelle worked at an historical tourist site.

Michelle was asked if she had anything further to add about her education and her transition to adulthood that may be significant. She described the unexpected length of time that it took and the high financial debt that she incurred:

Yeah... So basically how it is significant is that when I graduated from my first degree. I didn't have a lot of student debt and then I didn't think I would be in school for that much longer and but then I decided to go into pharmacy and I didn't graduate pharmacy..after pharmacy I did a year of residency so I didn't really start my career until I was about 28. That was a lot later than ever thought I would start working and to me that is fairly significant. When I graduated from pharmacy at 28 I had a six figure debt as well. So that is fairly impactful on my life.

Michelle was also asked to think back and try to remember if she had thought about making larger purchases such as a car and house and when she thought she might buy these. She discussed this idea in relation to the debt incurred by pursuing her education, her economic class and how her education impacted the timing of these purchases:

When I was 19...at that time would have thought never because I didn't think that I could afford it but I would have figured I would say when I was 23 or 24 when I finished university basically.

And then as to a house, I really wasn't thinking about house buying at the age of 19. It never really entered my consciousness until I finished university completely. At that point I thought I could never because I had \$100,000.00 worth of student debt...so I really didn't know when I would be able to buy a house at that point, when I finished university but...I was hoping that it would be sooner rather than later but I really didn't know.

We have a car and we have a house. My first car that I bought I was 24 and it cost less than my computer. We bought the house together when I was 31.

[Kelly] Is there anything further you would like to add about growing up and major purchases.

Yeah... it became more important as I got older and as I was going through pharmacy. There's a lot of rich kids in pharmacy too...so seeing what some of my classmates had, the cars they were driving, like that really did impact sort of how I looked at things as well and sort of brought it to the forefront of my consciousness at that point. So yeah living in [an urban city] for school and seeing what all my friends were doing, did definitely have an impact on when I thought things should happen and what I should have and what I should be driving and so forth.

Michelle took a moment to reflect on what she expected for her twenties in terms of timing education, marriage and children and she compared this to the reality of life during her twenties. In her own words:

[Michelle] Yeah, so whenever I was 19 starting university. I thought I would go to university, finish something while I was in university, get married shortly after and then have a couple of kids by the time I was 30.

In reality, I went to university and then I went to university again and then I didn't meet my husband until I was 29 and now I am [in my mid-thirties] and we have been trying to have kids for two years and haven't been able to yet. So it is very different reality than what I was picturing for my early twenties.

That being said, I wouldn't change a thing from what I thought would happen to what actually happened. I loved my twenties I did and I wouldn't change anything about them.

[Kelly] Does society set up an order?

[Michelle] Yes, yes they do... and

[Kelly] What would the order be?

[Michelle] Completing secondary completing post secondary and getting married getting a house, having a baby, buying a first car is probably between high school and post secondary.

Michelle was asked to describe a moment or moments that made her feel more "grown-up" like an adult. She listed graduated and starting to work for 'real' meaning paid work rather than co-op work design to help her learn and give her hands on experience. "probably when I graduated pharmacy school and I started working for real. That's probably about the most grown up I've felt. " Michelle completed this sentence: Growing up is..... by indicating financial independence as key to growing up. "Growing up means to me moving out of your parent's house and being able to financially support yourself," she said. At the time of the interview Michelle indicated that she does feel like a 'grown-up,' someone who has transitioned from adolescence to adulthood, stating: "Yes, I feel like a grown up...somedays I wish I wasn't but yes I feel like a grown up."

Michelle was asked if there was anything further that she wanted to add to the interview concerning the transition from adolescence to adulthood, her twenties or growing up in general. She concluded the interview with these final remarks:

[Michelle] Well I think there is a lot of pressure on kids...well kids...quote unquote..just to...well I think growing up is being delayed more and more because what people see as being markers of being a grown up like finishing school, getting married, buying a house, happen later and later like in reality it happens in your thirties rather than in your twenties. Just...so I think there is a disconnect between the babyboomers and the younger generations about when we should be reaching these milestones...So, I think it is a challenging time for young people because of the cost of living, the cost of houses, the cost of post secondary education really makes an impact on whether they can reach their sort of goal of reaching adulthood. It's a tough market out there these days to say that you have been able to achieve all that you can.

[Kelly] Do you think that impacts the way people feel about growing up and that transition to adulthood?

[Michelle] Yeah, because you hear about it all these kids who finish university, can't find a job and move back in with their parents. Like that is kind of well I wouldn't say discouraging but it is disheartening to...to think to some of them to feel like you have to move back home and it's like back in high school again, you can't find a job yeah so I don't know..

[Kelly] So how was it for you?

[Michelle] Growing up...?

[Kelly] Yeah.

[Michelle] It's not easy but I have always been very ambitious and very determined and so even though I did not chose the easy path, deliberately knowing that I would choose a path that would lead me to a lot of student loans, I did so knowing it would result in a secure job and a career even more than just a job when I was done and a very portable one at that and so I saw it as the investment in myself knowing that I would be fine knowing that I would someday eventually pay off all my student loans and knew that I someday I wouldn't have to worry about it. It was sort of a conscious decision to choose a profession that I knew I would always be employable with.

I will say the day I felt old was the day I turned 31 because then there was no going back to my twenties. No I enjoyed my twenties they were a period of growth.

The events that happened that were outside of my control, those were the hard ones.

Meaghan grew up with her parents and her brother. Her parents were married around the age of 18 or 19 and remained married until they both passed away when Meaghan was in her twenties. Their lives were most significantly different from hers in that they based their decisions on each other rather than on themselves the way she did during her twenties. She explained these differences in more detail here:

My parent's got married young. They were maybe 18 or 19 when they got married, so our lives were very different in that way in that they would have always based their decisions on themselves as a couple as a partner. During my twenties I based my decision on what I felt was I guess with myself in mind first and foremost.

My father's dad's died a couple of years before they got married so he kind of took over the father figure role I guess for his younger brothers and sisters and so they didn't party like what I would have experienced in my twenties. You know stay up until 4:00AM or you know that sort of twenties behaviour that I did they wouldn't have engaged in that I mean their lives were much more set towards their next goal. Like they got married and then they started saving towards their next house and it would have been so financial in mind so I guess a bit more smarter...not what I want to do in the moment or....

Meaghan always knew she would graduate school and go to university. She anticipated living in a dorm. Looking to the future she was unsure if she would get married. She said, "I think I thought if I didn't get married, I wouldn't live with anyone." During university, she lived in a dorm and after she graduated she lived with roommates. She had originally anticipated that her studies would be completed by the age of 25 or 26 and that she would be living on her own but that is not what happened. Her thoughts on having children were related to her thoughts on marriage. Explained it this way:

[Meaghan] I think it was sort of how I thought about marriage. I wasn't sure if that is sort of what came along in my life then great and it that wasn't then that wasn't something I could plan for or assume would happen if other things weren't

in place either. Like if I didn't have a partner then I probably wouldn't have children of my own. Like I didn't assume that I would have children but I didn't assume that I wouldn't so I guess it was undecided.

[Kelly] And do you feel the same way now?

[Meaghan] Yes.

She had anticipated becoming a high school teacher by the time she was 25. Thinking back to her high school years and looking forward, Meaghan described herself as ambitious. She then anticipated that she would work as a teacher and study part time with the intention of obtaining a Master's degree and progressing to department head and then on to becoming a principal or in an administrative position with the school board.

At twenty-five Meaghan actually worked as a yoga teacher and a fitness instructor. Some of the other jobs she held while in her twenties were research for a heritage website and a temporary secretary for the elections. Today, Meaghan continues to work as a full time graduate student and occasionally as a fitness instructor and yoga teacher. In the future, when she is finished her degree, she hopes to work for either the provincial or federal government.

Meaghan described her current living situations at the time of the interview:

[Meaghan] I guess it is kind of both. I live with my friends, one of my roommates from university [during my first degree]. But I guess I keep my sort of permanent home base with my brother in [the urban city where we grew up]. Like, during the school year, I live in [in the urban city where my university is] and at the end of the month I will move back to [the urban city where we grew up] and then I will probably stay there until my Ph.D. is done.

[Kelly] When you are finished your degree and your schooling?

[Meaghan] Probably live on my own because all of my friends will be partnered up and no one will want to live with a roommate anymore.

Meaghan discussed how some events were difficult for her to deal with when they happened but these were events that were out of her control such as the passing of her parents. She explained that these pushed her towards a new level of responsibility and adulthood as she now saw herself as solely responsible for the outcomes of her choices:

Most of my decisions that I made, I was comfortable with them and you make choices and you decide and the choices you make are yours and you decide what to do with them. The events that happened that were outside of my control, those were the hard ones. It just seemed like whenever I was young, it was like everyone was like I have to get this done and that done and when I got to that point it was like you never know what life is going to throw at you so you just see life as an adventure.

Both my parents passed away in my late twenties and that was very difficult....Yeah, that would be the exact moment that I started realizing that ...it's the moment that you realize that you are really on your own. It is not a bad thing. It's just sort of like: Okay...I am the one that has to...that I am in control and I am the one...I am the only one that ...when you make bad decisions then it's up to you to fix them. So, that was a pivotal moment when I was 27. It was like: Okay it's time to settle down and get focused.

Moments that have made Meaghan feel more 'grown up' or adult-like centered around financial responsibility. She describes paying bills and managing money as important to the transition between adolescence and adulthood:

I guess when I was in university and I had bills to pay and that I had to manage my money. That would have been the first time that I had a visa card and a debit card and those sort of things. Rather than my piggy bank with my money from babysitting in it.

Meaghan described herself as an adult stating: "I think so. Yes," to the question: Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult or a 'grown up'? In completing the sentence:

'Growing up is.....' Meghan reiterated the theme of responsibility as being key to social maturity.

(silence) Oh my...let's come back to it. Responsibility for your choices and actions.

Meghan concluded our interview with the following remarks:

It's really interesting that there is sort of a moment that you wouldn't have thought of.

Case Study #17 Jennifer - Married, Teacher and Performing Artist

...and it is an opportunity to exist in another way.

Jennifer was born in the late 1970's and she was in her early 30's at the time of the interview. She lived with her parent's who came from very large families and were married at an early age. She knew she would be headed for university and she knew that this would mean incurring debt as she would draw support from the OSAP program. Jennifer set off to develop her interests in the performing arts and at that time, she had aspirations of becoming a performer and eventually a choreographer as she would move into her 30's.

Jennifer pursued Bachelor's Degree and graduated at the age of 23. She then attained an Bachelor of Education Degree and this took her an additional 3 years of school. She explained that at this point in her life she often works on other types of professional development type courses. Returning to school for another degree is something Jennifer sees in her future.

I would like to get my master's in movement therapy...or art therapy, the modalities of art to help people heal. I would like to be in psychology so yeah I would like to do that but it is going to take quite a while because it is quite costly. I would have done it right out of my first degree but the cost of it ... I used OSAP...so the cost just didn't seem feasible.

Throughout her 20's Jennifer held many jobs to help her pay for education and the cost of living. Some of these were sandwich artist, hostess, lawn maintenance, building maintenance, labourer, grounds keeper, youth worker, group home worker, counsellor, dance, teacher, waitress, administration secretary, day care worker, and teacher.

When it came to living arrangements during her twenties, Jennifer said she knew 'it would be kind of here and there.' She said she always anticipated getting married and named '30ish' as a vague age marker. In addition to having several different types of jobs, she had several varying living arrangements from living on her own in residence, to having a roommate, to having more than one roommate in a townhouse in an urban centre to living with a partner to now being married.

Jennifer was asked to describe what she thought her parents' lives were like during their twenties. Having married later, she didn't encounter the exact challenges her parents' did. She highlighted the cyclical patterns of family life and difficulties her parents may have experienced as a young couple and first time parents. Here, she noted the irony of trying to escape a situation and re-creating it in the process:

Tumultuous...It sounded like it was a really difficult time for them. I mean they were moving. I mean getting married was a move to get out of their house as a way to get away from the responsibility that was put on them...[pause] and realizing that what they put themselves into was just the same situation so it was really kind of rough and tumble for them for a long time and that's ...[pause] my siblings who had to go through that. My sisters and my other one here in town, generations behind, well ten years behind, sorry not generations 10 years behind my older sister so we kind of got spoiled.

Jennifer had to pause a moment before explaining the similarities she recognized between her life and her parents' lives during their twenties. The one major similarity that Jennifer was able to draw between her parents' lives during their twenties and hers is the

commitment to having a family gatherings and sharing the closeness of really being in the presence of family members.

I don't know...I think that we enjoy a lot of...I mean we spend a lot of family time together on the weekends. It's almost like a regular thing. We are a very close knit family. I mean we grew up in a house with four girls and a mother and a father... and my dad had [just over 20] siblings and I was like, 'Come on! That's crazy!'...and my mom had [just under 10] and so there were always bodies. I think always having people around is how I live or I try to even though I don't have children...and I push that upon my partner because it was like a lot for him because he was an only child.

Jennifer outlined the difference between the order that she expected to meet coming of age milestones and the order they actually occurred. She listed them in the following order: purchase of a car, moving out, education, first full time job, marriage and intimate relationships, purchase house, children and family. In actuality, her list looked more like this: education, move out, first full time job, marriage and partnership. She noted that the house and cars she now considers to be frills and with the milestone of children and family she explained her and her partner are 'not there yet.' Jennifer was asked how she felt about life events that did not happen at the time you expected them to happen. She explained how she has difficult feelings about meeting 'more traditional' milestones and markers for adulthood:

[Jennifer] It has been stressful. I want to pay off my OSAP and I want to be able to have a stake for myself in this life and not be reliant on my husband despite the fact that I appreciate him and everything. It's just that with the current career that I am in it is an uphill battle. I don't know...That's how I feel...I'm going to get all emotional! (teary) That's what I want I mean I don't know that's what I want and I continue to apply for other jobs. And I've had interviews recently for... I was interviewed for the cultural development program I was one of the top four people maybe one of the top two I don't know but I know that I was told that there was four that were selected for the interview process and if I was qualified for something like that that then it means that I am doing something right, but I think in reality I need to continue to look outside of reality outside of my teaching if I want to take a stake and start taking care of my debt feeling not so inadequate

because I do feel like that these days. I mean I wear several hats but it's just...it's just such a battle.

I don't know if I am coming or going, so I wear my teacher hat in the institution or the professional school boards which is kind of stressful. You know I never considered myself to be the role model kind of type and here I am. And then I host a show, it's just volunteer work and it was just for fun but it was also to create a reputation. And then teaching dance, teaching ballet, and jazz and Broadway. There are all these different things that I am trying to be so good at and so it just seems that I am cutting each group a little bit short. I can't completely invest my whole self into it and so and well then you think about okay my relationship with my husband will I even have a family or is that even part of the plan? Is that what is going to happen? or I don't know and then family itself, I mean family means so much, I mean it is what I was brought up to do and we are so close so it's...it's a lot!

[Kelly] You said you have many hats and you don't know whether you are coming or going. Does that have something to do with having many paths?

[Jennifer] Yeah, I think so I don't really know which one to focus on.

[Kelly] Is that more difficult for you or is that beneficial to you?

[Jennifer] I think it is beneficial but it is definitely difficult. So I mean it's opening more doors. So I went to school and I have so much debt but if I didn't I would probably be stuck in a crumbier situation with less opportunity and less opportunity to wear all those different hats. I think now there is definitely value there. Given the opportunities that I am given but I do feel it.

Jennifer discussed a moment that stood out to her as a moment where she felt more grown-up. This was a moment that highlighted the inter-connectedness between family members and an a greater awareness that she was embedded in a collective. She describes this moment here:

So the first one that came to mind when you said that was when we were dancing at York and we were in the studio and my father's son was dying ... he had brain cancer and so he was on the brink of death and so I think that was a moment that

despite all the things that I want we are all part of a bigger picture and I was connected with my family and the events of my past and it meant something but at that time I was only 22 and so it was a big deal. Just the amount of aggression and anger in his voice just really shook me and I was like you really don't have any idea about suffering and the crap that people go through I don't know.

In reflecting upon what 'Growing-up' means to her, Jennifer had some difficulty pinpointing the meaning. She brought up many interesting points as she took her time to brainstorm the concept:

[Jennifer] Oh my God this is so funny...I am having a hard time with this...

Growing up is scary, frivolous, shouldn't be taken too seriously but should also be valued and it is an opportunity to exist in another way. You know...it is definitely scary you know that you have to come to terms with it. You know that you have to survive and live and really and not really get bogged down by your thought process and where you come from and what you are and that's really easy to do.

[Kelly] I am hearing two things from what you are saying: survival and getting by and something that is more about becoming what you want...

[Jennifer] Yeah... Yeah.. Definitely the realization of what you can actually contribute to the greater. I know we are all connected and that and it is another thing to remember to laugh at yourself and not take things so seriously again so bogged down on the process and the expectations and the things that need to be done.

Jennifer had described the emotional difficulties associated with reaching milestones out of order to not reaching them at all. She was then asked whether or not she felt like a 'grown up'. She highlighted the irony of how some of the roles that we might associate with 'adulthood' actually help her feel young and energetic in a very positive way.

[Kelly] You are legal and adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up?

[Jennifer] okay um...yes...but...um being an aunt which is ironic makes me feel younger and more alive which is ironic being around children not necessarily teaching though playing, or experimenting or dancing. Just being with them. Teaching burlesque or improvisation not so much the technique...feel not so much like an adult, but, yeah.

In closing the interview, Jennifer was given the opportunity to add any further comments regarding her transition from adolescence to adulthood, growing up and the experience of her twenties. She had important points to add about the impact of class relations on the experience of growing up.

[Kelly] Is there anything further you would like to add?

[Jennifer] Yes absolutely. I only made a couple of good friends while I was in school, so two people, so I don't have a lot friends. I am someone who has a couple of good ones and she is currently choreographing. She has an English degree so she is good at writing grant application, so she has a grant so I am trying to get her to come here and work here with my students, but on the same token, it's a little bit bitter sweet. I mean that's how you look at it. Sometimes, I think I should have tried to stay in [the larger urban centre where I went to university] and try to struggle a little bit but all of the training that I went through. It wasn't that I just gave up though my body did I was fighting tooth and nail for all four years. That definitely effects me and then my close friend from grade 2 she is married and has children she is a social worker and her husband is a social worker and they have kids and they are in a very different situation and even close family members that I would consider friends are at those points in their lives I mean [my friend] doesn't and she is living a very different life and I am definitely envious of it ... I think she is doing her master's now or she just finished her master's in performance art but she comes from a lot of money and her parent's keep funding it, so all the more power to her but you know that I think about but then I have friends who are you know local. They are from here and some of them have family or they have a child and have left their partner...You know I know it all happens for a reason, you know it's just a lot.

[Kelly] Do you think your friends who had their children earlier had a different experience from you?

[Jennifer] No I don't. That's just their personality because I just think we all struggled with it depending on what class we came from. I mean there are all kinds of different things that influence variables...that influence how quickly you grow up or whatever but I think that the people that I surrounded myself with here in [my home town] I mean I think we are all kind of from the same mindset.

Case Study # 18 Emily - Single, Teacher, Landscape Designer

Emily was born in the late 1970's and she was in her early thirties at the time of the interview. She grew up as an only child with her mother and father and lived with them until she left for university. Emily's mother was in her late 30s when Emily was born. Her mother was a school teacher and traveled to [a larger urban centre a few hours away] to work whereas her father worked more locally in the neighbourhood where he grew up. Being part of an adult world, is something Emily has always experienced because her parents' were older and being an only child, she explained that she was usually part of their adult world and spent a lot of time with adults as she grew up.

She was 18 when she graduated high school. Emily said there was no question in her mind that she would be going to university. It was just the thing to do, she explained. Emily reflected upon what she knew of her parent's lives during their twenties and also her memory of them as she was growing up. In hindsight, she related to her mother quite a bit with regard to her educational career, and lifestyle expectations and choices.

I guess I don't know a lot about their lives except that any pictures from that might be from that time that might be party-based which is the same. You know you see fun pictures and things like that. I know my mom worked in [an urban] area which was unique and maybe made it easy for me to uh travel a distance to go to school and to work and it was...I never gave that a second thought. It was just where you go and you work like that. My dad, I think was more so, I mean he worked in the neighbourhood that he grew-up in it was just the way it was so. That was kind of odd I guess. Two different sort of styles and I'm thinking...I guess my life more similar to my mother's and you just did what you need to or what you want to pursue your interests but always work-based I guess...

University was always an aspiration of Emily's and she set off for this chapter of her life, she was certain she would chose to live in residence:

I only thought that you would live in residence when you went to university. It didn't even occur to me that you would live in your own apartment somehow. And there was one or two girls in our very small program, we were only 22, that didn't

live in residence. I had no idea that you could possibly live on your own. [laughing] You just have to live in residence. So that was a surprise to me and then somehow I hadn't really thought about second year, and what was going to happen where was I gonna live in September but I hadn't planned it and a girl that I had played soccer with called me and said do you want to be my roommate and I said okay and I went and found us an apartment and we lived in an apartment and I live with her subsequently and she was my friend and my best friend and we lived together many times.

While at university, Emily had full intentions of following in her mother's footsteps to become a teacher by the time she would turn 25. Her choices for education and career are described her by Emily:

...No, I always thought I would be a teacher and my mom was a teacher and she said, "No." so that was sort of my second choice and I still do it, landscape architecture but uh yes I did always think I would be a teacher. I like the combination of work that I have evolved in now. So I do teaching in the school year and then sort of at the tale-end of the school year and at the end of the summer I do landscape design.

Emily was asked if she always knew that she would combine the employment in architecture and also teaching from the beginning, before she started her university education. She wasn't sure but she did know that the shift to also include teaching had to do with recognizing and utilizing her own abilities and strengths in the employment setting. In discussing, whether she had planned this combination from the beginning, Emily had the following to say:

[Emily] No, I don't think so...it's possible. I loved landscape architecture while I was doing it just got to the point that I didn't want to sit down and I realized that I am better at talking and moving than I am at sitting. I think they required some time to realize my actual strengths in a job setting.

[Kelly] What job did you think you would have at 30?

[Emily] I don't think I thought that far ahead. I think I thought in terms of clothing...Professional clothing. So, I imagined that...I guess, like I said in the beginning, I was thrown into a much further role than my abilities warranted. So

I was giving presentations to city councils and things like that at 23 which was probably something that I should have been doing at 30 maybe or a little bit older than the experience that I had...

As she studied landscape architecture, she didn't really consider how long her education would last. She was not currently a student at the time of the interview but she would consider returning to gain some education in the field of business. Most likely, she would consider looking at college for this type of education. She explained why this education might be valuable to her:

I currently have a few small businesses. I am a teacher so I currently go back on my own to do professional development through the universities...I mean in terms of not working time for schooling time, no...But, I feel I could learn a little more about business through a college or something.

I originally went to so school for landscape architecture...and I worked in that field for a number of years, and then I returned for a teacher...bachelor of education.

When exploring what types of cultural influences may have guided or shaped her expectations for her twenties, Emily revealed again that she was exposed to an adult-like world early on, through literature, noting that she often read novels with mature content and strong powerful female characters.

I have read some very strange books. I don't know why I would have been allowed to read them. Texas Dawn That I think I read in... I'm sure it was like a love-sex story which was a very long, I don't know how...a giant book, very odd. (laughing) and I think I also read Alica Shrugged sometime in high school and the woman in that book, was a professional and dressed like a professional, and I guess I read books where women were more independent maybe. I also read the book Roots and Shindler's List. And I guess I read those books because I was already quite sympathetic to unfortunate situations and so maybe that was maybe really easy for me to choose to work in a not for profit where most of my friends chose to go and work for large resort based businesses. Yeah I think it influenced my career choices in terms of helping the down and out. Yeah, which isn't really the people I worked with but not for profit situations I guess.

Emily was asked if there was anything further that may be significant to growing up, life in her twenties and her education. She began to make a point about the order of learning and maturation in relation to the material and hand and then moved on to discuss feeling ill at ease with some of the expectations placed upon her after graduation.

[Emily] It was absolutely significant. I can remember, like I said it was fourth year of my landscape architecture degree, I gave my professors that I worked with a note that we didn't read this certain article. in our first year because was it would have informed a lot of things for us in our first year. and his reply back was that we were not ready to learn that at that time. um...so can you say the question again

[Kelly] What was significant...

[Emily] I guess what was significant or significantly lacking was money management or financial skills. Real life application. I guess. I...I...yeah no... I had gone to university and then once you're done...then people expect you to be able to do what you learned and I didn't feel like I was confident enough to do that on my own. The place where I took a job after I graduated, there had been landscape architects when I was hired and there were cuts and so it was me and one other person and I sort of felt like doesn't anyone know that I don't actually know anything about what I am doing right now?

Today Emily is a teacher and landscape designer. However, throughout her twenties, Emily held many types of jobs before she decided to go into full time teaching and even today her entrepreneurial side has lead her to take on many additional business ventures. She listed and described these during the interview:

At university, I worked refereeing intra-mural sports. I worked summer jobs, I worked for [Mr. Smith, pseudonym] actually maintaining his estate. I worked tree-planting one summer. I am sure I did other things in there. I always had my own business throughout there doing landscaping, but it was very small minimal. And then following graduation, I moved to [_____], and I was a landscape architect there and had my own business as well, and then I moved back to [_____] and I worked for [an agency] as a landscape architect of sorts. Then, I went back to school and I got my teaching degree. Then, I worked at sort of a hybrid position at a firm in a [a larger urban centre] called [_____] which is

not for profit that tries to bring nature back to cities. I would visit schools and help them design their school ground and help them integrate them into using that school ground. And then, when I was about 28 I decided to go full time into teaching.

Talking about where she would want to be during her 40's, Emily explained how it is more possible to look forward at the future from where she is standing today in her thirties. She described her future plan:

[Emily] Yeah...I think it is much more attainable to think that far ahead at this point. uh yea well I have a [small] business as well right now. I guess I see myself having a more independent job. I am trying to build my business on planter designs for landscape...landscaping businesses but in terms of planters. but also in terms of this [other small business] thing has a lot of potential to expand...but I love education so that has to work into it. I think maybe half-time teaching and half-time to be more entrepreneurial.

[Kelly] I am going to go back to that job that you described where you felt as though it was really more for someone who was 30. So can you tell me more about how that would feel in terms of your knowledge but also you identity in terms of your transition from adolescence to adulthood

[Emily] I guess it goes back further than that for me. I was born as an only child to my mom who was 38 at the time. So, I have always sort of lived in an adult world of sorts. Being an only child, I hung around with adults all the time, and my mom brought me to things with her, and she was...she is quite intelligent well rounded, and so I have always been drawn to older people anyways so I don't know that I guess I thought that the skill-set that somebody should have would have been that just a lot more experience than I would have had. I felt that the experience that I would have had was limited for the position that I was representing. So, I guess what I thought I was comfortable in the role. So, in hindsight, I may have been like "Why was I doing this, that seems like something that my boss should have been doing" [laughing] ...

I have been grown-up career-wise for a long time. I think it has taken a lot of time for my personal life to catch-up to that state of development. ...

Emily was asked if there was anything further that may be significant about her transition from adolescence to adulthood, her twenties, and employment. She noted that

as new information came to her about the potential to move beyond a fixed salaried income, her motivations began to shift as did the direction for her career. She outlined the shift from moving from being content with a fixed income to wanting to grow her income rather than simply completing the job she was supposed to do.

I guess I can add something, in hindsight as well, now that the business are growing and becoming a little bit successful, it had never occurred to me that you could make more money than your salary. I don't know how I didn't understand that but it didn't occur to me. You know you made your teaching salary and you just did that and it automatically went up and it was out of your control over how much money you could make so I was contentedly working at that, which was nice. I was contentedly working without that knowledge that you could make more money because I was choosing jobs that I felt were valuable and I always got the job I wanted which was super fortunate. If I wanted one job, I only got that job and it was clear and specific that way but they were most "not-for-profit" and government. Very controlled circumstances it was not something that I could make more money at and now that I am in my thirties I am more interested in making money, I am not saying compromising my values but I am saying pursuing an avenue where there is more potential to grow your income as opposed to doing the job you're just asked to do ...

It was very easy only applied to one there were for landscape architect programs, I only wanted that program. I was much more able to focus on my interest. If I only wanted that job, I only got that job.

The interview shifted to a discussion of relationships during the time period that followed her formal university education. In discussing family, marriage and intimate relationships, Emily brought up some very significant points. Of particular interest, was the point she made about the need to revise early held thoughts regarding the timing, ordering, and process by which she would chose a life partner. In her words:

...and yes I did think I would get married by 24, I thought that was the number since I was like 12. I don't think I ever revised that idea. And so, I had a boyfriend when I lived in [_____] regardless of whether he was uh made me a better person. I just thought that was the person you married. so uh that

was a little bit odd to have thought longand uh...so we didn't get married obviously...and uh then when I moved back to Ontario... I uh. I guess I just thought then when you were in your twenties, you would marry the person you were with. It never occurred to me that you would continue dating and finding if that person would be a good match or not.

We continued discussing the type of households twenty-somethings live in during this time in their lives. Emily was reminded that she knew she would live with roommates during university years. She may have thought she was going to get married but when that did not happen as she expected, as she explained above. Therefore, Emily was asked if there was a time that she expected that she might stop living with roommates and she was asked to describe her household at the age of 25.

Well, I think when I moved to a new city, I wasn't looking...I was looking for a single apartment, I didn't want to share with anybody that I didn't know....[At 25 years old]

I must have been living in [_____] by myself in a cute little apartment. I think I was happy at the time that I had my own space and then when I lived in [_____] , I had my own apartment and I felt quite happy with that. I felt like an adult.

Another related idea that was explored during the interview was the idea of whether or not Emily would consider owning a car or a house. As she thought back to high school, she couldn't really recall an age for these purchases specifically but she did associate them with married life, as she explained here:

I hadn't considered it. I always had access to a car...My Dad passed away in my first year of university, and I got his car. It was just never coming up. yeah...I hadn't really considered that. I guess that was part of the whole marriage things but it wasn't clear. But, I did purchase a house in my twenties. It was a sort of random. I was working [in another location] and there was nothing else to do, so I bought a house. [laughing]

Currently, Emily is living back with her mother for the first time since she was 18 and she described this as a transition. She explained that at this point in her life she is not interested in living with a roommate, and the next time she considers moving out she hopes it will be with a life partner. Although, Emily had expected to have her children around the age of 24 she does not have any children today. Emily is glad she has delayed childbearing and still considering having children at some point in the future. Emily added the following comment regarding family, partnerships, and childrearing:

I think I am glad that I waited. I think I will be a better mom when that happens...yeah I think I had a lot of great experiences that I may not have had, had I had a partner that was tied to a job or different things like that. So, I guess I am glad with the way it's worked out at this point.

The timing of meeting certain markers and milestones for adulthood was discussed in relationship to Emily's feelings towards the timing and sequence of these in her own life. She highlighted two very important points: 1) looking at life holistically *versus* in a compartmentalized fashion; and 2) an uneven process of social maturation. In other words, she discussed the possibility of feeling like an adult in one area of life such as work but feeling like 'it just didn't seem to be happening' in her personal relationships.

[Emily] Well, I guess just because education did work out so smoothly, I was just confused as to why I wasn't marrying that person who wasn't even the right person for me. I guess I didn't see things as holistically as I see them now. They were compartmentalized as your questions are. It was very odd for me...why aren't we getting married...It was very odd. It was just confusing. I thought...uhhh yeah, I guess that would be relationship-based. I just didn't understand why that wasn't because everything had been so clear and manifested itself exactly the way I wanted in terms of job and education so when I moved to [_____] and met a boyfriend I thought that is what happened and it just didn't seem to be happening so...confusion just uh yeah.

[Kelly] And with that confusion, was it upsetting, or was it...?

[Emily] Oh no! Very upsetting. Very upsetting. It was like "Why?! This isn't the way it's supposed to be"...at that point it occurred to me "well that's kind of strange. You've never revised your idea since you were twelve and you have gained an enormous amount of experience and knowledge and why would you stick to an idea that you had created during sort of an 'unknowing' time in your life."

[Kelly] And do you think that society sets up an order in general for these things to happen?

[Emily] I think in different scales of cities that happens. I think in terms of a small town like [the one I grew up in] that happens many of my friends stayed and got married and are much further along in their sort of relationship things or family life than I am at this point but in terms of [the larger metropolitan centre] where I lived many people there don't have their babies until their late 30's and have had a number of different relationships in that time until they found the person that they wanted to spend a longer period with and yeah I think the scale of the city influences that as well.

Moments that made Emily feel more grown up tended to center around career and employment, echoing what she had discussed earlier. The moment she highlighted was moving away to [] to get a job. Emily highlighted both the financial self-sufficiency and emotional independence in completing the sentence: 'Growing up is.....'

Her response:

Being on your own....[pause] You feel grown up when you feel removed from the need of having your parents support both financially and emotionally. So I guess that distance from your parents. University was close enough that I came home often enough that ...

In discussing whether or not she feels adult-like, Emily describes a cyclical process rather than a series of linear stages:

[Emily] I feel like I had a cycle of that and that I came back and needed that sort of emotional support and now I am independent of that again.

[Kelly] How do you feel towards it now that you know that there is that cycle. That, that can happen?

[Emily] I think I don't feel this way, but I feel this way in terms of the other people's reactions....I feel embarrassed but I don't feel embarrassed for myself. I feel embarrassed for them when they say "Oh you don't have any kids yet?" or they say "oh you haven't been married for a hundred years?" I am okay with it but feel their uncomfot or discomfort so I am okay because I know it will happen and I am able to see that clarity that I used to have with jobs and things like that, and it's a little less clear than the job situation but I know I what I want whereas then I didn't know what I wanted, it was hard to be clear...So, I know what I want and it is easy to be clear that way. I'm okay with it...life evolves and I am in a much better place to be in a long term relationship than a bad choice I would have made in my twenties.

In closing our interview, Emily was asked if there was anything at all that she would like to add about her experience of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, growing up, or her life during her twenties. She described how while she was very equipped by the education system to take on further education and employment, she felt less equipped with regards to personal life, family and relationships.

[Emily] Well, I think that the education system, which I am a part of, really sets you up for jobs. What you're going to do when you are older and sort of financial or employment goals are sort of inherently established during your education time but that means to achieving them and how that balances with relationships or how your family is a part of that. It all seemed very compartmentalized and independent of each other. And my parent's much of talkers about how you pick a good partner or how that works out so I wasn't really getting that education in relationship to my schooling education. So, it would be great if parents, cause I do feel that is a strong role the education system plays to help you get a job and help you learn good job skills and life-skills and it would be great if your parents were sort of moving at that same pace educating in relationships.

[Kelly] Did your parents have the same level of education as you?

[Emily] My mother was a teacher so yeah. My dad was...I don't even think he graduated from grade 8...probably.

Case Study #19 Angie - Educational Assist, Common Law Wife and Mother

I just keep comparing myself to some of my friends. I feel that I grew up faster because I was in a steadier job. I had a full time job. I had the house and everything that happened at 20 when my friends were still at college or school and partying and I was more the adult at that age. You know? Yeah, it kind of shaped the rest of my life.

Angie is was in her early 30's at the time of the interview and she was born in the late 1970's. When asked which generational group, she identified that she was not of sure the difference between Generation X and Y. We discussed that she could be considered as part of the XY cusp. At the end of high school, she was living with her parents. Her parents' were married when her mother was 20 and her father was 25.

Angie knew she would graduate high school and she did at the age of 18. She knew she would continue to live with them for a while longer because she planned to go to the local college and live with her parents in order to save money, but she hadn't looked as far ahead as to consider who she would live with during her 20's. She lived with her parents until she was 20. As she explained, what she felt very confused and didn't know was what she wanted to do with the rest of her life, but she made what she saw as a temporary choice:

The only thing I could think of is that I was too young to know what I wanted to choose to do with the rest of my life. The other thing that rings a bell is 'that's not what I want to do with the rest of my life, but that's what I chose at the time.'

She applied to and graduated from the Educational Assistant program at the local college. Angie was not currently a student at the time of the interview and she had no intention of returning to school for further post secondary education. Of importance, is a comment that Angie said a few moments later in the interview when she was asked what type of job she thought she might be doing at the age of 25. It seemed as though Angie had an

interest and a direction that she considered but did not immediately explore because she was uncertain if it would work out. In her own words:

No...I thought I wanted to work with animals, but it wasn't a focus thing. It was kind of "I like to work with animals but I'm not quite sure if I am able to that; if there's job's out there...That kind of thing...

When Angie was 25, she worked with the school board as an educational assistant. She had no other jobs during her twenties. She went straight right from college to working in her field. In the future, looking towards her 40's Angie hopes for a different type of job, one more in line with her earlier interest in working with animals. At the age of 40, hopes for:

A different job...hopefully with animals. It's still in the back of my head. Yeah, that or self-employment, run a business.

Angie was asked if there was anything further that she wanted to add regarding her employment, the transition from adolescence to adulthood and her twenties. She discussed how the security offered to her through her stable job with the school board has held her back from taking risks and actively seeking change in her employment career.

I think it's made me scared to change. I'm kind of stuck in a rut and not willing to try new things because it's a good job, a stable job. I love to try new things. It's just that, that job has always been there. It's just hard to change when you don't know what is out there and how long it could last for. The unknown, I guess.

Angie also discussed her adolescent expectations for marriage stating that she really did not anticipate marriage and she really didn't care about it. Also, Angie did not think about having children. It wasn't a priority to her looking forward as an adolescent. Marriage was not something that she thought about. At the age of 25 Angie lived with

her partner and currently she still lives with this same partner. Her first and only child was born when she was 31 years old.

As an adolescent Angie never really considered major purchases such as a car or a house. When she was 20 she bought a first car and a house together with her partner. Angie noted that her life during her twenties was almost a carbon copy of her parents' lives during their twenties:

Actually, my parents' lives are almost identical to mine. Yeah, my parents were married when my mom was 20, [my dad] 25. Same kind of characteristics. I am like my mom. My partner is like my father. Yeah, and we are both five years apart. and we both have the same lifestyle they did when they were that age. Yeah, so it's pretty much a mirror of what my parents did.

Not only was her life very similar to her parents, she also stated that things happened as she would have expected them to happen and that she felt very comfortable with the order and timing of the social milestones that she met, as she said: 'I think it worked out good. Pretty much happened the way I thought it would. I have no regrets on how I lived my life.' The order of these were: 1. completing high school 18; 2. completing college 19-20; 3. first full time job; 4. purchase first car; 5. common law partner; 6. purchase first home; and 7. first child. She also explained that she believed that society still favours an order for these milestones to be completed within, stating: "Oh definitely, I think that you set on... you have to get an education and then you get married and then you get a house and then car...oh not a car then you get child."

Angie described a moment that made her feel more "grown-up" or like an adult centering on the birth of her child, taking on responsibilities, seeing herself becoming like her mother and the physical aspects of aging such as wrinkles. She describes these here:

Definitely my first child, or my only child. That's when the world changed. That's when I felt older...and uh now I'm seeing the wrinkles.

Just that I was responsible for somebody else and that I felt that I was being my mother. I could see my attitude and my reactions to things.

In defining what growing up is, Angie emphasized financial responsibility:

Oh geez um.. .growing up means to me that you have to be more responsible, paying bills (laughing) um uh I don't know I'm lost for words.

However, in assessing whether or not she felt like a grown-up, like an adult, Angie had mixed feelings. She said she sometimes still feels like a teenager but when she needs to take on household responsibilities she then feels more adult-like.

Some days I do. Some days I still feel like I'm 16. Just some days you have the housework and everything and you feel the age. And then other days, I'm out with my friends and just my attitude is not.. I try keep joking and fun and not so serious and bogged down with the everyday kind of madness that happens.

As we concluded the interview, Angie had some important final words to add. She explained how her employment, relationship status, and purchasing her home made her feel that she grew up faster than her friends. She, explains this here:

[Angie] I just keep comparing myself to some of my friends. I feel that I grew up faster because I was in a steadier job. I had a full time job. I had the house and everything that happened at 20 when my friends were still at college or school and partying and I was more the adult at that age. You know? Yeah, it kind of shaped the rest of my life.

[Kelly] How did you feel about the disparity between you and your friends.

[Angie] Oh, I thought it was fine. It didn't bother me. I wasn't much of a follower anyways. No it did not bother me.

Case Study #20: Mireille - Married, University Graduate, Working

Ya Wanna Know What? Things Have Changed and That's Okay!

Mirelle is a 32 year old woman from Generation Y. She describes herself as coming from a very close-knit family and circle of friends who gave her a great deal of emotional support during her twenties. She lived with her parents until she moved away to university.

Mireille said she sees herself as being a very structured person and a perfectionist and that these traits shine through in her career choices. Mireille aspired to become either a teacher or a lawyer during her final year of high school. At that time, she expected that she would marry her boyfriend after her studies were completed. As an adolescent, Mireille did not anticipate having any children.

There was a change in Mireille's life that she considered to be very important and instrumental to her transition from adolescence to adulthood. This was the separation that occurred between her and the boyfriend that she met and dated through high school. They were engaged and his infidelity to her lead them to separate before the marriage occurred.

It was at this point that Mireille relied heavily on her informal support system. She notes that it was the solid social structure that surrounded her that allowed her to deal with this break-up in the most positive way. She described her age perspective towards this changed noting that at the time of the separation she felt that it was a bit of a failure. She explains that at the time it felt like a failure because it did not match the life cycle structure that she was using as a reference guide. But with the help of her friends and family and over time her perspective towards this life event changed. In her words, it became for her a situation where she said "Ya wanna know what? Things have changed and that's okay!" Rather than experiencing the break-up as an event that caused her

progression to adulthood to become paralyzed. She notes that someone else in her shoes, without this support system, may not have been as resilient.

Mireille moved on and married the partner with whom she currently resides. Her thoughts on having children have shifted slightly in that she is now thinking maybe she could consider having children whereas before she was certain she would not.

An important shift within her work life was also described. While pursuing her B.A., Mireille had an opportunity to work as a law clerk and she found this field very bureaucratic and decided to focus her studies towards the field of teaching. Mireille did become a teacher but as another work²⁰ opportunity arose, she decided to take it. She has taken the odd university course to upgrade her studies and keep them current. She says she would continue to take professional development courses as needed but has no plan or desire to return to school as a full time student at this point. Mireille does see herself climbing the ladder within her field and she hopes to move into highly positioned managerial roles as she turns 40 and 50 years of age. Mireille has tweaked her work life to match her interests and she envisions very specific future.

Mireille noted that there was a specific time frame between the age of 21 and 22 where she bought a car, a house, found a full time job and moved in with the partner she is now married to. She noted that her life was quite similar to that of her parents but that the timing of events was shifted slightly so that she met adulthood markers and milestones slightly later because her schooling took longer. The timing was delayed and she has not had children. Her mother was 25 when she had her first child.

When looking at her timeline, Mireille described the importance of the age perspective on her perception of the timing and changes that occurred within her

²⁰ Mireille second career type is not included as a means to protect her identity.

twenties. At the time things may have felt like failures, but that was because the events did not match the structure in her head. She explains that not every change can be anticipated and re-adjustment. This type of 'resiliency' seems to be strongly linked to her sense of what growing-up is. For Mireille growing-up was defined as a general process of "establishing your life in the way you see appropriate." Mireille reported that today she feels "absolutely" comfortable with the order in which her life events occurred.

A Few Highlights in Mireille's Own Words:

Mireille compared her life to that of her parent's stating the following:

There were some things that were similar and some things that were different, obviously. To begin there was schooling. The schooling was completed in my situation, later than theirs and in regards to marriage...the marriage was done earlier as opposed to later, and third with children it's later...Back then, it was considered later my mom was 25 but everything has shifted in regards to the age. Things that are similar is the closeness of the family. It is a close-knit family. It's similar and different in the sense that my parents both had college and I did university and so there was a bit of difference in the type of study and also the time that was allocated to it. And, in regards to jobs...different not the same types of jobs.

It was note worthy that Mireille began the interview describing herself as "structured" and a "perfectionist." She came back to this as she mapped out her two biographic timelines on paper. She made an error and wanted to start over. She was upset that she had scribbled on the form saying again, I'm very "structured" and a "perfectionist." "It's like the commercial," I interjected hoping to ease her stress-level, "Life's messy." Mireille discussed the way she felt vis-a-vis her expected biographic timeline and her actual lived biographic timeline drawing some interesting conclusions.

[Mireille] I think that the timeline that I had anticipated was definitely linked to how society sees it and things changed with time and there were things that weren't necessarily anticipated and that certain things happened before and some things happened after. I view that as you can't predict everything that is going to

happen in life so you can re-adjust with it but looking at it I don't feel as though I have had a failure because I didn't attain according to the time line. I feel as though things were different for me and for me this was the timeline that was appropriate.

[Kelly] Looking back on it, can you think of how you were feeling as you went through it?

[Mireille] So obviously one of the big things that is different is that I predicted that I would live with my boyfriend at the time and I had been with him for seven years, and I was engaged, and you know that whole thing, and uh so at that moment I found out that uh he had cheated on me, and at that moment it felt like a bit of a failure because it wasn't the structure that was in my head...But it didn't take long to realize "You wanna know what? Things happen for a reason and there is a reason it happened before we got married, and it's just readjusting my timeline and that is okay."

[Kelly] So you are comfortable looking at it today?

[Mireille] Absolutely.

Mireille commented on a few milestones that occurred almost simultaneously that helped her to feel grown up.

I would say probably when I was 21 or 22, whenever it was, the big transition to owning my first house was the big big big one more than purchasing a car, but everything happened pretty much within the same year. Finishing my studies, buying a house, buying a car and finding a full time job. That was a big transition year.

When asked to completed this sentence: Growing up is..... Mireille's response perhaps had less to do with the milestones and markers she described as making her feel grown up and more to do with the processes related to her break-up and career re-adjustments. She replied the following: "Establishing your life in the way that you see appropriate."

In explaining whether or not she feels like an adult at this point in her life, she pointed to mostly feeling like an adult but with some moments that continue to feel more adolescent than adult-like:

To tell you the truth in regards to my job, in regards to all of that, in regards to society, yes I do feel like an adult, but deep inside sometimes I do still feel like a child at heart. I still feel that I have that teenager, young adult thing where you need to have a night with your girlfriends sometimes you just need that moment of letting go, but in regards to society, yes, definitely I feel like an adult.

Mireille concluded the interview with the additional following statement:

I have to say that I had a very structured environment, and I had a lot of support in regards to friends and family. I am not sure if I had or I didn't have, if someone else was in the same situation that didn't have that the anticipated time line that there were things that made it happen that made it switch, I don't think they would feel the same way as I do. So that is an important factor that I had that structure I always had somebody there I was never alone which made it that it was not a failure it made it that "You wanna know what? Things have changed and that's okay."

Case Study #21 Crystal - Single, Part-time Educational Assistant

***Am I There Yet? Yes and No...
It's like a roller Coaster... and
...Something is still missing.***

Crystal is a 29 year-old woman of Generation Y. She lived with and was raised by her parents. Her father was a factory worker and her mother was a secretary. Following her work as a secretary, Crystal's mother became a stay-at-home mother for Crystal and her sister. Crystal reports having to grow-up at a very early age because her mother fell sick when Crystal was 10 years old. The family was left with only one income.

At this time, Crystal took on a motherly role for her sister. Crystal always worked a lot as a young teenager, in order to help her family. She describes herself as always having been older in a sense because the role she took on within her family with her mother became ill. She described her life as different because she had more to focus on than just her studies. She had to work, take care of her family in addition to keeping up her studies.

As a young woman about to complete high school, Crystal thought she might live at home until about the age of 25 and then get married. She said she did not really want to live with anyone else. She would either live with her parents at home or on her own. Crystal did have aspirations to become a teacher and a writer in her final year of high school. She expected that this might happen by the age of 25. She expected that she might be a teacher with more seniority by the age of 30.

At the same time as wanting to go to university, she knew this was probably not going to be possible because it was financially unattainable for Crystal, at that time. Crystal chose instead to take the educational assistant program at the local college because it was within the same field and she could still live at home, which made this choice more economically feasible. In addition she, would still be able to help her mother and father at home. Even faced with these adverse circumstances, Crystal was able to graduate from her college program.

At the age of 23, Crystal decided to move out of her parent's home and she lived with her boyfriend at the time. They moved to a city nearby and she tried to get work in her field. This lasted for about a year and then this relationship ended. Crystal then

came back home to live with her parents and began to look for work within her hometown.

Eventually, after having worked a lot of part-time work over the years and with her father's help she was able to buy a duplex for herself. Crystal was twenty-four when she moved into this duplex. She continues to live in the duplex on her own and alone. This was a somewhat different from what Crystal had anticipated. She expected that certain life circumstances would all come about together. For instance, buying a car, a house and getting married. Rather than happening concurrently, meeting certain markers and milestones seems to be happening more gradually and progressively than Crystal said she had anticipated.

As Crystal had mentioned, her work life began very early as an adolescent. At the age of 25, she was working in a clothing store and also as a supply teacher. Crystal described having worked also in a larger department store and she babysat a lot. Occasionally, she worked as a monitor during the elementary school lunch hour. She did get hired on with a school board as an educational assistant but because of cutbacks she is only currently working at 50%.

A few years ago Crystal was diagnosed with a degenerative disease that could be progressively disabling. This changed her outlook on the future somewhat. While before she saw herself becoming a teacher, now she is looking towards something that will be more slow paced in the future. Although she did not really specify what this might be, she had mentioned earlier in the interview that she would consider going back to school to become a secretary or perhaps a social worker --a people oriented profession

is how she described it. Looking forward at her thirties, Crystal sees herself getting married and possibly having children.

Crystal's definition of growing up has two main parts to it. The first is regarding living a responsible life, particularly an economically responsible life that exists separate from one's parents. Second, she pointed to starting a family as important to what growing up is. While taking on a mothering role and working pushed her to feel more grown-up at an earlier age. She sees this as incomplete without being financially independent and starting her own family where she can fully take on the role of mother.

Crystal described her relationship to growing-up in various ways. At first she said it was easy and she was ready for it. She then said it was "like a roller coaster" whereby circumstances change and obstacles are thrown your way.

In Few Highlights in Crystal's Own Words:

[Kelly] Anything else?

[Crystal] Basically my mom had fallen sick when I was 10 so it was hard for me because I couldn't really afford to go to university...and that has kept me back. So, I knew it was something that I wanted to do... just something I could stay home.

[Kelly] Was this difficult?

[Crystal] I don't think it was very difficult. I had to grow up at a young age so I felt ready for it.

Crystal added this statement regarding her adolescent perspective of herself and her future :

Just, I don't know that I was growing up and that I started seeing that there is more to life than just being a kid, living at your parents, and that you know there were responsibilities that had to be met.

Crystal described what you think your parents' lives were like during their twenties.

Mainly things were different. She saw them as being less social, working hard, and less stressed. Their levels of education were also different:

I would think that mostly they would stay at home and they worked hard and that there wasn't that much stress. I am sure there was stress there always is but less.

...More like they didn't have to go to school. They didn't have university or college. They had factory work, like labour. My mom was a secretary. She had stayed home to be with my sister and I but then she fell sick so she was on disability but not at the age of twenty-five.

Crystal noted that her expected timeline fit with the timeline that she was socialized with through society and her religion because that was all that she knew at the time. Her actual lived time line is quite different from her expected biographic timeline, but she doesn't really see this. She also maintains that these timelines could have been aligned had circumstances been different for her:

It's what I thought it would be because that's all I knew and as of now things aren't what I really thought it would be. It's not that it wasn't realistic because it could have been realistic. It's just certain circumstances make it that's not how it happened.

They are a little similar...

Crystal described a few moments and markers (taking on a motherly role, working, and buying a house) that made her feel more "grown-up" like an adult:

I know that at the age of 10 when my mom fell sick. I had to take on the role of mom for my younger sister. I would have to say at least being in high school I felt grown up enough I had to get a job earlier. Other people, they wait they go through college, and they don't have a job. They just focus on their studies whereas, I had to work and be by my dad's side and be with my sister. That too, especially owning a house makes me feel more, more grown-up.

Crystal focused mainly on responsibilities and starting a family when describing what growing up means to her:

Growing up means being responsible, being an adult, having family, a job too, like I said responsibilities. I don't know just having your life...Not having your parents pay for your bills and whatnot.

Crystal sees herself as grown up but not fully. There is something missing still, and she describes what is missing in the following quote:

Yes and no. I feel like a grown up because I have responsibilities. Like...have a home...like I have a duplex to keep care of and I have my car and my job. To say that I am not grown up, I feel like something is missing maybe when I have the husband, the children maybe it will feel more complete. So, am I there yet? Yes and no I'm a kid at heart so...

Earlier in the interview, Crystal described taking on an adult life as "easy." However, her concluding remarks challenge this notion and she reverts to a notion of incomplete adulthood and seeking the 'next' steps in life. Steps that need to be taken without her parents and towards forming a family of her own. Here Crystal sums up growing up amidst the many obstacles she has faced:

[Crystal] It's like a roller coaster, you've got what you were looking forward to what you thought would happen and then you get obstacles thrown to you.

[Kelly] Is there anything else you want to add? you have a house you mentioned that ...

[Crystal] Yes, but I had help from my father so the next step would be the next step will to get a house on my own...with a husband.

Case Study #22 Sarah -Divorced, Archeologist

"What you think you want when you are twenty is not necessarily what you want when you are 30"

Sarah is a 31 year old woman the Generation Y. She was raised by her parents and lived with them until she was ready to leave home to go to university after completing high school. Sarah is from a rural area in Ontario. Sarah's father has worked as a mechanic all his life and her mother was a stay at home mother.

Going to university was always within Sarah's aspirations but she didn't always expect that she would find employment in her chosen field. She described herself as non-traditional and not needing a marital relationship. She also explained that from a very early age, Sarah had no intention of getting married or having children. As far as the future of her work life was concerned, Sarah really did not think she would find full time work as an archeologist because that is what everyone had told her would happen. She thought she would move directly through to complete an M.A. and Ph.D. However, she said that upon realizing that she would only need a Ph.D. if she wanted to teach (and she did not), she changed her mind about the Ph.D.

During the earliest portion of her studies, Sarah found it difficult to find living accommodations with only temporary, part-time work. She could not sign a year-long lease or buy a house. Sarah sometimes lived in hotels. When Sarah did move out of her parents home, more finally, during her education, it was with them that she bought a house at the age of 21. She rented rooms to some of her friends at times. She described this experience as being a bit 'weird' occasionally but did not elaborate further. Sarah also noted her father's support as she discussed her terrible little car that only cost her \$1000.00 because her dad is always able to fix it for her.

Sarah did marry during her twenties but as she describes it, what you want during your twenties is not necessarily what you will want in your thirties. They did get a divorce. While Sarah didn't talk much about her divorce, she did say after commenting that they wanted different things at ages, 20s versus 30s: "That's the point isn't it?" They had bought a house together using funds from her first home and now she will use funds from this home to purchase her 'very own' house.

To her surprise, Sarah was able to find work but it was contract work and part-time work. This work grew out of her university program and co-op placement. Sarah didn't realize that there was more than one archeology first where she could work and once she did find a second place to work, more opportunities opened up for her. Sarah was able to find full time, permanent employment with this second agency. She noted that this was very significant for her progression to adulthood for a few reasons. First, it was nice to have a regular income, but it had more to do with permanence rather than income. She found the temporary nature of her work 'nerve racking.' She was constantly wondering if she should go back to school, find another job, look for a new type of work etc. The full time job gave her a direction that she could see as lasting and secure. This seemed to settle doubts she may have had about her career path. Now, she can see herself as a manager doing hiring in her 40s or perhaps even as a teacher in her 50s. Maybe by then, she says she would be up for teaching.

Sarah's concept of adulthood revolved around 'responsibility' particularly with respect to finances. She talks about mostly feeling like an adult paying her own bills and doing her taxes. However, she describes herself as also young at heart meaning that if she wants to book a vacation she will because you should do that while you are young. Sometimes, she says she just lives in the moment.

Sarah sees her adulthood as quite different from that of her parents as they had much less opportunity to do social things because they were married early and they had kids. She reported that her mother had always wanted to go to university but did not and Sarah therefore was really determined to let anything in the way of her education. Sarah

expressed a disappointment or sadness that her mother didn't attend post-secondary education because Sarah saw her mother as very intelligent.

Highlights in Sarah's own words:

Sarah had a difficult time combining work and school and had postpone her M.A. studies.

This is what she had to say about combining work and school:

I think I thought that I would do my MA right away and that I thought I would also do my Ph.D. and then financially, I just couldn't afford my M.A. so I waited and I started working....So, it was very hard to leave, but I waited a little longer than I planned to go back to school, and then I also just realized that I don't need a Ph.D. in my profession unless I want to be a teacher, and I don't want to be a teacher. Just financially and time-wise there are just lot of things that I would rather do than get my Ph.D. I think I will probably stop after the M.A.

Sarah was surprised by her ability to find work, but she struggled as it was only part-time work for many years. She describes this struggle here:

[Sarah] I think I was just always surprised when I got work because no one really thought that I could get a job in what I was doing including myself...So the coop program is really what got me to be able to do what I wanted to do...So, I was always really glad that I did that in school and then one of the tough things though. the whole time I was at [my first job placement] I was a term employee and being on contract and so I think, and I was that all through my twenties and so I think I thought that I would have had a more permanent job and I think that was quite a lot of stress to never know sometimes it was only a two month contract so I couldn't buy a house, I couldn't I lived in hotels sometimes because I couldn't sign a lease because you need to sign for a year so there was just a whole lot more uncertainty than I expected.

[Kelly] But did it always worked out?

[Sarah] It did! (with enthusiasm and sigh of relief)

[Kelly] So that was a pleasant surprise?

[Sarah] Yes it was!

Sarah discusses her marriage and divorce while working to find the right way to phrase what she wants to say but ultimately pinpointing and summing up what she wants to say

by confirming that what she wanted during her twenties was not what she would want during her thirties and this represented a significant shift that would lead her to make big changes in her life. In Sarah's own words:

It was very funny how things happened. I really, I never thought I would get married. I am not a very traditional person and if I am in a relationship I am just in it. To me it doesn't really matter to be married and I planned to finish school before I got married and I did end up getting married and that kind of put off school for a bit not in a bad way but I think as it turns out I was right and we had to get a divorce just because I think what we wanted...I think when you are in your twenties... and I think this is probably the whole point...What you think you want when you are twenty is not necessarily what you want when you are 30 and so we sort of changed our minds on what we wanted so we are not together anymore and now I'm going back to school doing what I finally said I would do. But I still, I never thought that I wanted kids and I think I'm still a bit of an anomaly because I'm 30 now and I still can't see it. I'm told there is still time for me to change my mind but I don't see it yet.

When asked about her perception about society's views on the meanings and markers for transitions from adolescence, Sarah was quick to point out that she always knew her plans were out of line with what 'society' expected. Here Sarah describes whether or not she thinks society has a prescribed set of markers for transitioning from adolescence to adulthood:

Yes, I definitely do because I have always thought the way I thought things would happen is not the way most people would think this would happen. I thought I would never get married and a lot of people think it is important and I still don't think I will have kids and most people are like uhh are you sure? uh ya kinda!

Sarah notes the importance of age perspective when thinking back about the events on her life during her twenties beginning her remarks with "I'm fine with it now...:

I'm fine with it now but if anyone had told me that I was going to get married before I finished school I would have said that they were absolutely nuts but then as things started to happen I was just like oh well sometimes you've gotta be a bit flexible.

Sarah compared and discussed her expected biographic timeline and her actual lived biographic timeline and how the transition to a permanent residence and full-time work from renting rooms in her house to friends and having part-time work were significant to her:

[Sarah] Well I got my first house a lot younger than I feel a lot of people do and then I rented rooms to some of my friends so that was a little weird at some points. It was a different way to do things and I was disappointed for the job. I didn't get a full time job until this year so that was always a big factor and not the way I thought things were going to go.

[Kelly] Was this not having full time work stressful?

[Sarah] The money thing is always nice to have, but I thought [_____] was the only place that hired full time archeologists. So I thought: if I don't work here, where would I work? So I was always think what if I went back to school? Do I have other skills that I could do something else? So that was nerve racking.

[Kelly] And so getting the first full-time job, was that significant to feeling as though you were progressing from that transition from adolescence to adulthood?

[Sarah] Yes that's probably like the best thing that has ever happened to me. (Laughing) Probably the biggest moment in my life. (Laughing)

Sarah went back to the example of the house and the full time job to describe moments that made her feel more 'grown-up.' Her description of the house as significant also points to the fact that it is a status symbol that allows her to mark her adulthood for others. In turn, the full time job allows her to purchase and pay for this status symbol, in addition to doing the things she wants to do:

Getting that first house made me feel pretty grown up. I was still in school so it was like a nice solid thing to be like yeah... look at what I'm doing. The job was a big one. Just to have the job security and feeling like you can buy the house and you can do all these things that you think you'll do as an adult you can finally actually do it without worrying about money all the time. Yeah that's a big one.

When asked to define "growing-up," Sarah replied with giggles:

More responsibility! That's kinda what I'm thinking right now.

In a final remark, Sarah made an interesting distinction between her adult-self and a younger self. These are her words as she described an uneven two-tiered emergence of herself as an adult.

(Laughing.) Most of the time, for my job and my life I feel like a pretty responsible person, and I feel like an adult and I pay my bills and I do my taxes and all that sort of stuff. But most of the time, I just still like to have fun and just be silly and if I have a bit of extra money I just like to go on a vacation and maybe some people wouldn't think that is very responsible...So, in that way not but I'm like yeah whatever. I'm young at heart but very like 'do it while you're young kinda person' because you never know what's coming, so sometimes I just live in the moment and I just take off.

Case Study # 23 Stephanie - Wife and Student

I would think that my mother in her twenties was a lot more sure of herself and her future since she knew she was going to be a stay-at-home mother and that is something that I didn't know for my twenties because I didn't plan on having a family immediately like she did. So that's something to think about there...

Stephanie was born in the mid-1980's and she was in her late 20's during the interview. Stephanie explained that she was born into a very religious family. Stephanie grew up with her parent's who married. Her father worked outside the home, while her mother stayed home to raise her. They lived a very traditional lifestyle, although her mother did transition to work outside the home as Stephanie and her sister grew a bit older.

Stephanie finished high school attaining her grade 12 at the age 18. She always knew she would graduate and move on to continue post secondary education. She also always knew she would get married but expected this to happen in her later 20's after her

education would be completed, somewhere around the age of 27. Being unsure of what she wanted to pursue educationally, Stephanie continued to live with her parents, work and save money.

Honestly, in my last year of high school I had no idea...honestly no idea. That's why it took me a good two years to even enroll in school. I had no idea what my interests were, at that point.

One thing that Stephanie was sure about was that when she would finally enroll in school she would move out of her parent's home and that is exactly what she did. Two years later, she chose to apply and enroll into a Child and Youth Worker program. This took her three years to complete and graduate from. As Stephanie reflected upon her choices surrounding living arrangements during college days, she recalled a lot of last minute 'scrambling' to find accommodations and roommates:

[Stephanie] Hmm that is a good question. I don't know that I ever thought of it. It just kind of seemed like but it was like last minute planning like you were scrambling to try to find out what you were going to do but a little bit. 'Cause I remember distinctly when I went to college and I moved to [a nearby urban centre] for the first time that it seemed like at the very last minute I had found the solution for what I was going to do like you're really...I was looking into residence, I was looking into friends that I could live with I was looking into living by myself. It seemed kind of scrambled. I didn't really know to be honest.

[Kelly] Did you have anyone to help you de-scramble it?

[Stephanie] My boyfriend at the time. I remember him taking me up to [a nearby urban centre] to look at places. Yeah, that's pretty much it.

Initially, Stephanie lived alone, then she lived with friends for two years, and then she decided to move in with her partner. During this timeframe, Stephanie had taken on several different jobs.

I had a number of jobs. I started working for [a major department store] as a customer services representative from the age of 16 up until 20 or 21. I worked in a similar position with [clothing retail] a company called [_____] that was only for a few short months and that was while I was in college and then I worked for a [home improvement store] as a cashier for nearly a year and I was an assistant manager at [a music store] before the company actually claimed bankruptcy and that was after college. And I worked for the distribution and logistics company for 4 years. ...

When I was 25 I was working in an office environment. ... I worked for a distribution company in their logistics department as a dispatcher. ...I hope to be in the accounting field by the age of 30 working as an accountant.

At this point, Stephanie could foresee herself working into her 40's and beyond as an accountant and described this as what she is really passionate about. Stephanie reported that she currently 'just a student' and is currently unemployed. She is studying Business Accounting at the local college. She is in the first semester of the program and hopes to be finished next year in April because she is fast tracking. Studying through the summer without a break will help her graduate early. Plans were already being thought through for her next educational pursuit. To the question of whether or not she would seek further education in the future, she was quick to reply:

Oh definitely! The business program here at [the local college] doesn't give you your actual certification for your accounting. You have to get something called a CGA. My understanding is that the course gives you a lot of the basics for getting it but you still have to take additional courses to get the CGA.

We discussed the order by which Stephanie expected social milestones to occur verses the timing as they occurred during her personal life. She expected:

1. move out of parent's house
2. education
3. full time job
4. first car
5. first house
6. marriage at 27 and
7. children and family

For Stephanie, these life events actually occurred in the following order:

1. First car bought at 16
2. Move out 20 education 20-23 and now 27 ongoing
3. 20 moved out complete education 23
4. 23 first full time job
5. Married at 23 relationship has been ongoing since 20.
6. first house at 25

During our discussion of the timing of her life events and her feelings towards these, Stephanie tended to emphasize how the timing and circumstances that surrounded her wedding and marriage were significant. She currently lives with her husband and they do not have children. However, she has reported that they are actively trying to conceive a child. Stephanie also discussed her expectations for marriage and explained that she fully expected to be married a lot later than she was married.

I just thought it would happen sometime in my late twenties it didn't really turn out that way though. I got married a lot sooner, a lot earlier than I thought I would actually. I got married at the age of 23...

To be honest with you I think I would get married at a later age. It was very expensive to get married at such a young age. I mean it was great to have our parent's help us out with the expense but I don't know. It could have waited I think.

When asked to describe the differences and similarities between her parents' lives during their twenties and her own, Stephanie went back to discuss religion, marriage, and how her family felt about her moving in with her partner prior to getting married. This was a departure from the religious norms that had been long held within her family.

[Stephanie] Much different from what we have now obviously...It is not okay...my family is very religious in their values so, for example, when I moved out and lived with my husband before we got married that was a big issue to them. That is not something they would have done in their day. Yeah that would have been different for sure. I know it was more traditional for women to not go out and work as much. To do the 'stay-at-home mom' thing.

[Kelly] Did your mom?

[Stephanie] She stayed at home. She was a stay-at-home mom. She has kind of migrated out of that as we got older because she definitely did go out into the workforce but when we were younger she was a stay-at-home mother so she has changed herself that way.

Thinking back to what her mother must have experienced, she seemed to conclude that her mother had likely faced many or all of the same struggles that she had encountered. Stephanie was not immediately specific about what types of struggles she was referring to but we came back to these as we concluded our interview. One point she did make here was that the struggles may have been upon her mother at an earlier age.

[Stephanie] I am sure she dealt with all the same struggles that I did in my life like where am I going to live and what am I going to do

[Kelly] Do you think it all happened at the same time same ages?

[Stephanie] Maybe younger...I would think.

When Stephanie was asked to describe a moments or moments that mad feel more "grown-up" or adult-like, she listed and described major purchases, her first full time job and supervising people:

Definitely buying your first house makes you feel grown up. There are a lot of legalities to it and contracts that you have to sign. Signing paper work always makes you feel grown up. Your first full time job. When I worked at the distributing and logistics company, I had a lot of responsibilities and that made me feel grown up. I was looking after people. There were people working beneath me, I was managing the place I was responsible for the day to day activities. If I wasn't there, I felt like things didn't get done. That makes you feel like an adult.

Stephanie defined growing-up as simply and 'definitely' hard. She noted that she doesn't always feel like a 'grown-up' despite having reached the age of majority. She noted that partying is not exciting as it used to be:

I still feel like I have a ways to go. I can be very immature sometimes. You know I still like to have my occasional night out party and be immature and crack jokes and being ridiculous. I expect to grow out of that phase is what I am saying and I already. It's starting to get dull. It's not as exciting as it once was.

Stephanie was asked if there was anything further she would like to add regarding her transition from adolescence to adulthood, her twenties, and growing up. In concluding our interview she emphasized the struggles that women still today face as they enter the workforce:

[Stephanie] I would think that my mother in her twenties was a lot more sure of herself and her future since she knew she was going to be a stay-at-home mother and that is something that I didn't know for my twenties because I didn't plan on having a family immediately like she did. So that's something to think about there...

[Kelly] You didn't plan on doing that or you didn't have a plan?

[Stephanie] I thought it would just come to me. I really think they should have more resources to help people in high school figure out what it is they should be doing with their lives because I really didn't think high school helped me with that at all.

Maybe my father felt the same way I did about it. I don't know he has never spoken to me about it. Technically, but I mean I do think it took my father a little while in his twenties to figure out what he was going to do as well because I seem to remember him saying that when he was in his twenties, he initially invested in real estate and he did a lot of being the landlord kind of thing and started up a number of small business with his friends and some relatives of his that didn't go anywhere they weren't successful and then he started working with my grandfather in the company that he now owns and I don't think that got started until his thirties. So, I am sure being in his twenties, I think he felt more confused. You know being in your twenties is that area in your life where you are meant to be figuring things out so you take a number of different paths.

[Kelly] Do you think you had more paths to chose from?

[Stephanie] More opportunity, Yeah I do. Yeah, I think there is more of a change in attitude toward women in the workforce ... There are more women in the workforce now and people are more accepting of it than they did back then, so I'm sure that gives me more opportunity.

[Kelly] Do you think those opportunities make your twenties easier or more difficult?

[Stephanie] I'm not really sure because I think we are at that point where you still do encounter some struggles as a woman because not everyone feels that way. We are kind of in that transition period almost.

[Kelly] What type of struggles?

[Stephanie] Like you still have people who may not admit it up front, but they think that because you are a woman, you are not as capable as a man...but then you joke about it so then you know that's how they really feel but underneath that it does affect how they treat you and how their expectations are for they expect you to do but it's still is an underlying problem that...But, they're changing attitudes toward it.. it but there is still that struggle. There have still been times when there are bosses that I have had that have made comments that are related to that.

If you are talking about whether it is a bigger struggle for women then obviously Yeah ... we have to prove ourselves more than a man would.

Case Study #24 Rachelle - Divorced, pregnant, financial planner

Rachelle was in her late twenties at the time of the interview and she was born in the mid 1980's. She grew up with her parent's and she was living at home with them during her final years of high school. Her mother was very young when she married Rachelle's father who was much older than her mother. Rachelle discussed some of the difficulties that they encountered during their relationship including what she termed 'promiscuity.' Rachelle seemed to relate to her mother's experience a great deal as she too was married quite early. She described in detail the similarities and differences that she saw between her parent's experiences during their twenties and her own experience of her twenties:

Sometimes, my parents talk about some of the things they were going through when they were having us. Now more than ever I realize that when they had kids

with about as much 'no'²¹ nothing' as I do and I don't think it was very different. I hear about the car problems they've had. They have been in car accidents. They were promiscuous, like I went through, the biggest thing that they seem to be experiencing is that technology isn't the same. My mom and dad were also married when she was young and my dad was older like my ex-spouse. So I feel like I may have gone through the same emotions as my mom being committed to someone so young but I didn't have any of the responsibilities of raising children like my mom. Like when my mom ended up pregnant with my sister who is the youngest of three. My mom was really upset about it so I realized that her life wasn't perfect even when she was growing up. Maybe a lot of other kids or girls envied her for getting married right away but it may not have been exactly what my mom wanted. She told me that she was hungover the day that she married which was a shock to me because I thought she had like the perfect time when we were growing up and my mom you know, until I was 10 she was in her twenties so it wasn't as peachy as I thought it was.

My mom encouraged me to continue right after...She raised me in French. Whereas, she learned French after we were born...which I think is hard. Like, when I try to learn a third language I give up easily. But I know she had tried to give us a leg up on what she had. My mom went back to school for her career in her mid-thirties so I think she wanted to avoid that for us so she would strongly encourage us...So, I think my mom had tried to make my life as easy as possible by like pushing me in certain directions that I wouldn't have had the motivation to do on my own, and I am grateful for her now for it.

We discussed Rachelle's education and she explained that she always knew she would graduate from high school and would be going to university and that this was never a question. She planned on pursuing a bachelor degree in psychology and philosophy immediately following graduation from high school. Because she would be benefiting from the OSAP plan, she knew she would need to complete her program within 3 to 4 years and this would bring her to the age of 21.

Rachelle is currently in school but it is not formal schooling like post secondary schooling. They are continuing education courses for her job at the bank. Rachelle

²¹ It is now impossible from the audio transcript to discern whether Rachelle, in fact, meant 'know nothing' or 'no nothing' but it is clear that she is implying that there was either a lack of knowledge or resources similar to her perception of her parents' experience of starting out in the world and raising children.

explained that she was considering returning to school full time but a 'life changing thing' had just happened. She tells the part of her life story here:

[Rachelle] Yeah, I had been thinking about it but I just experienced a life changing thing. I found out this last week that might postpone that a little bit but I had thought about going back to school and looking into what it would take to become a counselor. Because I am a firm believer in that it doesn't matter how old you are, you could change you know completely who you are.

[Kelly] Do you want to include what that life changing event is?

[Rachelle] Okay yeah sure. I found out I am pregnant....I don't know...I have been pregnant before but I miscarried...So, I don't know if I will carry to term, but if I do that is going to set everything back little bit.

Rachelle was asked if she would like to add anything that may be significant about her education, her twenties, and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Her response focused on summer job opportunities that influenced her direction for employment and education:

I think like when I first went to university I thought I would be a teacher and I think like most kids my age, I thought I would become a teacher. That was like the back-up plan. But I ended up on a summer job one of my years in university. It was in the baking industry and at that point in my university I had decided that I was not going to be doing any more education in that field was secondary.

Originally, Rachelle thought that by the time she would turn 25 years-old she would become a teacher teaching French and art to students. However, this is not how things turned out and Rachelle worked in a few different summer jobs, one that turned into a more permanent job placement as a financial planner with a bank.

When I was in post secondary, I did two or three types of jobs. One year I was a camp counsellor for an art program. That helped me think I was going to be a teacher. Then I worked in a tanning salon during the school year and then I started working in a bank summers and that was pretty much the last time I changed jobs and I would have been about 18 or 19 at the time. So, I would have been at the same place for a long time.

Rachelle had some ideas regarding how to combine her university education with the line of employment that she is currently working within. As she looked to the future at her 30's and 40's this was Rachelle was wanting to accomplish career-wise:

I was hoping I would take what I am doing and combine it with some type of family counselling and like family financial counselling so I was hoping that I would be doing a lot of what I am doing now which is helping people plan and giving people advice with incorporating in the home because more and more I am seeing that people are doing that as some sort of self-employment and it piqued my curiosity and so I anticipated that that would be the evolution of my work.

Rachelle discussed her households and living arrangements as she transitioned from a daughter living within her parent's household to life as a student, wife, a single young woman to now contemplating her next household given the new information that she is pregnant. Rachelle recounted her household and relationships first thinking back to her parents' home when she was 18:

[Rachelle] I suppose that was my permanent address but in my final year of high school I knew I would be going off to university and I didn't want to come back. I knew I would be coming back for the summer but I thought for sure I would be finding a job and I would be out of the house. So yeah...I was living at home pretty much but also in residence....

...from home I went to an off campus residence. When I was in university it was an off campus residence in which I had a room with I shared the kitchen and washroom with many other people. So I did that when I was 19 and at 19 I actually got engage. I got married at the age of 20. When I was married, I lived with my husband at the time. I am no longer married to that person but we were married for six years so from basically my late teens to the time I was 26 I was living with a spouse.

[Kelly] Did you think you would get married?

[Rachelle] No. No, because even like I had a big talk with the boyfriend I had at the time and I was like well I'm not ready to get married until I am at least 21 but then I ended up meeting this person at the age of 19 and he was a much older man I guess he was 27 at the time and I thought I was in love and we got married

which seemed right at the time but in retrospect was not in line at all with what I thought I wanted when I was a little younger.

Another topic that was explored with Rachelle was the purchase of major items such as a car and a house. Rachelle never liked driving and she never thought she would buy a car. She said she thought she would be good at not having one. When it came to the purchase of a house, she recalled that her partner at the time strongly encouraged the purchase of a house, so she was persuaded to buy a home with him.

I never liked driving. I didn't think I would buy one. I thought I would be good at not having one.

For some reason that was very strongly pushed by my ex-husband so we bought one right away. I don't think I anticipated that because I really liked the idea of renting which felt like less responsibility to me. I was okay with that. Now that I have owned a house for several years...when I got divorced he kept the house...I lived with my brother for a while. I decided I wanted to own again so I bought a house again. So it seems like home ownership is something that I seem to go back to.

Rachelle noted that the new information that she is pregnant will require her to re-evaluate her thoughts on many aspects of her life including households and her partnership with the baby's father. As she was asked who she currently lives with, Rachelle reflected for a moment:

I am on my own now...Yeah, so if you had asked me that last week, I would have said I was not planning on moving in with anybody even though it is not a very long relationship but we are committed. I thought for sure I would be living on my own for another year or so. The other person still has some of their own growing up to do and I would like the idea of being on my own and not having to answer to anybody and now the possibility of having a baby would at least mean that I would have the baby living with me. And I am not even sure what I want to do with [my boyfriend]. And now this is the point where I have noooooo idea of what is going to happen.

As she thought back to high school, Rachelle thought 'for sure' she would have five children and she thought she would have them over a period of 10 years and that by this point in her life she would already be on that path. She thought she would begin having her children in her early twenties after her graduation from university and after her wedding, as explained:

As soon as I would get married and then I would wait two years and then in theory I would start having kids at the age of 23 but we were having fertility issues where I was just not getting pregnant and so that kind of changed my mind...I'll be happy with just one. That is how I felt for the longest time. Like my whole idea about having kids changed drastically because of this new information of potential infertility and I felt like I was settling going from 5 to 1.

Rachelle had anticipated finding a full time job at the same time as she would move out of her parents home. However, the full time job came a little bit later and she was married sooner than she had anticipated. In discussing how she feels about life events that did not happen at the time she expected them to happen, she highlights that feeling although initially her early marriage and home ownership felt very positive to her, in hindsight she thinks that she needed to educate herself further before rushing into marriage and home ownership. As we made our way through the final questions, she spoke at length about her feelings towards meeting these 'milestones' her divorce and her new pregnancy:

At the time it felt like the best thing. Like oh my God I'm getting married and then I had a bit of a freak out when I was about 23 or 24 and I felt like I had made a mistake and I ended up getting divorced two years later anyway. Looking back I wish I wouldn't have started university right after high school. I wish I would have had more time to explore what I wanted to do. I felt like that wasn't really well done with the guidance counsellor at school. They strongly suggested some sort of post-secondary without really any consideration as to what we would be doing after that. Buying a house is no longer as urgent as I felt when we first got married...It felt like if we did do that right away, we would be losing on paying

down the house and losing all our capital and equity. Like now, if I met someone who was twenty trying to get married, I would like fucking try to get them to take a marriage course first because I feel even now it's too young to even really know yourself still and for some people it works. I know some people who got married when they were 18, 19, 20, like my new boyfriend's parents and they are still together like 30 years later. I don't know how they do it. So...yeah...like when I look back now at [in my late twenties] I just think that some of this stuff wasn't as urgent as I thought it was at the time. Take more time to get educated, to get married and get a house and even now for kids ...I used to think I could be 30 I could even be 40 and still have kids but as I am approaching the age of 30 I start panicking thinking what if it never happens! So, for like the longest time I was like...'what is the rush?...There is no rush...You can wait forever before you have any kids.

Rachelle was asked to describe a moment or moments that made her feel more "grown-up" like an adult. She brought up purchases but also an important point about the loss of her first pregnancy.

[Rachelle] Oh yeah, like getting married and buying the house that was a big deal. I was twenty. All my other friends didn't have that...and even ending the relationship was a big deal because I felt like I was pulling myself away from some type of dependence and becoming independent again. First miscarriage that I had felt like it was like the youth shattering experience and that not everything was as perfect as I thought it would be...yeah so those are the things that jump out right away.

[Kelly] Did you at any point feel...

[Rachelle]... because I feel like when I had my breakdown at 23 or 24 had what I felt was my breakdown. I felt like a lot of what I missed I was trying to re-capture that I was making a lot of stupid decisions because I had done my university and then I was in a serious relationship ended a serious relationship entered a new serious relationship right away. I never did a lot of the teenager things like drinking and doing drugs and heavy drugs and so I felt like as soon as I got married I felt like I had to start taking care of my ex-husband's family. They were very dependant financially and they were very burdensome and so when I had my little breakdown I felt like I was like f. u. to everybody. I was doing what I wanted so I felt like I was really going backwards but it was very liberating at the same time but when I look back I wish I maybe with I could have gone through that

without hurting so many people you know when you end a relationship so yeah that's the sliding back and forth I guess I had done.

Rachelle completed this sentence: Growing up is.....

[Rachelle] Growing up is hard to do. [Laughing] It's long. Absolutely. I feel like I still make stupid mistakes and I consider myself an adult I have adult responsibilities but the mistakes I make now are like on grand levels you know like the fact that I am pregnant and I have only been in a relationship for three months is something that I was making fun of one of my friends for doing that and I supposed I was still thinking that I was invincible because I didn't think it could happen to me before because it didn't happen to me before. I was married for 6 years. We never used a condom. We wanted to have a baby. We never did. How the heck did it happen now? But it was still a mistake, should have still been more careful but I feel like I am still constantly learning new things that I go through that make me feel like I am this big (gesturing a small amount with her fingers) and sometimes it is experiencing things that I haven't experienced before. For example, my new boyfriend, he is a farmer so going to the farm and feeding farm animals for the first time makes me feel like I have been ignorant and all without realizing it...So I guess that is part of growing up is realizing that you don't know everything even though I feel like I do. I feel like I am constantly giving people advice and not taking it.

[Kelly] You are legal and adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up?

[Rachelle] No ... Absolutely not. Especially now I have all these fears like what if I lose the baby again. I have to tell my boyfriend. How is going to react. He is younger than I am. He is 21. I am 27. I feel like I am protecting him by not telling him right away. I feel like what did I lose by getting married right away by getting chained down. I feel like that is going to happen to him. I don't know when everything is up in the air that is when you can't feel like you have your two feet in the air and you know what direction you are going in. How can I say I am there yet when I don't even know where I am going sometimes. so you know.

*[Kelly] Is there anything further you would like to add?
It just goes to show how it only takes a few days to change your perspective on things because geez that happened on Monday. I feel like everything is different all over again. Yeah it changes a lot of my plans.*

[Kelly] You said that your parents had to adjust to new technology do you think that changed how they lived their twenties?

[Rachelle] I know it changed how I lived my twenties. Last year is the first time I got my cell phone and my whole life changed after that. It's hard to adapt really quickly to anything new in your life. Before, like, I didn't talk very often on the phone with my brothers and sisters and I would wait until I get home and I can chat with friends from out of town using Skype and growing up my parents always had to think of long distance and you are tied to coming home before you make your phone calls whereas I can walk around and do it. I am on my cell phone walking around so I feel like my time management is better now that I have the technology so I don't know ...I really don't know how my mom did it but you just adapt to what is available. I am sure that when my mom was in her twenties new things were coming out that were exciting to them too...like you know record players or something.

[Kelly] What about that idea about communicating with people from other cities...does that take up a lot of time?

[Rachelle] I like being in touch with my friends which I didn't realize how little I did it and now I am a lot better at it but it is still time consuming sometimes writing an email as quick as it is sometimes you better pick up the phone.

Case Study #25 Rebecca Common Law Partner and Recently Unemployed and Re-Directing Her Life

And so I could say I am on the road to it...At least I'm not beside the road anymore.

Rebecca was born in the mid 1980's and she was in her late twenties at the time of the interview. Her parents were married at an early age and her mother withdrew from high school early, when she was in about grade 10. Rebecca lived at home with her parents at the end of high school but explained that she had returned home at the end of high school. For years prior, as a younger teenager, she had moved out of her parents' home. In describing moments that made her feel grown up, Rebecca highlights an early moment at the age of 14 that was most significant to her:

I was 14 and I moved out on my own that was pretty big because my mom... I just feel like you know at the end of the day even if you have a plan sometimes things don't happen as planned and in that time and I just did what was best and I was looking for fulfillment in some way and it was the right thing to do and I don't wish that on any child but it happens and sometimes it's just. It helps me now into

my timeline it was unforeseen experience but there was a lot of good that came out of it.

Rebecca says she knew she was going to graduate high school and go on to do post secondary education. She said 'For me it was the only option.' She thought she would have been in her early 20's when she would finish her education but explained that she only just finished a couple years ago. She studied a physical fitness and leisure management a three year college course. She tried to find employment for over a year and was struggling so she went back to school for two years to become a mining engineer technician. Rebecca said she would always keep the door open for education and would consider night courses or weekend courses to upgrade her existing areas of qualification. Rebecca summed up our discussion of education and growing up with the following statement:

I think looking back I just rushed into it and I just took somebody's guidance and I just took it. They said you should do this and I took it and it was a big mistake, but I've learned from it. I would say taking some time to reflect on what you want.

Career-wise Rebecca didn't really know what 'she wanted to be when she would grow-up' and she didn't really foresee herself in any particular position when she looked forward to the age of 25 from her adolescence. As she said it, "I knew I would be successful but to say a title²². I didn't know." At the age of 25, she was working as a prospector but Rebecca was able to list many jobs that she held throughout her twenties, also including: underground miner, road construction, retail, a not for profit children's agency, public educator in the field of sciences and she worked for a motor sports companies. Currently, she is unemployed and she is redirecting her life. As she looked

²² Here, she means a job title.

to employment during the next phases of her life, she explained that she is exploring new directions for employment:

I want to be a business owner of antique furniture and building some of my own furniture and using organic materials and I would like to take some courses in the energy healing field like reiki and that sort of thing.

Rebecca was asked if there was anything further that she would like to add to her comments regard her employment, her twenties and the transition between adolescence and adulthood. She added the following:

[Rebecca] I think in your twenties you just get out high school and you are still on that high of what's next? There was never a period of thinking. Running to the next step. Trying to get a head. But sometimes taking a break to try to help you get a head. I was always trying to get a head and when I didn't get I was always like okay well maybe now. It's just...I should have taken some time to breathe. It was like a circus it was all over the place. [Laughing] It was fun though.

[Kelly] It was fun but was it hard?

[Rebecca] Yes. You know because seeing the way things aren't unfolding the way you have planned makes you worry and then because you worry you try to fill that void. You know?

Other areas of her personal life that did not unfold exactly as she would have expected it to were Rebecca's households, partnerships and family life. She described the various living arrangements that she has taken part in throughout her twenties beginning with the decision she had to make for a new household as she moved out of parent's home once again:

I wasn't sure I was in a relationship and I had enrolled in residence and I kinda just went and did it a day at a time.

I did both. I lived in residence for two years which I had a roommate and her and I lived together for two years. And I have paid room and board and I eventually went on to renting a home with roommates...and eventually when I returned to school to do mining I had an apartment by myself when I was 24.

When Rebecca pictured herself at the age of 25 she expected that she would be married with three children. Today she lives with a common law partner in the home they own together at the age of 26. She recalls wanting to buy a car much earlier but she waited until she was 26 for this purchase, as well. She has described her thoughts on marriage and children, at this point in her life, as she once again done some re-evaluating.

I had thought if the schooling had finished early and I found employment and of course prince charming is going to be there I would have said by 25 at least I would have had my first child.

I think I am more open. I think you grow up with certain values or religion instilled in you then you're just kinda brainwashed to the way things have to be...and now I am open to marriage. I am not ready and I am open to having children...it's just one of those things I am taking time to reflect on it this time. I am looking forward to it but I don't have a set date or a year...

Rebecca made some final comments about the shifting trends in timing and order of partnerships, marriage and childbearing. She notes shifts in attitudes towards time and order but notes that it still remains important to get educated, married and have children.

In her words:

...I am noticing that some of my friends have moved forward before me and I am noticing that we are in a generation where it is starting to change it is starting to shift. It is okay to wait it is okay to go back to school or to have children and then go to school. Like there is no order, like I don't think the order is important as long as you eventually marry or get educated or have children. It doesn't matter which one you do first and I am noticing that people feel more liberated to know they don't have to do it how it used to be.

Rebecca went on to compare these attitudes to the ones that she figured her parents had encountered during their late adolescence and early twenties. She described how her life is different from her parents' lives during their twenties.

I would say for my mother she decided to pull out of school at about the age of grade 10 and having my father when I believe she was eighteen living next door, it was another one of those you find someone that is secure, you find security, you find comfort and that was my father and he came to Ontario to work and for him again it was security. And for them they were told to get married to have children and that it was very important. I think there was no...they didn't really have a voice back then...and looking at it now, I think there might be some regrets for them you know...but I mean, they did the best they could and in my life I think I had those values instilled in me and then I am realizing that it is not the right way of doing things and I am happy I am in my mid twenties realizing that as opposed to my friends who are in their 40s and they are realizing the same thing and they are having life 'crises' where they are they just want to travel or they just want to sell their house like they are just feeling stuffed. I think it was good that they showed me that way and I tried to be that cookie cutter and then I seen it's not for everyone.

Rebecca described two different timelines set forth within popular culture for meeting social milestones for growing-up. She explained that she sees the mainstream order for males to be: primarily getting the job. Once the man has a job, he should buy a car. For women, she explained, the appropriate timeline and markers set forth through mainstream culture is different. For women, she thinks 'society' calls for marriage, a house, and a child, and in that order. Rebecca then reflected on her own feelings about her bio-social timeline and the way she has progressed through milestones and markers for social maturation:

[Rebecca] I find I was pretty accurate on when for the schooling the fact that I was going to return, I didn't think of that. Owning my first car was a little later on but the part for the children and marriage I see it now in the 30s or 40s. For them, maybe the marriage and before it was very systematic where I knew I was going to school first and then I was going to do what people did marriage and kids and now I just see that I am not conventional and that is where I see that I just don't fit the mold and the old traditions. But I think that in general what I had foreseen I have pretty much achieved it that is really what I wanted that is a different story.

[Kelly] Are you comfortable with it?

[Rebecca] Comfortable now but I wasn't before. I thought I was because I was following the plan and it was not working for me and so now I am comfortable re-arranging the timeline or not even having a timeline per se.

[Kelly] Completed this sentence: Growing up is.....

[Rebecca] Being able to find fulfillment on your own.

[Kelly] You are legal an adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up?

[Rebecca] I don't think I will ever be there. I think there is always room for improvement and I am starting life with a new pair of eyes. I am starting to focus more onto what is real and what I am passionate about...And so, I could say I am on the road to it. I am not beside the road anymore.

*[Kelly] Is there anything further you would like to add?
I think it is different for everyone. I think it just you know you go to school and you it's like they tell you to dream but sometimes they don't really talk about life itself and even go to college they just kinda put up this big grand final scheme of things and really they don't really prepare you for the in-between and I hope in the future they have programs that touch more on life skills and just a career I would say.*

Case Study #26 Cindy - Common Law Wife and Clerk

I actually thought I would have my first kid now. Around 25 but I never really wanted kids but if I did it would be around now but that's not happening because of financial constraints. I don't even own a car.

Cindy was born in the late 80's and in her mid twenties at the time of the interview. She lived at home with her parents during her final year of high school.

Cindy's parent's were married and her mother worked as a nurse and her father inherited his father's business. Graduating from high school and moving on to post-secondary studies was a path that Cindy expected to take.

She was accepted into an honours B.A Specializing in English. She graduated from this degree at the age of 23 and went on to an advanced diploma at a college. Cindy

chose to live in residence for her first year away at school. She is considering museum studies in the future and would go back to school for professional development because she wants to do conservation studies. She had some advice that she would offer to senior high school students:

I would say don't let you parent's pressure you into taking anything. You really need the time to think through what you want to do. Basically you need to explore your options school wise.

Cindy recounted a few of the education and employment options that she had explored. She explained that the direction of her interests had been swayed more than once.

I honestly wanted to be a...[Coroner or a mortician]...But then I wanted to be a librarian but then I talked to someone and they said that was going down the toilet so then I took English and I am going to do teaching.

Cindy continued to talk about how she had thought she would be working as a library technician or as an archivist. She thought she would progress to work in field of collection management or conservation but for that she would need to go back to school.

Cindy described several types of jobs that she held throughout her 20's. She worked as a clerk in the human resources department for the city in which she lived. She worked as a receptionist in a hospital and at a consignment clothing store as a cashier. She also did volunteer conservation work for a museum. She expects to be doing the same type of work as she is doing now but she hopes for a more stable job. ..."You know doing one kind of job. You know I'm always doing contract work. But the same type of jobs collections or conservation. "

[Kelly] Anything else?

[Cindy] It's kinda hard finding work in the City. Especially with the bilingual requirement. You need a contact if you want a good job. When I worked at [the hospital] my uncle got me in and he knew the person hiring there so inside contact basically.

I think that is your basic student experience because you can only really work in the summer and maybe part-time during the year because you have a really heavy course load. I think it is a really common experience.

Cindy elaborated further on her household and living arrangements throughout her years as a student. She also lived alone and with her boyfriend.

[Cindy] I knew I liked living alone, I'm kind of a loner. I knew I would be living alone which I have done for a bit. Aside from that I have always lived with my boyfriend. So yeah I mean I knew I would be living alone or with my boyfriend because I needed someone for three years and we were living together and now I am with a new guy and we are living together for 2 years.

[Kelly] Is this what you expected,

[Cindy] Yeah definitely.

[Kelly] And at thirty what do you think,

[Cindy] Hopefully I will be married and living with my husband and have a house.

As Cindy described her thoughts on having children she explained that she had anticipated having children already but because of financial restraints and perhaps because, as she said, she never really wanted children, she doesn't have any. Interestingly, she finished this thought with the words 'I don't even own a car' suggesting that owning a car may be a financial signifier that she would be able to also afford a child.

I actually thought I would have my first kid now. Around 25 but I never really wanted kids but if I did it would be around now but that's not happening because of financial constraints. I don't even own a car.

Cindy was asked if there was anything further she wanted to add about family life, her twenties and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. She concluded this section with the following:

I think a lot of people do have kids young and they really limit their choices after having kids. I know sometimes it's not the way it's planned right but I think you need to take the time to think if you really can afford to have a kid in the first place because I do see a lot of teenage mothers or young mothers and it's not a good situation. And to really take the time to think and take your birth control and to think if you can really want a child right now and if you can support them.

Cindy had thought about and anticipated purchasing a car in her early twenties and she expected to be able to buy a house in her late twenties.

I did think of it and I thought I would probably have a car at least by the age of 23 or 22. I thought I would be buying my first house in my late 20s like 28 or 29.

Thinking back to her final years of high school, Cindy said she was anticipating finishing post-secondary education, buying a car, buying a house, and after all her debts were paid off she would have a child. Her reality is quite different. She describes her life and the way her twenties have unfolded. Thus far, she says she is:

Homeless, carless, childless and still doing my school. I am still at the first stage and waiting for those other things to follow. Effectively, it would be in the same order but I am just not there yet.

Cindy compared the two timelines and reflected on whether or not mainstream society still held a preferred life course order.

I think they used to but not so much anymore. I think those kind of orders have kind of been eliminated because I don't know... I really don't think there is an age on having kids or buying a house in that order... People don't do things in that order anymore. I mean buying a house having a kid. People kind of do whatever.

Cindy thought back to what her parent's lives must have been like during their twenties and described some similarities and differences between what she perceived their experiences of starting adulthood to be like:

It's definitely a bit different because obviously the job market was a bit different. My dad pretty much inherited his father's business and so he pretty much had his life planned out for him. And he makes a good living doing what he is doing. And my mother was a nurse and she really had to fight to get that because she grew up in a really dysfunctional family and she had to support her sisters and brothers. Yeah, it was definitely a lot of work. I think that what I am going through. It was definitely a lot more stable at the same time because I don't know it just seems like everything was a bit easier for them. I mean everything was a lot cheaper whenever they were 24 and buying their first house and I'm still in school without a job so [laughing] it's slightly different.

Cindy was asked how she felt about life events that did not happen at the time she expected them to happen. Her response focused on readjusting to the way things are rather than thinking about how she had anticipated her life course to unfold:

I am not going to dwell on what things could have been. I am more in the present thinking well this is how it's playing out. I have to accommodate everything. I can't dwell on what could have been. I mean there is not much point in thinking about it.

She referred to moving out as the moment that made her feel the most grown up and the significance of distance from one's parents to growing up:

I think living on my own obviously for the first time. It makes you feel a bit older because you don't have that support network...Well, you do have that support network; it's just that your parents aren't so close by anymore. Yeah, I think moving out of your parents' home.

Cindy was asked to complete this sentence: 'Growing up is.....' To this, she replied the following: 'Oh God...It means just entering the real world I suppose.' Still, at this point in her life, Cindy did not identify herself as a 'grown-up mostly for economic reasons.

She was asked specifically if she felt like an 'adult' or a 'grown-up' and in her words, she said:

No! No! No! No! I do not! I can't barely support myself and I am still going through school...So, no, I do not feel like an adult. If you're kind of autonomous and you don't depend on anyone else...Then you can really call yourself an adult.

Before concluding the interview, Cindy was asked if there was anything further she would like to add about her experience of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, her twenties, or the growing-up. She summed up her thoughts with these words:

I don't know...It's been kind of disappointing. [Laughing]...I don't really have anything to say about it other than you know...before going to school and spending your money, really scope out your options and really decide that that is what you want to do.

Case Study #27 Tanya Married, Self-Employed

I feel for me to be completely grown up it involves having a family...yeah...definitely having a family is definitely what is going to make my 'grown up feeling' complete.

Tanya was born in the late 1980's and she was in her early twenties at the time of the interview. She grew up with her married parents. She always knew she would graduate from high school and move on to college. She expressed her determination by stating: "I wanted to go to college so I had to make sure that that happened." Tanya hadn't really thought about moving out of her parents home but it happened immediately following high school as she went on to college. She lived with her partner at the time. Although she was determined to attend college, she did not graduate from the program. Talking about her education experience Tania explained that she chose not to finish the program:

Yes, I went to [a college out-of-town] for massage therapy. I didn't graduate. I ended up dropping out a year into it and I went back to school in November of

[the next year] and I ended up finishing that course. It was an 8 week course on how to run and operate your own business...I actually thought I would finish my massage therapy and open up my own clinic. The way it had actually worked out I had planned on being a massage therapist for probably about seven years to find out that science wasn't for me and tendonitis took over. So it was kind of the let down to not finish...I could see myself going back to school to benefit my business, French immersion courses.

Even as a young woman in her early twenties, Tanya had already worked several part-time jobs. She had worked at camp grounds babysitting, day camps with children, in janitorial services in factories. Tanya explained that she has opened her own cleaning and organizing company this year. As she looked to the future she was hoping to expand her company and hire employees so she could be in a supervisor role and focus on the stay at home-mom role she anticipates taking on someday. In her words:

Yeah, I am kinda of hoping that in my 30's and 40's that I will have people helping me out in my business and I am kinda of hoping to let them take care of it and make sure that they are doing good and be a stay at home mom.

Tanya always anticipated marriage and starting a family. However, as she explained she did not expect to be married so early.. "Uh not this early!" She said. "I definitely had high hopes that I would get married. Yeah definitely." At the time of the interview, Tanya was still married and living with her husband. In thinking back to high school, Tanya said she "definitely" anticipated having children in the future and explained that she still does: "We kind of have it in a planned way. If it happens by accident, then it's okay but we have it planned that in five years from now we are hoping to start a family. "

As she reflected on the major purchases that she has made, Tanya noted her parents' assistance and how quickly she has been able to purchase a vehicle and a home.

I got my car when I was 18. My parents did a little trick on me. I thought I was paying for the entire vehicle so I put money aside for it. They had me pay for it, but a few years later they gave me back all the money. So I guess in a way it is definitely a gift. I was 18. I ended up getting a house at 22 with my husband. I definitely didn't think I would have all this, at this point. I thought I would be at least 25...So I am definitely way ahead of the game.

Tanya identified with her parents in that they were married around the same age and faced the same initial struggles purchasing a home. In talking about the differences between herself and her parents, Tanya noted that she was able to learn from valuable financial advice that they were able to share with her:

My mom and dad got married around the same time as we did. So I know the struggles that they went through like we did around purchasing homes...I learned from them. They warned me ahead of time so I learned to plan it a little better...We moved up to [a city up North] to save up that little bit of extra money. Well, they got married and then realized after spending all that money that they still needed a house to live in so I was very lucky to have their influence to be able to do that. So I definitely think their twenties were a lot harder than mine.

Perhaps because she was still in her early twenties, Tanya was able to outline very clearly and specifically her anticipated biographic timeline and her actual lived biographic timeline. These were as follows:

Anticipated Biographic Time-line

1. find a job 17
2. education 18
3. moving out 23
4. car 23
5. home 25
6. marriage 26
7. children 27

Actual Lived Biographic Timeline

1. job 18
2. education 17
3. moving out 17
4. car 18
5. marriage 20
6. home 22
7. first child late 20's

Tanya discussed how she felt about life events that did not happen at the time she expected them to happen, highlighting how it all happened so quickly and easily she met markers for adulthood:

It was definitely unexpected and surprisingly a lot easier than I thought. I think it is because I had moved out of the area in order to get more money and it is definitely hard being this young and having all these extra responsibilities that you definitely don't expect for another five years like managing a house, keeping bills in line, having to take care of a spouse. It is like being a mother but not really being a mother yet but he makes me happy and proud. I also think that I am very lucky and I know that a lot my friends couldn't make it as far as I have (teary) so they don't have...They are not married. Their boyfriends left them and they are stuck with kids. I couldn't imagine being in that position and that is where I know that I am very lucky.

Tanya described an unexpected moment that made her feel more "grown-up," like an adult. She said:

A moment that made me feel really grown up is the day that I called my mother and told her that I couldn't do my schooling anymore because I was wasting my parents' money, and for them to tell me that they were very proud of me for dropping out of school definitely made me realize that I am making the right choices in life.

Moving away from everything, taking those chances and moving away from family and friends to try to start a new life. You definitely have to have your feet on the ground for that.

Tanya completed this sentence: 'Growing up is.....' With the following words:

Growing up is tough and exciting. Growing up involves challenges that no one can really expect. It's definitely an adventure and a half.

In discussing whether or not she feels grown-up or adult-like at this point in her life, Tanya pointed to the idea of starting a family as an important step to make her growing-up feel complete. She conveys a stage-like stepping stone idea of growing-up in

this last section of the interview. You are legal an adult now. Are you there yet? Do you feel like an adult, like a grown up?

[Tanya] I feel I still have a long way to go. I wish I was completely grown up. But yeah you know like I feel for me to be completely grown up, it involves having a family...Yeah...definitely having a family is definitely what is going to make my 'grown-up feeling' complete.

[Kelly] Is that something that you plan or is that something that you have discussions about or do you keep that in your head?

[Tanya] Every now and then it kind of comes up...one of these days we will have kids. I know he is not ready so I just keep it in my head. I know he could notice especially when you go around and start hugging babies like crazy [laughing].

[Kelly] With all of these steps that you have already taken were any of them in relation to having children?

[Tanya] (exhale and whispers) Definitely. I kind of have like I wanted to make sure that I finished the schooling so I would have a good job so I could take care of my children in the long run. You know make sure they have a roof over their head and it just seems like everyone expects it...You know you get a job...You get married you have kids. You make sure you have a roof over your head and I actually definitely didn't expect it to happen the way it did with all my other friends getting pregnant right in high school. So...yeah...so I am definitely glad with the way I took my steps.

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