Moving in a man's world: three qualitative case studies illustrate how women can survive in male-dominated work environments

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Moving in a man’s world: Three qualitative case studies illustrate how women can survive in male-dominated work environments

by

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A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education

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1999

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important changes in the United States' economy over the past thirty years has occurred in the demographics of its labor force. Where our workforce primarily consisted of men, and management consisted of white men, the workplace has now become much more ethnically and sexually diverse. In the 1990s, according to the Department of Labor, women comprise "more than fifty percent of the workforce and more than half of the entry-level classes for colleges in the U.S." (McKenna 1997, 261). By the year 2000, "two thirds of all the people who enter the workforce in the U.S. will be women, a majority of whom will be in their childbearing years" (ibid., 262). Although the effects of gender and job opportunities have been studied, the changing demographics of the United States' economy make the issues more important now than they might have appeared in the past. Furthermore, though these issues have been analyzed, they do not seem to have influenced how we prepare young women for an increasingly competitive job market.

The change in general employment patterns has brought about similar changes in the professions women choose for their careers. Previously, if women worked outside the home, they were usually restricted to traditional, feminine jobs such as teachers, nurses, or secretaries. Few women dared or were able to break out of these professions. In the late twentieth century, however, we see increasing numbers of women entering male-dominated professions such as academia, law, and computer science. These changing demographics have brought new problems into the workplace. A system that was designed for and utilized almost exclusively by white men cannot incorporate women without problems. Felice Schwartz, for example, notes that "we are still plagued by disparities in perception and behavior that make the integration of men and
women in the workplace unnecessarily difficult" (1991, 127–128). She adds that these disparities "take their toll on women's career development" (ibid., 131).

My dissertation research consists of three case studies of women who work in male-dominated professions. The research questions are: Did the type of background these women have facilitate their entry into nontraditional work environments? How have these professional women been able to negotiate the imaginary line that exists between their private lives and their public personas? And, since it is now easier for women to become professors, lawyers, and scientists, what strategies can be utilized to make those masculine environments more conducive for females? My goal is to move beyond "fighting patriarchy" to illustrate what can be done about the paucity of women in masculine professions.

Since I have conducted qualitative interpretive research from a feminist standpoint perspective, I will first delineate my positions in these two areas and describe how they interrelate. According to Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln,¹ "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. . . . In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes" (1994, 4). The former is a "value-laden nature of inquiry" . . . while the latter "is purported to be within a value-free framework" (ibid., 4). Most feminists choose to conduct qualitative research.

Currently, qualitative research is experiencing "a triple crisis of representation, legitimization, and praxis" (Denzin 1997, 3), which began in the mid-1980s. As for representation, some scholars now question whether "qualitative researchers can directly capture lived experience" (ibid.) since the text is situated in the author's words. With legitimization, researchers challenge how to evaluate interpretive writing since the classical terms of validity and
reliability are no longer accountable in a poststructuralist and postmodern world. The first two crises shape the third (ibid., 4), praxis, which is also the ability to unite theory and practice. Feminists believe that praxis can transform the world and make it a better place for women. However, Norman Denzin questions, "Is it possible to effect change in the world, if society is only and always a text?" (ibid., 4). The best way to address these three crises is to take a brief look at how qualitative research has evolved in the twentieth century.

Ethnography, "that form of inquiry and writing that produces descriptions and accounts about the ways of life of the writer and those written about," (Denzin 1997, xi) can be traced back to "the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a result of Columbus’s and later explorers’ voyages to the Western hemisphere" (Vidich and Lyman 1994, 25). My analysis, however, will be confined to this century when "the norms of classical qualitative and ethnographic research" were established (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 7). Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln divide twentieth century interpretive inquiry into five movements which they call moments: the traditional period, modernist phase, blurred genres, crisis of representation, and the fifth moment (1994, 7–11). Each moment will be briefly identified.

The first moment, referred to as traditional, extends from the early 1900s to World War II. "In this period, qualitative researchers wrote ‘objective,’ colonializing accounts of field experiences that were reflective of the positivist scientist paradigm. They were concerned with offering valid, reliable, and objective interpretations in their writings. The ‘other’ who was studied was alien, foreign, and strange" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 7). Bronislaw Malinowski (1848–1942), a Polish researcher, fits into the traditional period. He believed that field-workers should spend a great deal of time in a culture, and he was the first individual to use the terminology "participant-observation." The American anthropologist Margaret Mead’s research also belongs in the traditional period. She was one of the first researchers to write about education
and to suggest that teachers use ethnography to learn more about their students. Some other ethnographic terms that came out of the traditional period are "social realism, naturalism, and slice-of-life" (ibid., 8). "Slice-of-life" originated at the University of Chicago's Chicago School, which developed the theory that a "researcher-as-author" [had] the power to represent a subject's story" (ibid.).

The modernist, or second phase, "builds on the canonical works from the traditional period" and "extend[s] through the postwar years to the 1970s and is still present in the work of many" (Denzin 1997, 17). During this period, "the modernist ethnographer and sociological participant observer attempted rigorous, qualitative studies of important social processes, including deviance and social control in the classroom and society" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 8). Books such as *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss recommended that qualitative researchers work inductively and continually develop and test hypotheses. They believed that qualitative research should be "grounded" in data. Terminology that fits into this period includes positivism (using objective research methods) and postpositivism (believing all methods are flawed, therefore, only partially objective accounts can be produced).

The modernist phase was considered the "golden age" for qualitative researchers. By the 1960s, however, dramatic changes had occurred in the United States' social structures. The Vietnam War was the first unsuccessful conflict in our country's history, our population included more and larger groups of minorities who did not want to assimilate into our culture, and schools began to fail large numbers of students who could not meet minimal graduation requirements. "Thus did the modernist phase come to an end" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 9).

The third period, blurred genres, lasted from 1970 to 1986. In this period, "Qualitative researchers had a full complement of paradigms, methods, and strategies to employ in their research" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 9). In the qualitative camp, feminism appeared while
quantitative researchers began to use computers to store all of their data. "[Clifford] Geertz’s two books, *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973) and *Local Knowledge* (1983), shaped the beginning and end of this moment" (Denzin 1997, 17). Among many other ideas, Clifford Geertz argued that "the boundaries between the social sciences and the humanities had become blurred" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 9), that positivist approaches were being replaced by interpretive perspectives, and that the scientific article was being replaced by the essay. Using the term "thick description," he claimed that all research was interpretive. The "golden age" was over.

The crisis of representation or the fourth moment occurred in the mid-1980s. This crisis appeared when ethnographic works appeared such as *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986), which made "research and writing more reflexive, and called into question the issues of gender, class, and race" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 10). In other words, everything that Clifford Geertz had predicted in the previous "blurred genre’s" moment was realized. Critical, feminist, and epistemologies of color replaced the classic, more objective forms of research from the earlier periods. However, Patricia Clough claims that these new forms of writing were not necessarily free of "empirical science’s hegemony" (1992, 8).

"The fifth moment is the present, defined and shaped by the dual crises" of representation and legitimization (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 11). The qualitative researcher now experiments with many unique methodologies. For example, a reader will encounter theories in narrative terms such as John Van Maanen’s *Tales of the Field* (1988) and "new epistemologies from previously silenced groups" such as standpoint epistemologies³ (ibid., 11). According to Yvonna Lincoln (1993), smaller studies, which are restricted to specific problems or situations, will replace larger, all-encompassing surveys. Whatever the method, the goal of late twentieth century qualitative researchers is the same as the early ethnographers: to investigate the complexities of people and their lived experiences.
Although the process of examining traditional research methodologies began long before the 1960s and 1970s, it was during those decades that women began searching for new feminist methodologies that would allow them "to tell their stories" more effectively. They argued that most traditional positivist epistemology was androcentric. Since it was written by men, for men or women, it could not adequately describe women's experiences. Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith talks about the problem: "There are indeed matters to be spoken and spoken of that discourse does not yet encompass. We had no language in which our experience could be spoken among women by women" (1993, 183-184). Consequently, feminist researchers called for alternative, women-oriented paradigms. One of the best types of research to emerge from this new feminist scholarship is labeled oral histories or life stories. Life stories, which I use in my research, incorporate female verbiage and experiences to "ground theory contextually in the concrete realm of women's everyday lives" (Stacey 1991, 111). This type of research is labeled feminist standpoint epistemology.

Since feminist standpoint epistemology is relatively new and controversial, I will clarify my position. First, I will describe the five parts of the qualitative research process as they are presented in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln. At the same time, I will place my qualitative research into the five phases. The five phases are: "the researcher ... as a multicultural subject, theoretical paradigms and perspectives, research strategies, methods of collection and analysis, and the art of interpretation and presentation" (1994, 11).

**The Researcher as a Multicultural Subject**

Most qualitative researchers in the 1990s believe there "are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed" (Denzin and
Lincoln 1994, 12). Therefore, any researcher's "gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity" (ibid., 12) as well as situated in a particular historical time and place. As Virginia Olesen explains, "these [biases] are resources and, if the researcher is sufficiently reflexive about her project, she can evoke these as resources to guide data gathering or creating and for understanding her own interpretations and behavior in the research" (ibid., 165). Consequently, I will now briefly tell my life story so that my position will be known as I, in turn, interpret the words, actions, and positions of my respondents.

I was born after World War II, in 1947, on the cusp of the baby boom generation. My maternal grandfather journeyed to the United States from England and my paternal grandmother emigrated from Denmark at a young age. Thus, I am a third-generation North American on both sides of my family. I grew up in the Scandinavian community of Ringsted, Iowa, population 750, surrounded by my father's family. Although the older generations could speak Danish, I never spoke any language other than English. As in many immigrant families, my parents "wanted my generation to be 100% American." My family even became Presbyterian when the local Danish Lutheran Church refused to speak English at their services. Since the rural community in northern Iowa where I grew up was isolated, I had little exposure to races other than Caucasian, ethnicities other than Northern European, and religious denominations other than Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic.

My father owned a hardware and implement store with his older brother; therefore, my family would be classified as middle-class. More unusual was the fact that my mother was a high school teacher, since most married women did not work outside the home in the 1950s. Her job, however, allowed my family to own a cabin in northern Minnesota, where my mother took my older sister, brother, and me every summer for two to three months. My fondest childhood memories revolve around the escape from daily life that our vacation cabin provided. In addition
to some relatives who also had a cabin on our lake, our friends there were like a second family to me. I also learned to swim and water ski well enough that I was able to attain summer jobs as a life guard, swimming teacher, and water skiing instructor during college.

Meanwhile, back in Iowa, I became an "activities jock," participating in every extracurricular activity that my junior high and high school offered. I was involved in plays, the band, chorus, speech contests, the National Honor Society, basketball, and softball. I became a cheerleader and a band beauty queen as well. In my free time, I worked at my father's store—waiting on customers, cleaning, and going on buying trips. I also was a waitress in a restaurant and worked as a receptionist at the local telephone company. Although my school life was going well, my home life was anything but ideal. My father was drinking heavily, and my mother was becoming more verbally abusive. At the end of high school, my family just assumed I would attend college like my sister and brother. So I did. I chose Iowa State University (ISU) and planned to major in either interior design or merchandising because they sounded like glamorous career options.

The first major trauma in my life occurred two years after I started college. In 1967, my 56-year-old father died suddenly from a massive cerebral hemorrhage, which was attributed to his alcoholism. Unbeknownst to the family, he had accrued many debts and had mortgaged the family house, cabin, and farm. While my mother worked to pay off the mortgages, I paid for my college expenses using the Social Security funds I received as a dependent minor. In the meantime, I had changed my major to English, which seemed more academic to me, and had planned to transfer to the University of Minnesota because it had a better humanities program. My father's death meant that I could not attend Minnesota because we did not have enough money to pay the out-of-state tuition. In 1969, I received a B.S. degree in English with minors in art and history from ISU.⁴
Since I could not find a job after graduation, I applied for and was offered a work-study scholarship at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, to major in library science. I loved Michigan but decided that I did not want to be a librarian. In addition, my boyfriend was a new professor back at Iowa State University. I therefore applied for a teaching assistantship in English at ISU and moved back to Ames. Although my mother was against my marrying a man who was seven years older than I and a divorcee with two daughters, I persisted and was married in 1971. Thus, this marriage was the first nontraditional event in my life. Meanwhile, at the age of 25, I received my M.A. degree in English from Iowa State.

After our marriage, I planned to move to San Francisco where my husband had gotten a job. I wanted to teach in the California state college system. Due to a bad economy, however, these plans were abruptly changed. So, we remained in Ames. Suddenly, I felt "trapped," with few good employment options. Extremely disappointed, I decided that the only available course of action was to become a high school English and speech teacher. It took me two more years to acquire all of the necessary education courses and to student teach before I was able to find a job. Although I detested teaching at the high school level, I stayed in that profession for nine years because I thought it was what I was "supposed to do."

The 1970s were a difficult time for me. Since there were many unemployed teachers and I had no high school teaching experience, I had great difficulty finding a job. In 1973, my mother was killed in an automobile accident. Losing a second parent at such a young age had a big impact on my life. Since we had just bought a home in the country and had only one car, my husband took our car to work, and I spent that winter walking around our acreage, attempting to cope with my losses. Then, in 1975, I became a full-time stepmother when my husband's two daughters from his previous marriage came to live with us. They were 10 and 12 years old; I was 28. By that time, I had gotten my first teaching position, but it involved a two-hour commute.
My stepdaughters were rebellious during their teenage years, and it was an extremely stressful time. I was working full-time and taking care of the girls and the house. Since I felt my husband was not supporting me, we had many arguments, which caused a crisis in our relationship. I did not think our marriage would survive that period. Then, in 1979, my husband had major abdominal surgery. It took him six months to fully recover. Meanwhile, my biological clock was ticking, and I realized that "I had forgotten to have children." My first pregnancy resulted in the birth of premature twin girls, who survived only two weeks. Twenty years later, the death of my twin daughters is still so painful that I have difficulty talking about them.

The decade of the 1980s went much better. In 1980, my first son was born. A second son followed in 1985. After the birth of my two children, it became increasingly difficult to direct school plays, coach speech contestants, and teach anywhere from five to eight different high school classes. Consequently, I decided to stay home and be "a good mother." Then, a community college called and asked me to teach part-time. Since I would have been bored staying home and I felt very isolated living in the country, it was a great relief to be offered another job. I enjoyed college-level teaching and stayed at the community college for ten years. It also offered me a flexible work schedule while my children were young.

In 1992, at the age of 45, I chose to suspend my community college teaching job and began taking classes at Iowa State with the goal of eventually obtaining a Ph.D. I wanted to become a college professor. During this time, my husband, who had become a tenured professor and an administrator at a national government agency, earned a sufficient income to support our family while I did my graduate work. Nonetheless, the process of obtaining this degree has not been without challenges. In 1995, my family moved to the East Coast. As a result, I have had to complete my degree over the Internet. During this same period, I have experienced unusual health problems, which have been diagnosed as a chronic autoimmune disorder. Despite these
challenges, I consider my current schooling to be one of the most exhilarating parts of my life. Furthermore, I have become a feminist and believe the knowledge gained from studying the women's liberation movement has greatly empowered me. Since most of my family and friends were against my working on a Ph.D., I consider the pursuit of this degree the second nontraditional event of my life.

After reading a great deal of feminist literature, I now realize that I have had a privileged position in our society: I am white, Anglo-Saxon, married, U.S.-born, heterosexual, middle-class, and Protestant. The sole discrimination I have encountered is as a result of my gender. These experiences, however, have provided the impetus for my study of feminism and my research into gender inequities. The first incident of gender discrimination occurred when I graduated from college. I wanted to sell textbooks, so I interviewed with a publishing firm. After laughing at me and saying that only men got that kind of job, the interviewer asked me out on a date. The second incident took place after I received my master's degree and went to the English department at Iowa State University to ask the chairman if I could be a temporary instructor. He knew that I had recently married a professor and said: "Shame on you, Candi! You should let a needy man with a family have the job instead." These two seemingly minor occurrences had a huge impact on my career plans as well as on my self-esteem. It would take me thirty years to rebound from these events and finally pursue my dream career.

Theoretical Paradigms and Perspectives

Egon Guba defines a paradigm as an interpretive framework, how a researcher views the world, or as a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (1990, 17). Following Egon Guba's lead, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln believe there are three elements of a paradigm: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. They state that "The gendered, multic Culturally situated
researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways" (1994, 11). Furthermore, "All research is interpretive, guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (ibid., 13). In other words, information is gathered, analyzed, and written down in a research format, and all of this material is filtered through the unique lens of the researcher's gaze.

I will use feminism as my interpretive paradigm or framework for my research. According to Denzin and Lincoln, feminists "privilege a materialist-realist ontology; that is, the real world makes a material difference in terms of race, class, and gender. Subjectivist epistemologies (knower and subject create understandings) and naturalistic (in the natural world) methodologies (usually ethnographies) are also employed by feminists. Criteria from gender and racial communities (e.g., African American) may be applied (emotionality and feeling, caring, personal accountability, dialogue)" (1994, 14). In addition, traditional criteria such as internal and external validity are replaced with terms like credibility and transferability.

Although ethnographic studies frequently include interviewing components, and vice versa, feminist interview research is different from ethnography in that it does not include long periods of field research, and it differs from survey research in that there is free interaction between researcher and interviewee. In other words, each participant is invited to tell her life story in her own way. Since the "digression" (Yeandle 1984, 47) is oftentimes more important than the core information, it is important to build this flexibility into the interviewing process. Therefore, "The use of semi-structured interviews has become the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives" (Graham 1984, 112). The semi-structured or unstructured interview allows the researcher to ask certain questions about a given topic but lets the discussion determine what information is
In this manner, the interviewee is able to talk about her life in her own words, not in the researcher's language. Since conducting research in this manner is a radical paradigm shift from the standard scientific procedure, it is not without controversy. However, feminist researchers continue to experiment with a variety of interview formats.

Following Sandra Harding's lead, Virginia Olesen identifies three broad feminist perspectives: standpoint epistemology, empiricist, and postmodernism. For my research, I use feminist standpoint theory, that is, "taking women's view as particular and privileged" (Olesen 1994, 164). Standpoint epistemologies have produced a broad range of feminisms, but a woman's lived experience is always the central theme of each one. These feminists criticize the "Eurocentric masculinist approaches" (Collins 1991, 205) that traditional research assumes and question whether there is "a single standpoint from which a final overriding version of the world can be written" (Smith 1989, 58). A second characteristic of standpoint epistemologies is that "Race, class, gender, and culture are interlocking" (Harding 1991, 179) and cannot be separated from each other. Third, feminist standpoint theorists often begin their research with painful autobiographical writing. Feminists such as Patricia Clough (1994) claim "that experience is the starting point for social change—the site for politics of empowerment" (Denzin 1997, 59). The final element of standpoint epistemology according to Norman Denzin is the "desire . . . to recover a self that has been subjugated by the dominant structures of racism, sexism, and colonialism in everyday life" (ibid., 58).

Norman Denzin, one of the foremost qualitative researchers, is a critic of feminist standpoint epistemology. Therefore, I will briefly mention his four arguments. First, he claims that "These authors argue against positivism and postpositivism," . . . while "they maintain (in varying degrees) a connection to the ocular, visual epistemology that defines the realist, positivist project" (1997, 54). That is, standpoint epistemologists are using the same criteria (the
ethnographer's gaze) as the positivists. Second, he believes that "The standpoint authors stress lived experience but do not show the reader how the experience of the other is brought into the texts they write" (ibid). Third, Denzin theorizes that "The writer’s place in the text is seldom clarified" (ibid.). Finally, he states that "A romantic, utopian impulse organizes this work, . . . [but] a politics of action or praxis . . . is seldom offered" (ibid.). My dissertation will illustrate how these criticisms are invalid.

Research Strategies

In *Under the Sign of Hope*, Leslie Bloom discusses feminist methodology. She writes: "Feminist methodology promises a more interpersonal and reciprocal relationship between researchers and those whose lives are the focus of the research" (1998, 1). Furthermore, it "is a means through which we may reinterpret the world, others, ourselves, and our lived experiences" (ibid., 138). Since my research questions why the majority of women have been excluded from male-dominated professions, feminist methodology also "can provide a valuable means for critical feminist researchers to begin to address the relationship between structural oppression and the realities of individual lives" (Weiler 1988, 59).

Within my feminist standpoint paradigm, I will use case studies for my research strategy. A case study is defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin 1994, 13). Sharan Merriam moves beyond Yin's definition and states that "The defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study, the case" (1998, 27). I will "delimit" my case studies by asking each of my respondents the same questions, which focus on specific aspects of their lives. Unlike many traditional male researchers, feminists believe that case studies are an important research technique. Shulamit Reinharz writes: "The three main purposes of feminist case studies—in addition to generating and
testing theory—are to analyze the change in a phenomenon over time, to analyze the significance of a phenomenon for future events, and to analyze the relation among parts of a phenomenon" (1992, 164). She continues: "Feminist interest in case studies . . . stems from a desire to rectify research tainted by gynopia, misogyny, and male-dominant theorizing. Gynopia is the inability to perceive the very existence of women or to perceive women in undistorted ways; misogyny is the hatred of women; and male-dominant theorizing is the creation of theories that assert the superiority of males. With few exceptions gynopia has made it difficult or impossible for androcentric researchers of factories, mines, unions, and other male-dominated settings to ‘see’ the women in these settings" (ibid., 168). In my case studies of women who work in nontraditional professions, for example, I hope to show the relationship between power and gender.

"Typically, the study of women’s diverse lives is accomplished through the interpretation of women’s personal narratives" (Bloom 1998, 145). One of the most important contributions to this type of feminist research is Interpreting Women’s Lives. The Personal Narratives Group, who both wrote and edited the book, explain why they find life stories to be so powerful: They "are particularly rich sources because, attentively interpreted, they illuminate both the logic of individual courses of action and the effects of system-level constraints within which those courses evolve. Moreover, each life provides evidence of historical activity—the working out within a specific life situation of deliberate courses of action that in turn have the potential to undermine or perpetuate the conditions and social relationships in which the life evolved" (1989, 6).

Two classic feminist books, Writing a Woman’s Life (1988) by Carolyn G. Heilbrun and Composing a Life (1990) by Mary Catherine Bateson, illustrate the empowering nature of personal narratives. Both authors examine the lives of women, which provides a framework from which they can generate theories about relationships, masculinist work environments, and gender.
As Carolyn Heilbrun theorizes, "Feminists early discovered that the private is the public [and] women's exercise of power and control . . . has until recently been declared unacceptable" (1988, 17). In order to successfully combine their private and public lives, therefore, professional women are "breaking new ground" and encountering conflicts that most men do not experience.

As with other research strategies, personal narratives contain contradictions and limitations. For example, in Between Women, Carol Ascher, Louise DeSalvo, and Sara Ruddick discuss the difficult problem of evaluating the women they study: "Should they present attitudes or events in the woman's life that in their eyes dishonor her? . . . Should they accept conventional assessments of their subject's 'greatness'? What place should they give to the subject's own evaluation of her life and accomplishments?" (1993, xxiv). The answers to these questions evolve with the research. In addition, as the three authors reveal, the researcher often identifies with her respondents' lives, which can be a positive experience. "In feminist methodology there is a belief that a researcher's identification with her respondents or biographical subjects enhances the researcher's interpretive abilities, rather than jeopardizes validity" (Bloom 1998, 151). Finally, Kamala Visweswaran reminds feminist researchers that they must take into consideration the diversity of women's lives. She maintains: "We can no longer describe women as women, but as subjects differently and sometimes primarily constituted by race, class, and sexuality" (1994, 99).

For my research, I conducted three case studies of women who work in primarily masculine fields of endeavor—areas that have traditionally excluded or silenced women, specifically the fields of academia, law, and computer technology. The first case study involves a woman who is a full professor with tenure at a state university of science and technology. In the second case study, I observe a female lawyer who has worked for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and has recently returned to work at a private law firm. The third woman works as a computer scientist and an administrator at a national government agency. The women have diverse backgrounds:
two of them were born outside of the United States, two have Ph.D.s, two of them are divorced, one is a single parent, and one is married with children still at home and in college. All three women are between the ages of forty and sixty years old, and each one has worked for ten years or longer in her profession. My research was conducted between spring, 1995, and spring, 1999.

Methods of Collection and Analysis

Since most case study researchers are concerned about validity, triangulation is employed in qualitative research as an alternative to validation (Flick 1992, 194). "Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (Stake 1994, 241). Although qualitative researchers do not like to be limited by numbers, I have estimated how many interviews and observations I will do with each respondent. However, the emergent nature of my qualitative research may cause these figures to change.

The multiple methods of collection and analysis that I will use in my qualitative, interpretive research are: in-depth interviews (direct quotations), direct observations (field notes), and written materials (documentation). Member checks will also be used to verify the collected data. Each of these research tools will be briefly described:

In-depth interviews—To fully explore each woman's life experiences, I conducted five, one-hour (or longer) open-ended interviews. The interviews, which were recorded, gave me the opportunity to gain a rich understanding of each individual. Next, I transcribed, coded, and analyzed each interview looking for common themes.

Direct observations—I observed different work environments where my respondents encountered typical interactions that related to their positions. Each observation period lasted one hour or longer, varying as the situation required. During these observations, I acquired "thick
description" (Geertz 1973)\textsuperscript{14} about each event, situation, and the resultant behaviors. If permitted, I also tape recorded each of the observations and/or took notes.

**Written materials**—A minimum of ten examples of work-related documentation from each respondent was examined. Again, I looked for common ideas that related to my overall theme of what it is like to work in a male-dominated environment and how each woman handled the sexual stereotypes that she encountered. According to Norman Denzin, "verisimilitude, or ability to reproduce (simulate) and map the real, has been the most important criterion of traditional validity" (1997, 10). In order to protect my respondents' identities, I did not incorporate much of their written material into my paper.

**Member checks**—Each woman read her interview transcripts and made corrections. I also negotiated the contents of the life stories with each respondent. For example, if an illustration or anecdote revealed an individual's identity, it was omitted. Other necessary changes were negotiated at each stage of development. Each respondent had the right to withdraw at any time from the study, for any reason, and the data would have been returned to her upon request. Finally, each woman will receive a copy of the dissertation after its completion.

**The Art of Interpretation**

This final stage is probably the most difficult one for qualitative researchers. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln state that "The researcher does not just leave the field with mountains of empirical materials and then easily write up his or her findings" (1994, 15). Instead, there are specific steps that need to be followed. First, a field text is created that contains the field notes and documents gathered in the field. Second, the writer interprets the field text into a research text, which eventually results in "a working interpretive document that contains the writer's initial attempts to make sense out of what he or she has learned" (ibid.). Third, the final
text is written incorporating all of the above elements. John Van Maanen (1988) identifies seven presentation styles that can be used to write up qualitative research: realistic, impressionistic, confessional, critical, formal, literary, and jointly told. As Robert Stake said, however, "Case content evolves in the act of writing itself" (1994, 240). Therefore, my presentation style—"confessional"—emerged as I gathered and interpreted my data.

**Summary**

One of the purposes of the Women's Liberation Movement was to point out the inequalities between women and men—especially in the workplace. Keeping that original goal in mind, this research focuses on the lives and experiences of three women who are currently working in male-dominated, high-status occupations. These women's lives illustrate how the status of women and gender-role expectations are evolving, slowly but surely, but not without problems. Difficulties, such as "the glass ceiling" and conflicts between a woman's professional commitments and home life, are barriers that some women are unable to overcome.

My dissertation will be divided into five chapters. This first chapter gives an overview of qualitative research and situates my research within a feminist theoretical framework. Chapter 2 examines women and work. It will revisit the three theories that have dominated feminism over the past thirty years: that public roles for males and private spheres for women devalues females; that patriarchy is ubiquitous; and that we must reconceptualize male-dominated, traditional knowledge and work so that they will also include women's lives, experiences, and diversity. Finally, it will briefly survey the three masculine professions of my respondents: academia, law, and computer technology. Chapter 3 will relate the life stories of my three respondents—Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer—from their childhood to their most recent work experiences. Chapter 4 will analyze the three life stories looking for common themes and patterns. It will also contain my
interpretation of what I have learned from these women's lives. Chapter 5 will summarize all of
the research and suggest implications that might affect women who either currently work in or
hope to be employed in male-dominated fields. I will also posit a number of ways in which this
research and the issues it raises can be incorporated into masculine work environments.

Since the first large wave of baby-boom women, ages 34–54, has now entered "the work
pipeline" and attained senior positions in their professions, it will be interesting to see whether
they have had any effect on our traditional work culture. Hopefully, individuals like my
respondents will help transform male-dominated professions into environments that are congenial
for both women and men. The next chapter will be a literary review of women and work.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW: WOMEN AND WORK

Being the youngest child in my family, I was lucky to be the first to attend graduate school; however, there was no alternative since I was unable to find a job with a B.S. degree in English/art/history and no teaching certificate. Fortunately, I was able to win a scholarship in library science at the University of Michigan. I stayed at Michigan only one semester because my prospective husband was back at Iowa State, where I coincidentally ended up getting a teaching assistantship in English. I loved college teaching, but like Sue Middleton, "In younger days, [I] never would have dreamed that an academic career was possible" (1993, 112). According to Paula J. Dubeck and Kathryn Borman, my gender-role expectations were not unusual for that time period. They report: "In the United States in 1970, women represented 5 percent of the practicing lawyers and eight percent of the practicing physicians; they were 13 percent of the Ph.D. recipients overall" (1996, xv). Fortunately, I found myself "a good man" and received my "MRS. Degree" while I was in graduate school. I next pursued a series of teaching jobs. All together, I was a teacher for 23 years.

In 1994, at the age of 47, I was finally able to enroll in a doctoral program. Although it was not atypical for the 1990s, thirty years into the women's liberation movement, my pursuit of a Ph.D. was a brazen career move for me because females in my generation usually did not receive that advanced of a degree. "By 1990, 35 percent of M.D. degrees, 40 percent of law degrees, and 37 percent of Ph.D.s were received by women" (Dubeck and Borman, 1996, xv–xvi). Thus, the representation of women in high-profile, high-status professions has greatly improved, but their presence is still "characterized by invisibility and by a lack of social, political, and economic 'muscle'" (ibid., xv). An examination of why it is so difficult for women to enter and work in masculine careers follows.
The under-representation of females in male-dominated professions can be historically traced back to the subordinate position women occupy in society. Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington in *Women of Academe* state that "An equal role for women in the organization of society has never been the norm. On the contrary, . . . the proper sphere for women is the private and domestic one" (1988, 3). These authors imply that not only is the female sphere separate from men’s, but it also has less power "than the public world inhabited by men insofar as their private domain affords women no role in the formulation of public policy, in the shaping of the institutions that in turn largely shape and govern culture" (ibid.). Consequently, we have social norms that go back many years, norms that emphasize "the division of responsibility—public roles for men, private for women—with a variety of assumptions about male and female natures, drawing natural connections between given proclivities and given roles" (ibid., 4). Iris Marion Young traces the public/private dichotomy to "the metaphysics of presence" that exists in Western philosophical writings.¹ She theorizes that Western metaphysics "consists in a desire to think things together in a unity, to formulate a representation of a whole, a totality" (1990, 303). Unfortunately, "The desire to bring things into unity generates a logic of hierarchical opposition" (ibid.). We therefore encounter "such mutually exclusive oppositions that structure whole philosophies: subject/object; mind/body, culture/nature, male/female. In metaphysical tradition the first of these is elevated over the second" (ibid.).²

At the root of the public/private sphere dilemma is the fact that our society is patriarchal. Christiane Northrup states: "Western civilization has rested for the last five thousand years on the mythology of patriarchy, the authority of men and fathers" (1998, 3). In *The Gender Knot*, Allan Johnson elaborates further: "A society is patriarchal to the degree that it is male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. It also involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women" (1997, 5). He continues: "Patriarchy is male-dominated in that positions of authority—political,
economic, legal, religious, educational, military, domestic—are generally reserved for men. . . .

When a woman finds her way into such positions, people tend to be struck by the exception to the rule, and wonder how she'll measure up against a man in the same position. It's a test we rarely apply to men" (ibid., 5). It is true that women are entering the public sphere in greater numbers, but a substantial shift in power will have to occur before women’s status is changed from subordinate to equal.

Women’s place in our society and the patriarchal nature of our culture are two of the issues that spearheaded the women’s movement. Most historians divide the women’s movement in the United States into two waves. The first wave commenced in the 1840s with Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s and Susan B. Anthony’s anti-slavery and temperance campaigns” (Humm 1992, 2). After the Civil War, the anti-slavery movement began to fade, but women continued their activism and carried this momentum forward to the National Woman Suffrage Association. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote was passed. With its main goal accomplished, the first wave ended. "But it was the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), first proposed to Congress in 1923 by the Woman’s Party, . . . which eventually became a focus for the new feminist movement of the late 1960s” (ibid., 3).

The second wave of feminism in the United States was called the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) or the contemporary women’s movement (McCormick 1994, 11). It was based on the concept that women were oppressed and that we needed to develop a theory and a politics that would free us from this oppression. Second-wave feminists also contend that we need to acknowledge women’s lives and experiences as a major source of knowledge. An example of this practice would be the relatively new women’s studies programs that can now be found in many college curriculums. In women’s studies, "The woman scholar calls into question some part of the historic distribution of power between men and women, as well as the history of that
distribution as it has been conventionally recorded, through a male lens" (Aisenberg and Harrington 1988, 86). The contemporary women's movement is believed to be ongoing, although some researchers now refer to the late 1990s as the "post-feminist culture of the United States" (Conway 1997, 1).

One of the issues that second-wave feminists addressed was women in the public workplace. Throughout history, domestic labor was not considered real work and, thus, women were not compensated for doing chores such as cooking, washing, and cleaning. Motherhood was a woman's "real job," although she was not compensated for being a mother either. "Choosing work over mothering was perverse; doing both, unthinkable. The motherhood issue faded when women's labor was needed—usually in wartime—but out it came when the economy contracted" (Bemikow 1997, 324) as in the 1930s during the Great Depression. According to Louise Bernikow, teaching and nursing jobs were considered acceptable for women earlier this century because they were an extension of women's nurturing capacity. In the late 1960s, however, the battle over women in the public workforce re-emerged. Modern feminists were determined to prove that women could successfully compete in the male-dominated work world.

Theoretically, federal legislation abolished the separation of women's and men's work in the 1960s. The Equal Pay Act was passed by Congress in 1963. At that time, women only earned 59 percent of the average male income. In 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which made race and sex discrimination by employers and labor unions illegal, was passed. Executive Order 11375 implemented an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and affirmative-action directives for business and government with regard to the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of women. By 1970, want ads were no longer classified by gender. "But ending gender discrimination in practice is a different task, one that has occupied lawyers, activists, and other groups for the past two and a half decades" (Bernikow 1997, 326).
Much controversy exists among feminists as to how and why women came to be subordinate in our culture. In *Feminist Social Theory*, Stevi Jackson refers to the three D’s of this dilemma: "In seeking to explain women’s oppression within Western societies, feminists have addressed three key questions: How is male dominance sustained? How is gender difference constituted? How do we make sense of the diversity of women’s experiences arising from differences of class, race or sexuality among us?" (1993, 3). Each type of feminism has a different answer to the triple problem of dominance, difference, and diversity. For example, Marxist or socialist feminists believe that class struggle or the economic exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie is at the core of all history’s problems, while radical feminists argue that a system of male domination or patriarchy is to blame. In the 1970s, feminists such as Ann Oakley (1972) wrote about gender as a social construction separate from one’s biological sex. By the 1980s, poststructuralist and postmodern feminists borrowed Jacques Derrida’s concept, "to deconstruct," and called for the deconstruction of gender. That is, "The category 'women' could no longer be regarded as fixed and stable. What it means to be a woman changes over time, varies across cultures, and shifts from one social context to another" (Jackson 1993, 5). Today, most feminists believe that many gender attributes are socially constructed; however, postmodern feminists are wary about formulating any theory about women’s subordination because they believe it would only reinforce essentialism or biologism.

Antagonism between the essentialists and the constructionists is one of the controversies in the Women’s Liberation Movement. In *Essentially Speaking*, Diana Fuss describes essentialism as "a belief in true essence—that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing" (1989, 2). In other words, a woman’s ability to bear children is seen as the basis of her subordinate position in society. Constructionism, the opposite of essentialism, states "that essence itself is a historical construction" (ibid., 2). Diana Fuss states that the
controversy between the constructionists and essentialists has been overstated and that the two philosophies are not polar opposites. She argues: "Constructionism operates as a more sophisticated form of essentialism. This is simply another way of saying that constructionism may be more normative, and essentialism more variable, than those of us who call ourselves poststructuralists hitherto have been willing to acknowledge" (1989, 119). According to Diana Fuss, the "essentialist/constructionist polemic" is paralyzing the women's movement, and both positions could circumvent this stalemate by acknowledging the other's strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, "A major reason why the category 'women' was called into question was that it often served to conceal differences among women themselves" (Jackson 1993, 5–6). Modern researchers now believe that the traditional mainstream feminist attitude was as elitist and exclusive as the white, Anglo-American, bourgeois, heterosexual male argument. For example, many women of color find their race to be more important than their gender. Thus, in the 1980s, black feminists like bell hooks began to criticize white women for having a hidden racist agenda. In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984), she claims that white women demand equality with white men, not black men. Therefore, bell hooks wonders if black women are only supposed to desire equality with black men? Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins maintains that most black women face three types of oppression: race, gender, and class. She uses the term "Black feminism," which means "African-American women as a group experience a world different from those who are not Black and female" (1991, 24). Meanwhile, women from developing regions such as the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia charge that the feminists from Europe and North America should question the international hierarchy of power that privileges them. These colonized women challenge the intricate relationship between gender and imperialism (Rupp 1998). As middle-class, white women enter the working world in greater numbers, they hire black women or individuals from developing countries to clean their houses and take care of their
children. Oftentimes, the implicit racism in this double standard has been overlooked by mainstream feminists.

The same argument that has been made about racial and ethnic stereotypes can also be applied to the issues of classicism and sexism. That is, gender is only one of the many prejudices these women endure. Working-women’s lives are good examples of this situation. In addition to facing the obstacles that all working women encounter in their occupations such as the wage gap, occupation segregation, and lack of mobility, working-class women also confront unique problems that might include no benefits, physically demanding labor, and boring, tedious jobs. On yet another front, lesbians are usually forced to conceal their sexual orientation from their employers and co-workers, for they would lose their jobs or experience threatening, hostile retaliation. Marny Hall discusses this no-win situation: "The choice [for lesbians] appears inevitably to lie between either negative outcomes as a consequence of disclosure (i.e., of having one’s sexuality identified) or negative outcomes as a consequence of concealment (i.e., of having one’s sexuality misunderstood)" (1993, 168). Much more research needs to be done before we can understand how race, imperialism, class, and sexual stereotypes affect women’s lives.

Since 1970, many more women have entered high-level, nontraditional professions, such as executive-level management, professional jobs, and scientific positions. However, the "glass ceiling" (Morrison et al., 1987) appears to be more of a barrier for women in male-dominated occupations than for women in traditionally feminine jobs. As Jeanette Cleveland notes, "Women tend to progress until mid-level management positions or, in academe, until they obtain entry-level assistant professor positions, but they do not in proportional numbers move beyond mid-management or to senior professor ranks" (1996, 139). Statistics verify the infamous "glass ceiling phenomenon." Patricia O’Brien, Dean of the Simmons Graduate School of Management in Boston, states: "The proportion of women in top management in America has stayed at around
2% for the past 40 years . . . The proportion of women in middle management over the same period has risen from perhaps 4% to 40%" ("Jill-in-a-Box," 1998, 3).

The integration of their private and public lives has been another major problem for many working women who have fought long and hard to have both a career and a family. Society continues to exert pressure on them to assume the primary responsibility for their homes and families and to make their careers secondary to their husbands'. Cynthia Epstein notes that our society still has a rigid "stratification system, with the bourgeois, patriarchally oriented family serving as the model in contemporary society" (1993, 343). Cultural stereotypes dictate what a proper relationship should be—monetarily, emotionally, and sexually. Therefore, dual-career families, single professional parents, and divorced individuals face special difficulties. In the dual-career family, for example, difficulties may arise if the wife outranks her husband or makes more money than he does. These societal "norms are supported and maintained by processes that make it difficult for women to enter and participate in highly demanding occupations" (ibid., 344).

Some aspects of my respondents' lives will illustrate how many women are paying a "high price" for not conforming to societal norms.

The result of these societal contradictions is that when women do enter the public arena, they immediately are confronted by many problems. If they act like men and are competitive and aggressive, they are labeled as too masculine. If they act in a manner that is more in agreement with female norms such as being deferential and soft-spoken, they are considered too weak and ineffectual for a professional job. Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington discuss this dilemma: "Caught between two sets of rules, women cannot avoid running afoul of one of them. If they seek to practice a profession by following the rules and habits long established by its male practitioners—competition, aggression—they offend the old conventions defining womanly virtue. But if women behave in a professional milieu according to the old female norms, if they are
patient, deferential, accommodating, smiling, soft-spoken, they appear weak. Consequently, they are likely to be regarded as not serious in their commitment to work, or incapable of exerting the necessary authority” (1988, 18). Thus, another issue to be discussed in this research is whether women can successfully integrate their private selves into the public workforce. Furthermore, if many women are successful in male-dominated fields, will cultural norms begin to change as well?

Three additional terms, which appear regularly in the literature of feminist methodology, need to be defined and discussed: resistance, agency, and subjectivity. “Feminists view resistance as vital both as an organizing concept for rereading women’s histories and as a mode of action creating possibilities for the transformation of the conditions of women’s oppression” (Sotirin and Gottfried 1996, 367). When feminists use the word, resistance, it “implies agency in the context of relations of domination and oppression. Agency involves taking action, whether that is done as a coming to awareness (consciousness) or as an embodied operation” (ibid). For example, my dissertation illustrates an act of resistance against traditional research methods by engaging in feminist methodology where the researcher and her respondents are on the same plane. In addition, by including myself in the research, I have raised my consciousness, my agency. Finally, Chris Weedon describes subjectivity: “‘Subjectivity’ is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (1997, 32). Hélène Cixous ([1975] 1976) believes that one aspect of women’s subjectivity that needs to be changed is the way our society uses language. As it is currently being used, language is a male discourse. Women need to create their own language and name their own experiences.

A final area that will be studied in this research is whether women view success in the same manner as men. Traditionally, most middle-class working men had wives at home who took care
of the rest of their lives—e.g., their homes, children, and social commitments. Success was then defined as achieving a high position with an equally high salary, and a man could work as many hours as necessary to achieve and maintain his career. Many women find it difficult to balance the status and power of a high-profile career with their home life. However, this balancing act may change. Marie Wilson theorizes: "When women enter this particular system, we bring the private world into the public sphere" (quoted in McKenna 1997, 261). Only then will the invisible line between the public and private spheres disappear and result in a more humanized world for women and men.

Another aspect of success is discussed in *On Our Own Terms*, where Maggie Mulqueen states that "competence and femininity are perceived to be mutually exclusive in our society" (1992, 19). That is, competent women are oftentimes viewed as unfeminine, and feminine women are considered incompetent. Either way, she theorizes that successful working women oftentimes have to deal with low self-esteem and depression because their behavior is not sex-role appropriate. The solution to this dilemma is threefold. First, society should redefine competence "so that valued behavior no longer resides solely in the male domain" (Mulqueen 1992, 176). Second, we should challenge "sex-role stereotypes and cultural norms that dictate what is perceived to be feminine" (ibid.). Third, women can then achieve balance in their lives by "electing to apportion time to and to focus on selected tasks on the basis of their current priority in the person’s life" (ibid.). Maggie Mulqueen believes that "balancing" is the solution to the "competence/femininity dilemma" (ibid., 124). She concludes that women need to continually renegotiate their work with themselves and their environment.

Following is a discussion of literature specific to the professions of my three respondents: academia, law, and computer technology. I do not address every aspect of these occupations.
Instead, my intent is to provide a broadly based understanding of women's work experiences within each profession.

Academia

It is not easy to think like a woman in a man's world, in a world of the professions; yet the capacity to do that is a strength which we can try to help our students develop. To think like a woman in a man's world means thinking critically, refusing to accept the givens, making connections between facts and ideas which men have left unconnected. . . . And in breaking those silences, naming ourselves, uncovering the hidden, making ourselves present, we begin to define a reality which resonates to us, which affirms our being, which allows the woman teacher and woman student alike to take ourselves, and each other seriously: meaning, to begin taking charge of our lives. (Rich 1979, 244-245)

Although Adrienne Rich's words are now twenty years old, they still apply to the academic world today. The issues of power, gender, and pedagogy are intensely controversial topics in academia. Jo Anne Pagano asserts: "Knowledge is power. Those who have it are more powerful than those who do not. Those who define what counts as knowledge are the most powerful" (1990, xvi). Since the dominant forms of knowledge in the public arena have always been male, women who challenge those androcentric privileged ways of knowing are considered dangerous. Following is a brief look at how women professors are surviving on university and college campuses.

To understand the experiences of female professors we must first examine the faculty categories that most universities use. The lowest level of full-time employment is the instructor. This individual probably does not have a Ph.D. and is hired on a temporary basis. A woman with
a new Ph.D. degree is hired as an assistant professor without tenure. She then has seven years to prove that she is qualified for the next level. An evaluation of publications, teaching and committee work, and professional and community involvement determines advancement to associate professor with tenure. Oftentimes, this process is "muddied" when another faculty member in the department has a personal vendetta against the individual "up for tenure," or she becomes pregnant or has other family responsibilities. If she is lucky enough to receive tenure, she is guaranteed life-time employment, unless some extremely unusual circumstances occur. A full professor, who has more prestige and earns a higher salary than the associate professor, is the final level that can be achieved in the academic community.  

On the surface, the statistics detailing women's rise in academia look good. For example, females now constitute "the majority of the nation's postsecondary students—53 percent" on the undergraduate level (Sadker and Sadker 1994, 165). On the graduate level, 40 percent of those students in doctoral training are women, and more than 30 percent of college and university faculty are female (Witt 1990). According to Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender (1992), there has also been a great increase in scholarship by and about women in the past twenty years. When one looks below the surface, however, large discrepancies occur. First, greater than 50 percent of doctoral students in majors such as English, psychology, and education—where salaries are low—are women. Only 11 percent of biological science graduate students are women, and only 2 percent in the hard sciences—where salaries are high (Sonnert 1990). Second, "Assessments of staffing patterns reveal that not only do men outnumber women at all professional ranks and in administrative positions, but the higher the rank or position, the more dramatic the imbalance" (Sadker and Sadker 1994, 177). Furthermore, "Women in certain fields, and those belonging to minority groups are consistently paid less than men in the same positions" (Moses 1997, A60). Most women are employed by two- or four-year colleges and hold part-time or nontenure-track
positions. Third, women (and other minorities) have difficulty finding mentors who will serve as role models or help them handle specific issues such as maternity leave. Fourth, much of scholarship done by women has been ignored or marginalized. "Consequently, feminist scholarship might be ghettoized, confined to a primarily female audience but failing to transform research and teaching in fundamental ways" (Grant and Ward 1996, 167; Stacy and Thorne 1985). Fifth, women and men often receive different work assignments, with women doing more undergraduate teaching, advising, and committee work, which does not help them earn tenure (Kulis and Miller-Loessi 1992).

When feminism is added to the female/male educational agenda, the problems are compounded. Sue Middleton describes this situation: "Academic feminists are multiply marginal. As women, we are a minority among male academics; as women academics, we are anomalous among women and are seen as elitist by some grassroots feminist activists. As feminists, we are ‘other’ to some women academics. As feminist academics teaching women’s studies, we are associated with a vulnerable field of marginal status" (1993, 102). Accordingly, feminist educators often say they are working in hostile atmospheres, where they lack support from other faculty members and the administration.

Since my first respondent, Brenda Daly, considers herself a feminist pedagogue, it is important to understand the political climate at her institution. Brenda works at Iowa State University, a land-grant university, which is located in Ames, Iowa. In 1998, this coeducational university had an enrollment of more than 25,585 students and a faculty of 1,797. It is a typical scientific research university, except the number of tenured female professors is much lower than the national average of 45 percent.⁵ According to the assistant provost, quoting from the university’s Fact Book, 1998–1999, "Out of a total 1,797 professors at this university, only 225 or 19.3% are tenured women professors." Most of the women are on a nontenure track, which
means the majority of females have a temporary status, and most of these women are engaged in traditionally female areas such as education and liberal arts. By contrast, the majority of the male professors receive tenure, which the assistant provost stated was partly due to the university’s emphasis on science and technology. "A slow but steady increase in the number of tenured female professors has occurred at this institution," she said. "However, it is not unusual to have some years when no females reach the rank of associate professor with tenure such as happened in 1992–93." The assistant provost added that women professors at her school tell her about two major problems that exist in the academic world. First, the seven-year probationary period when a woman is "on the tenure track" usually coincides with the child-bearing years. Many women say that there are not enough hours in a day to satisfy the demands of their careers and their young families. Second, if they are in science and technology, they feel very isolated from other women. Men do not have to deal with these situations.

The conditions that exist at Iowa State can be found all over the United States. Women are making progress on college campuses; however, many disparities in pay and promotion still exist. Diane Carroll and Lynn Franey cite these latest statistics: "In just under 25 years, the percentage of women faculty members has increased from 22.5 percent to 33.8 percent, according to the study released . . . by the American Association of University Professors. But many women are in lower-level positions such as lecturers and instructors; only 18.7 percent of the top-ranked category of full professors were women in 1997–98" (1999, K7717). These numbers are also consistent throughout the Midwest. In 1997, for example, women faculty were only 14 percent of the full professors at the University of Kansas (Lawrence), 13 percent at the University of Missouri (Columbia), and 16 percent at the University of Missouri (Kansas City). This same study lists the number of females working at the lower levels of academia. In 1997–98, "women represented 55.6 percent of lecturers; 58.6 percent of instructors and 46.8 percent of assistant
professors" (ibid.). According to this study, "a variety of reasons [account for] why women lag behind men: from subtle discrimination to traditionally lower expectations for women to the strains of juggling career and family" (ibid.).

A committee at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) just completed a five-year study evaluating the status of women faculty in its School of Science. The committee was composed of tenured women faculty and three senior male faculty who had administrative experience. They concluded "that unequal treatment of women who come to MIT makes it more difficult for them to succeed, causes them to be accorded less recognition when they do, and contributes so substantially to a poor quality of life that these women can actually become negative role models for young women. . . ." They continued: "The heart of the problem is that equal talent and accomplishment are viewed as unequal when seen through the eyes of prejudice. . . . There is a perception among many women faculty that there may be gender related inequalities in distribution of space and other resources, salaries, and distribution of awards and other forms of recognition. Currently, a glass ceiling exists within many departments" (MIT Faculty Newsletter, March 1999, 6). Moreover, the women faculty said they felt "invisible" and "marginalized" in their respective departments. The lack of power experienced by these women is verified by the following revelation: "As of 1999, there has never been a woman department Head, associate Head, or center director in the School of Science in the history of MIT" (ibid., 13). Although some individuals stated that "the masculine culture of MIT was to blame and little could be done to change it" (ibid., 6), others took steps to change the situation. For example, an MIT Dean actively recruited women for faculty positions. The result was that "the percent of women faculty in Science exceeds 10% in 1999, a first for MIT. This year alone [1999] there will be a remarkable 40% increase in the percent of tenured women faculty in the School of Science" (ibid., 11). If a prestigious school like MIT can admit that there is gender discrimination on its
campus, other institutions should also examine their hiring and promotion practices for unequal treatment of women.

Societal norms, that assign public roles to men and private spheres to women, make it particularly difficult for women to succeed in the male-dominated academic world because it is in that world that we encounter the mind/body, rational/emotional, man/woman dichotomies. Consequently, many academic women experience a great deal of stress when they are unable to follow long-established men’s rules and are forced to create new roles and norms that fit women’s knowledge and experiences. Although the condition of women academics is slowly improving, there is still a long way to go before gender equality exists on all of our nation’s college and university campuses.

Law

Law is another male-dominated profession where women have had difficulty gaining admission. According to Louise Bernikow, "Women were first admitted to law schools at the same time as medical schools [1876], but resistance to them was stronger. It was impossible to contrive law as a nurturing thing or pretend that female lawyers were not going entirely against the cultural grain by intruding on the public sphere" (1997, 325). When local colleges refused to admit women students into their law programs, women such as Ellen Spenser Mussey and Emma M. Gillet opened their own law school in Washington, D. C. "By 1920, although 47 percent of college students were female, only 3 percent of lawyers were" (ibid., 325). Even with this slow start, women have entered the field of law, one of the last bastions of white male power, in droves.

As with academia, there has been an enormous increase in the number of women lawyers in recent years. "Between 1970 and 1990, the percentage of women lawyers in the United States
rose from less than 3 percent to 22 percent” (Poor 1996, 195). Furthermore, women now constitute nearly 50 percent of our nation’s law students (Harrington 1993, 15). Once again, however, women have been denied access to the highest ranks of the legal profession. Statistics illustrate this discrepancy: Approximately 90 percent of the federal and states judges are men, prosecutors are almost all men, and only 10 percent (or less) are law partners and tenured law professors (ibid., 15).

The chief instigator of this gender discrepancy in the law profession is the American Bar Association. "Starting at the turn of the century, bar associations increasingly limited bar admissions to graduates of bar association-approved law schools” (Poor 1996, 195). According to Daniel Poor, this practice was begun in order to elevate the incomes and social status of lawyers. This elitist practice was also instituted "to limit the access of ethnoreligious minorities to the bar”; however, it excluded women of all colors from law school as well (ibid., 195). When women were admitted in large numbers to law schools in the late 1960s, the results were astounding. "The enrollment of women in American Bar Association-approved law schools increased 1650 percent" (ibid.). Unfortunately, more hurdles remained. Making the transition from law school to law practice is not necessarily an easy one for many women.

The majority of lawyers work in one of three areas: business, government, or private practice. Businesses are one of the fastest growing fields—now hiring lawyers to handle their legal work, which reduces their overall costs. These lawyers have predictable hours and are paid well but do not have much job security nor advancement potential. Lawyers working for the government also have predictable hours and civil service protections, but their salaries are lower than business or private practice, and career advancement is limited. The majority of women lawyers work for the government—on all levels. Finally, private practice can be divided into two categories: large versus small firms. Currently, the large law firms are becoming bigger, and
solo practices are becoming less economical. Daniel Poor states: "Generally, attorney income and prestige decline with firm size" (1996, 196). The pinnacle of private law practice is what is known as the Wall Street firm or those lawyers who belong to New York's largest financial law firms. Cynthia Epstein describes these prestigious firms: "Their clients are the largest corporations, commercial banks, and investment houses, and a few rich men and women" (1993, 176). In other words, they have a lot of power and control vast quantities of money. Since there has been so much prejudice against women in the legal profession, it is particularly difficult for women to penetrate the Wall Street firms.

Most private law firms consist of associates and partners. "Associates are hired directly out of law school to work for a multiyear trial period, after which they are made partners or fired" (Poor 1996, 197). Most associates do not have their own clients and are paid a standard yearly salary. They are totally dependent on the partners to give them legal work. For example, tax lawyers have the highest billable rates, and they will pick only the best associates to work for their clients. A high number of billable hours is the main criterion used to promote an individual into a partnership position. Most associates are expected to work long, unpredictable hours. According to Daniel Poor, "The generalized social expectation that women will care for home and children hinders their ability to display commitment in the form of complete work availability" (ibid., 197). "Professionals are always on call," Daniel Poor continues. "They demonstrate commitment through availability" (ibid., 197). Thus, most partners are male and are paid by "points" or the amount of business they bring into the firm. Women have a difficult time generating much business because most clients don't hire women to handle large transactions or to litigate big cases. Consequently, a "glass ceiling" exists for women in most private law firms, where advancement into the highest echelons is usually reserved for male attorneys.
As one might expect, women encounter many obstacles as they enter the law profession. First, "women's starting salaries are lower than men's (median $37,000 versus $40,000 in 1991). These sectorial income disparities increase with experience" (Poor 1996, 197). Second, women have difficulty putting in extra time at work because they are also expected to take care of their families. In *Women and Law*, Cynthia Epstein discusses the two "greedy institutions" that women lawyers are expected to work for: their professional job as a lawyer and their domestic life as a wife and mother (1993, 318). Third, "Taking parental leaves has a negative impact on women's partnership chances, whereas having children has a positive impact on men's partnership chances" (Hagan and Kay 1995 quoted in Poor 1996, 197).Fourth, women experience a double bind when they work in a quintessential male culture such as law where it is difficult to maintain their female identity in a strongly masculine profession. According to Jennifer Pierce, "Men are expected to be aggressive, manipulative, and instrumental, and women are not. Women who display these qualities are regarded as 'unladylike,' 'domineering,' 'strident,' and 'shrill'" (1995, 113–114). If women behave in a more feminine manner, they are considered "too nice" or "not forceful enough." This double standard is especially difficult for women litigators who are expected to be strong adversaries in the courtroom. Finally, whether women work for a business, the government, or a private firm, they usually encounter the "glass ceiling," which means they have difficulty advancing beyond the middle level in any job.11

Although women lawyers experience conflicting pressures from their colleagues, their families, and from society—all of which have norms as to how females are to behave—they continue to pursue careers in law in increasing numbers. Paula J. Dubock and Kathryn Borman maintain: "The importance of opening access to the study and practice of law cannot be understated. It gave women the means and leverage to make corporations and government agencies accountable to legislation barring discrimination against women" (1996, xvi).
Of all the sciences—both hard and soft—computer technology has the most difficulty attracting and retaining women. A "Women and Science" Conference Report verifies this fact: "Women remain under-represented at all degree levels in the computer sciences, and in recent years, the proportion of degrees awarded to women in this field has dropped. In 1994, women earned about 29 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded in the computer sciences and 15 percent of doctorates. This is a substantial increase from 1973 when women earned less than 15 percent of computer science degrees at all levels. However, the current proportion represents a decrease from 1986 when women accounted for 36 percent of all bachelor's and 30 percent of master's degrees. The proportion of computer science faculty who are women has also declined in recent years" (1997, 19).

Computing is the newest of the three male-dominated professions in my study; therefore, it is easier to document how women in the United States have been mostly excluded from this power domain from its beginning. From 1938–1941, John Vincent Atanasoff and his graduate student Clifford Berry invented a computer at Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.¹² It was the first machine to use electronic digital drum storage (computer memory) and electronic digital circuitry for arithmetic processing. Although controversy still surrounds this issue, Atanasoff is considered by some individuals to be the father of the electronic digital computer, which is called the ABC (Atanasoff-Berry Computer).¹³ When World War II began, John Atanasoff went to Washington, D.C., to work for the navy. The patent for his computer was left behind and was never filed. Thus, most history books incorrectly credit John Mauchly and Presper Eckert, Jr., with co-inventing the first general-purpose electronic digital computer in 1946 at the University of Pennsylvania. Their machine, the ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator), like
the Atanasoff-Berry Computer from which it was derived, was designed for scientific calculations and laid the technological basis for a new computer age.

The federal government is credited with giving digital technology its initial thrust. During World War II, the Department of Defense poured millions of dollars into the development of computer technology for national security reasons. For example, the military financed the ENIAC computer. "By 1950, the United States government was spending $17 million a year on computer research and development for improved guidance systems and atomic bombs" (Lubar 1992, 312). Also in 1950, Mauchly and Eckert, the engineers who built the ENIAC, went into business for themselves and invented the first commercial computer, UNIVAC (Universal Automatic Computer), for the Census Bureau. The Information Age had begun.

Although most people are unaware of this fact, a few women played a strong role in the early development of computers. Since World War II caused a labor shortage in the United States, women with scientific and mathematical backgrounds became some of the earliest programmers. "When ENIAC first became operational, for example, its instruction manual and much of the early programming was done by Adele Goldstine" (Lubar 1993, 361). Six other women also worked on the ENIAC's programming. "At first they worked only from wiring diagrams, because they were viewed as security risks and kept from the computer room. . . . Despite the obstacles, the women succeeded; even the test run was flawless" (Adelson 1997, 7).

Since programming was initially considered a low-status job, it was thought appropriate for women to do that type of work. The women who sat at the early calculating machines were even called "computers." Although Admiral Grace Hopper was on the team that developed the first compiler, which translated mathematical languages into the binary code for the UNIVAC machine in 1951, women's initial computing success did not last. "As the field expanded, men came to outnumber women. . . . In the business world, programming was a prestigious, highly paid job,
and so was mostly reserved for men" (Ibid., 1993, 362). Other than Admiral Hopper’s work, any knowledge of the part females played in the development of digital technology has been mostly obliterated, and most people still associate images of computing with a man’s world.

As with the Industrial Age that preceded it, the Information Age has not benefited all individuals. The personal computing machines (PCs) that we use today were initially believed to be equally available to everyone. According to Steven Lubar, however, most people "failed to recognize that technological revolutions generally reinforce the power structure in which they take place; they rarely overthrow it" (1993, 345). The "power structures" that have been reinforced in the United States are all masculine domains—the military, government, science, and business worlds. The military, one of the strongest perpetrators of hegemonic masculinity, is credited with being the primary initiator of computer technology. As a result, women have been excluded from technology in general and computing in particular starting with its inception and continuing to the present day.

Nevertheless, research indicates that females "are learning to master computers. . . ." *Forecast* magazine reports that more than 25 percent of women have home computers and that more than a third of the people logging on to on-line services are women" (Adelson 1997, 7). More significantly, it has also been shown that more women are using computers at work—at all job levels. Females, however, are still being excluded from the power domains. "*Computerworld*, a trade newspaper, has reported that only one out of four computer operations managers is a woman" (Adelson 1997, 7). Thus, "The computer industry, especially in marketing and sales, continues to be male-dominated. The female participation rate in IT [information technology] jobs declined from 31% in 1983 to 29% in 1996" (Strassmann 1999, 2). Mary Herring, a professor at Morningside College, concurs: "Technical competence is seen as a key source of men’s power over women, providing them with the capacity to command higher incomes and attain scarce
jobs. . . . Women may have knowledge about the technology, but the key to power is flexible, transferable skills that remain the property of men" (1994, 8). If males continue to control computer technology, the distribution of power between women and men, the rich and the poor, whites and people of color, will grow even larger. Looking to the future, then, women need to aim their computer careers towards the information management workforce.\textsuperscript{15}

In the past sixty years, or since the original Atanasoff-Berry computer was conceived, computers and networking have influenced almost every aspect of life in the United States, and it is predicted that they will remain the defining technology well into the twenty-first century. Unfortunately, we have also seen that technology is a culture that is primarily masculine, that it is characterized by the absence of women, and that computers may affect the distribution of power from women to men even more than it has in the past. According to the National Science Foundation, "The crisis in computer science must be stemmed. The recent decline in computer science degrees awarded to women must be reversed, and the public perception of computers as a male-dominated endeavor must be corrected" (1997, 43). Since we are now well into the Information Age, it is more important than ever for white women and people of color to enter into and successfully compete in the field of computer technology.

This chapter has examined the world of women and work. Specifically, it has illustrated that the number of women in male-dominated professions has increased significantly, but not necessarily their status. Then, it looked closer at the three professions of my respondents. Next, Chapter 3 will present the life stories of my three respondents: Brenda, a professor; Meena, a lawyer; and Jennifer, a computer scientist.
CHAPTER 3. BRENDA'S, MEENA'S, AND JENNIFER'S LIFE STORIES

Brenda’s Story

I first met Brenda when she was a speaker at an afternoon tea sponsored by the local YWCA. The event was to honor young women students who had received scholarships for the upcoming school year. Brenda’s speech was articulate and personal as she talked about her relationship with her mother. At the end of her speech, she introduced her mother, Arline, who was visiting for a few weeks. I later heard Brenda read one of her papers in a graduate seminar. This time, her story was an even more powerful, moving account about her struggles to achieve personal independence and professional success. When I later asked if she would be interested in being one of my respondents, she enthusiastically agreed. Brenda said she was determined to share her life story, no matter how painful, so that she could be a mentor for young women who had experienced similar circumstances.

Brenda Daly was born Brenda Ivah Oland on June 27, 1941, in Hibbing, Minnesota. She was the second child of seven, with one older sister (Una Fay) and five younger siblings (three brothers and two sisters). Since their father was in the navy and away from home during World War II (1941–1946), five years separated Una Fay and Brenda from the rest of the family. Thus, Brenda said it was like living in two different families.

Arline Hought Oland, Brenda’s mother, was born in 1921. She did not finish high school because she was pregnant with her first child. Although Arline was an insecure woman—"who was too timid to make phone calls and rarely left the house" (Daly 1998, 44)—she was skilled in numerous domestic arts such as quilting, sewing, cooking, and gardening. Jorgen Oland, Brenda’s father, held all of the power in the family. He was born in Norway in 1920 and immigrated to the United States with his family when he was six years old. Upon completing high
school, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he primarily worked as an electrician. After the war, he repaired transformers and sold electrical appliances. Brenda remembered that her father was a highly verbal man, and it mystified her as to why he did not go to college on the GI bill. She added: "I think he was held back for a time by alcoholism and probably by mental illness." In her book *Authoring a Life*, Brenda describes her father as "more of a boy than a man, terribly insecure about his authoritarian views" (ibid., 146).

Brenda's family was Scandinavian, Protestant, and working class. Ethnically, both parents were Norwegian, although Arline was also Irish and Swedish. Arline came from a rural, middle-class background. Her father was a wealthy farmer who owned 3000 acres of land in North Dakota. Jorgen's family went from "riches to rags." In Norway, the Olands were quite well-to-do, but after moving to the United States in 1926, they lost everything in the depression. Like most Scandinavians, the Oland family belonged to the Lutheran Church; however, it was Jorgen's decision to become a member of one of the most conservative Lutheran branches, Missouri Synod, which did not ordain women as ministers. Jorgen also joined the right-wing, anti-Communist organization, the John Birch Society, in the late 1950s. According to Brenda, "I believe my father joined the John Birch Society . . . to rationalize the secret crimes which allowed him to claim 'masculine' superiority. The Society's defense of the American constitution against attacks from 'the enemy within' gave my father a self-aggrandizing cover-story for his fear of governmental authority" (ibid., 38).

In 1942 or 1943, Brenda's family moved to Hanks, North Dakota. That change of residence was followed by a series of moves around the state of North Dakota due to her father's job transfers. Since money was always tight in their large family, the Olands did not own many material possessions such as a television set or a car. The family's lack of money was impetus for Brenda to begin working at a young age. For example, she remembers applying for a job at a
shoe store when she was in fifth grade. Brenda’s mom also helped stretch the family’s budget by sewing and recycling clothes for her children, and by gardening and canning fruits and vegetables. Although she had difficulty working with numbers and often asked her two oldest daughters for help, Arline ran a small sewing business from her home as well.

The seeds for Brenda’s life-long struggle with the United States’ male-dominated society were sowed when she was young: “What I observed as a child was that men are in charge. They were the principals; they were the bankers. Their voices were big. . . . Their words defined reality.” In her family, men were “extremely patriarchal and controlling.” Brenda tells this amazing story about her maternal grandmother: "My grandfather didn’t even allow my grandmother spending money. So, she had this secret little arrangement with the major department stores in Williston, North Dakota, that she would go in and pretend to buy something and what they would really do was just give her cash.” Brenda’s early mentors, her mother’s sisters, were all strong women who excelled in "domestic creativity" but always deferred to their husbands. In particular, her Aunt Jackie was “in charge but couldn’t show it.” Thus, Brenda searched for role models in the great love of her life, reading. "And I remember looking for [female] models and Brenda Starr, girl reporter in the comic books, was one of the few. I certainly didn’t find them [women mentors] in literature. I didn't find writers who were women or who portrayed women in the fullness of being.” Early in her life, Brenda had already discovered that women are marginal and have been excluded from much of the informal and formal knowledge that is taught in our society and by our schools.

Probably the most influential happening in Brenda’s life occurred when she was about seven years old. At that time, Brenda became aware that her father was sexually molesting her older sister, Una Fay. Since Brenda and Una Fay shared a bed, Brenda heard her sister struggling to ward off their father’s advances. In 1952, Jorgen also made sexual advances to Brenda but
suddenly restrained himself. Brenda writes: "Both my sister and I recall being carried from our beds into his, as if we were meant to take his wife's place, and both of us recall his first touch as gentle. Our accounts differ dramatically from this point on, the greatest difference being that my father's abuse of my sister was more violent and that his abuse of her continued for many years" (Daly 1998, 29). To this day, Brenda does not know why her father stopped making sexual advances to her since he later molested both of Brenda's younger sisters.3 Later, Brenda discovered: "The abuse began with my older sister in 1947, when she was only seven, and continued until 1968 when my youngest sister left home at age sixteen" (ibid., ix). Simple arithmetic indicates that the incest continued, unabated, for 21 years!

When she was still in grade school, Brenda became intrigued with being a "'nice' girl, a 'good' girl" (Daly 1998, 31). She saw the world as black or white—either you were bad or you were good. In her mind, Brenda believed that her older sister was being abused for being "too independent," which is what a "bad girl" would do. Therefore, she thought she had to be perfect. She explains her position: "Part of the problem is that, for a girl, knowledge is often equated with being 'bad.' Since only 'bad' girls know things, especially sexual things, I constructed a false public persona: I was an 'innocent' girl, a 'good' girl who was smart but who didn't understand dirty jokes" (ibid., 31). Brenda hoped this public facade would also provide a psychological safety net around her so that her father would not abuse her.

As she grew older, Brenda's popularity soared. At the age of 12, she began to date. During the summer of her seventh-grade year, she remembers Lester Coil knocking on their screen door and asking her to go to a movie. By eighth grade, dating was an important part of Brenda's young life. Brenda attended high school in Minot, North Dakota, where she described herself as a "schoolaholic, a teenager addicted to school" (Daly 1998, 103). To escape the abuse that was taking place in her home, Brenda participated in as many school activities as possible. She was a
cheerleader; on the newspaper, yearbook, and literary journal staffs; a homecoming princess, a Thespian, and was considered one of the most popular girls at school. Brenda reminisced: "So on the surface, for that era, I looked as if I was the girl who had everything. Isn't that odd?"

However, Brenda continued to receive mixed signals from the adults in her life about her popularity. Her Lutheran minister, for example, disgustedly informed her "that dancing was 'like having intercourse standing up'" (ibid, 34). As for her grade point average, Brenda never let it go too high because she knew that boys didn't like smart girls. Like most young girls growing up in the 1950s, Brenda believed that females are not supposed to be intelligent, liberated, nor have a career. Instead, she again concentrated on being "a 'nice' girl, a 'good' girl," and her "public persona" allowed her to appear as a "smiling and cheerful 'all American girl'" (ibid. 31).

In 1959, Brenda graduated from high school into a booming United States economy. "Eisenhower was President!" It was also on the day of her high school graduation that she learned her maternal grandparents would pay for her room, board, and tuition at the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks. Like many people in her generation, Brenda was the first member in her family to attend college. As she recalls: "I went to college before the women's movement, so I had no vocabulary for articulating the discontent I felt. Only in retrospect did I understand the consequences of the absence of women in the literature curriculum which turned into my major."

Consequently, Brenda labels her four years of college as her "miseducation." She senses that something is wrong but is unable to protest these incongruities in her post-secondary education.

Once again, Brenda was very popular and active in college. She participated in the same activities that occupied so much of her time in high school: cheerleading, journalism, and a new activity—sorority life. She adds: "Of course, I thought I had to be president of every activity." By her senior year, she was one of two women who was nominated for Outstanding Senior Women
and she was in *Who’s Who*. Once again, her grades "were in the B range." In 1963, Brenda received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of North Dakota.

Brenda ends her collegiate experience with the same ambiguity in which she began it. She talked about her lack of options: "I did not even know what choices were open to me when I was a senior in college in 1963. Everybody was getting married, so I did too. And, I could not figure out what kind of profession to enter, and so I became an English teacher almost by default. Naturally, I became a secondary English teacher because that’s what women did. You certainly weren’t presumptuous enough to think you would ever go on to become a university professor."

Looking back, Brenda observes that she received contradictory messages from society—she could go to college but only to receive her "MRS." degree. Furthermore, her job options were limited to stereotypical female professions; therefore, she quickly picked up her teaching certificate during her senior year so she would be employable. Although she was able to leave her working-class background and receive four years of advanced education, she was unable to achieve equality in her career plans.

In 1963, Brenda married a fellow student at the University of North Dakota. Denis Daly was tall, dark, handsome, and would probably earn a lot of money—a good catch! Brenda did not realize that the marriage would not be an equal one: "At the time of my marriage, despite my fear of men, I did not fully understand how this great imbalance of power [between women and men] would affect me. I was certain that, if I had an income of my own, I would maintain my equality" (Daly 1998, 66). However, she did not take her first secondary teaching job because she was pregnant and started graduate school at the University of Minnesota instead.

During her first semester’s final examinations, in 1964, her only child was born, an experience Brenda acknowledges as one of the highlights of her life: "And when my son was born, I embraced motherhood, perhaps one of the most seductive institutions ever imagined. I
wanted to be the best possible mother for my son—all that my parents had not been for me. Most of all I vowed *never* to abandon my son, always to love and protect him" (Daly 1933, 66). Brenda immediately fell into the societal trap of trying to be the perfect mother. She wanted to protect her son from the abuse she experienced as a child. Of course, maternal perfection is impossible, and Brenda recognized later that she was just setting herself up to be a scapegoat when her marriage eventually went awry.

Although Brenda is a new mother and happily married, her parents’ marriage was breaking up. Arline Oland sued Jorgen for a divorce in 1968 after Jorgen, stating his desire for a divorce, moved out of the family home. In retrospect, Brenda analyzed the situation: "I think my father initiated the divorce because he was beginning to be overwhelmed by guilt." Late in his life, he repeatedly tried to talk about his incestuous behavior and, on his death bed, commented, "There’s more than one version of the Heidi story" (Daly 1998, 145). One can only imagine what Brenda’s father meant by referring to the childhood classic book, *Heidi,* but certainly it had something to do with the unrestrained, sexualized love that he had for his daughters.

Next, Brenda pursued a series of secondary teaching jobs, so she could support her husband’s aspiring career: "Then, of course, I did the typical, traditional thing. I followed my husband around. I taught two years in Bloomington, Minnesota. Then, he went to graduate school at Harvard, and I was a teacher for two years in a suburb of Cambridge, Massachusetts. When his job took us back to the Twin Cities, I taught two more years—this time twelfth grade. During the sixties, I taught tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Finally, awakened by the women’s movement, I asked: When is it my turn?" Up to this point, Brenda’s life was always secondary to her husband’s, and she was expected to make all of the sacrifices in their relationship. She had supported her husband as he traveled cross country, changing jobs three times, and she was a
good mother to their son. All of this was about to change, as Brenda’s personal life began to unravel.

In 1969, one of Brenda’s younger sisters told her that their father had also sexually molested his two youngest daughters. Brenda was devastated. She writes: "I thought that, once my older sister [Una Fay] left home in 1959, the abuse had stopped. I recognized that by not telling anyone about my sister’s suffering, I had allowed my younger sisters to become incest victims as well. My guilt intensified. . . . How could my life matter now that I knew that my sisters, like prisoners of war, had continued to suffer repeated trauma during the very years that I, who had escaped from home, was enjoying college?" (1998, 35-36). In an attempt to rescue her youngest sister, Darcy, who was still at home, Brenda turned to the psychiatrist Sigmund Freud to read about father-daughter incest. In "Case History of Dora," for example, Freud takes the side of an adulterous father who is using his daughter, Dora, as sexual bait for the cuckolded husband of his mistress. Once again, Brenda has encountered the barriers of her patriarchal society and discovered "how voiceless—how truly unheard—women are" (ibid., 36). Seemingly without hope, she "commits academic suicide" by deliberately failing "Introduction to Linguistics," a graduate course at the University of Minnesota. Brenda concludes: "Finally I had learned the lesson that my father, my minister, my linguistics professor, and Freud had been teaching me: since men controlled women’s bodies and since language belonged to men, I was helpless" (ibid., 36).

For about five years during the 1970s, Brenda suffered from depression as she struggled with the painful realities of her life: the fact that she had given up jobs and moved three times for her husband, the indecision about whether to choose a professional career or primarily devote her life to her family, and "the horrifying revelations of [her] two younger sisters" (Daly 1998, 69). She did return to graduate school in 1971 to pursue a master’s degree when her family moved to Mankato, Minnesota; however, she delayed completion of her degree. In 1972, Brenda began to
read Joyce Carol Oates, a contemporary North American author who seemed to speak to her, and she realized that she was not alone in her struggle. Oates' writing not only helped Brenda comprehend her father's incestuous acts, but allowed her to find her own voice as well. In addition, the women's liberation movement, which began in the late 1960s, gave her courage to challenge the gender role conditioning that she had received so far.

Although there were many major events that occurred in her life during the 1970s, Brenda credits one in particular with helping her start on the road to independence. In 1974, a girlfriend asked Brenda to go with her to Paris where they would attend a French Language School. Her husband opposed the trip: "He just went insane about this idea, as if I couldn't possibly go anywhere without him, and he wouldn't give me any money which made me very, very angry! I realized how much autonomy I'd given up because I no longer had a job. I didn't even have any money I could call my own. It was all under his control." In a burst of independence, Brenda accepted another offer of financial aid from a girlfriend in New York City and went to Paris anyway. This episode involved a "major shift in confidence" for Brenda. It provided the impetus for her to return to graduate school. Looking back, she credits it with being "a turning point" in her life. Meanwhile, her husband and she were experiencing marital problems and separated for a short time.

In 1976, Brenda's father died at the age of 56. Brenda describes one of their final meetings in *Authoring a Life*: "In one of our last conversations, at a time I had separated from my husband and was planning a divorce, my father tried to counsel me back into my bad marriage. 'Don't play father to me,' I said, finally voicing my opposition to his hypocrisy. He looked stricken, and his eyes begged me to rescue him. I refused" (Daly 1998, 151). Then, Brenda was able to write in the guest register at his funeral: "I am my father's daughter" (ibid., 137). That simple declarative sentence was the beginning of Brenda's recovery from her painful childhood.
memories: "It was the first time I declared myself in public, claiming both my father's authority and his secret—and its shadow—as my own" (ibid.). Brenda will now begin to tell her own story, "authoring her life," challenging the patriarchal authority that her father and society have held over her for so long. "By finally recognizing myself as a victim too—in the sense that my reality was denied—I began to claim strength as a survivor" (ibid., 135).

In her attempt to be a perfect wife and mother, Brenda had sacrificed her professional goal of attaining a doctorate in literary studies at the University of Minnesota. Instead, she concentrated on perfectionism in her domestic roles. She writes: "To this ideal, I was trapped into playing the part of the sacrificial mother. Ironically, I had made a vow of maternal perfection in order to avoid repeating what had happened to me as a child" (Daly 1998, 66). To escape this "trap of institutionalized motherhood," Brenda "commit[s] an act of destruction that would remove [her] forever from the contest of perfect motherhood: [in 1976, she] chose to have an abortion" (ibid.). Although Brenda makes it sound like the abortion was her fault, the facts illustrate that the abortion was the act of a desperate woman. After an ovariotomy, her doctor told her that she could not become pregnant. Subsequently, Brenda became pregnant with a child that her husband did not want. She said: "I felt betrayed by the medical profession and abandoned by my husband. I could not afford to raise the child on my own," . . . thus "I felt forced, in a violent culture, to choose either my child or myself when it should have been possible for me to choose both my child and myself" (ibid., 67).

It was during this same time period that Brenda began to study the Kronos myth, which also became the interpretive model for her master's thesis. In that Greek myth, Kronos, who was afraid that his children would attempt to steal his power, orders his wife, Rhea, to give all of her newborn children to him. Rhea obeys her husband for years as she watches him eat each of her infants. Finally, Rhea decides to deceive her husband and gives him a stone wrapped in cloth to
swallow instead of her next child, a son named Zeus. Kronos eats the rock, totally unaware of the fact that it is not one of his children. Rhea hides Zeus until he grows up, then persuades him to kill his father. Zeus slays Kronos and becomes the most powerful Greek god on Mount Olympus.

As she studied the Kronos myth, Brenda increasingly identified with Rhea, whom she defined as "the loser" (Daly 1998, 69). Either Rhea could watch all of her children being devoured by her husband, or she could encourage her son to commit patricide. Furthermore, the story reminded Brenda of what her own mother had done: "Hadn't my mother sacrificed her daughters and sons to placate my father?" (ibid., 68). Analyzing the riddle of the Kronos myth helped Brenda to solve a riddle in her own life. She could not be a loving wife/mother and also attend graduate school, full-time, in order to become a college professor. Brenda concludes, "I had deferred completion of my degree because I was afraid to face the truth of the Kronos myth: that I could not avoid sacrificing my son to the violence of a divorce" (ibid., 69).

In the spring of 1977, Brenda received her Master's Degree in English from Mankato State University. She next insisted upon her right to pursue a Ph.D. at a school of her choice, and the Daly family moved back to Minneapolis in the summer of '78. Brenda ironically sums up the results of that move: "I did manage to get back to graduate school—though it cost me my marriage." Like many women, Brenda was unable to pursue a professional career in the public arena and also maintain her status in the private domain.

During her second year in graduate school, 1979, Brenda filed for a divorce. She was about to be taught another difficult societal lesson: "My divorce taught me that those (men) with money, those with the ability to hire the most verbally manipulative and intimidating lawyers, will invariably get what they want" (Daly 1998, 65). Brenda and her ex-husband were given joint custody of their son. Brenda’s son, however, chose to live with his father. He explained his decision to his mother: "Dad has no friends." Nevertheless, "losing her son" was the most painful
part of the divorce for Brenda: "Giving up the daily parenting of my son was, by far, the most painful decision I have ever made. I missed him, missed kissing his cheek each morning to wake him for school, missed seeing his bright smile after school, missed his intelligence and humor" (ibid., 70). In 1982, after two and a half years of legal maneuverings and nineteen years of marriage, Brenda was divorced.

Brenda and her mother, Arline, now had much in common. They had both been through a divorce, which left them feeling powerless and penniless. Brenda considers their similarities: "As a result of my divorce, my marital income, over $100,000 a year plus benefits, had plummeted to less than $10,000, while my future employment was uncertain. Furthermore, like my mother, my divorce had left me without a car, making it necessary for me to walk to school and work. Also, like my mother, I had a son at home at the time of my divorce" (Daly 1998, 64). Even with their commonalities, Brenda had differences with her mother. She deplored the fact that her mother had not taken charge of her life—either during or after her marriage. After her own divorce proceedings, Brenda states that she felt like her mother in that she had no "narrative control" (ibid., 65). However, Brenda will not allow her mother or her husband to stop her personal journey.

Brenda had begun a doctoral program in feminist studies in literature at the University of Minnesota in 1978. She was 37 years old. Thanks to some of her inspiring feminist teachers—Shirley Nelson Garner, Toni McNaron, and Madelon Sprengnether—Brenda was encouraged to write about her life. She explains: "I began to entertain the possibility that—if I had the courage to break my silence about childhood sexual abuse—I might become part of a community of feminist women, women who dared to write and speak with authority" (Daly 1998, 4). Brenda was beginning the slow, painful process of changing from incest victim to incest survivor. In late 1984, she defended her dissertation on the writings of Joyce Carol Oates and received her Ph.D.
in English in 1985. However, even more obstacles lay ahead. At the age of 43, Brenda now had to fight the additional problem of ageism as she sought a job.

Meanwhile, in 1983, Brenda’s first article entitled "I VIVIDLY REMEMBER, pretty well: A Witness Against Her Self" was published. It appeared in *Hurricane Alice: A University of Minnesota Feminist Review*. In the article, Brenda analyzes her mother’s testimony at a trial using Robin Lakoff’s book, *Language and Women’s Place* (1975). The situation developed like this:

Brenda’s mother, who was now divorced and widowed, still had one son at home to support; therefore, she took a full-time job clerking at a Minnesota Fabrics store. Since she did not have a car, she walked back and forth to work, a distance of about two miles. Walking home from work one night, she was hit by a car and suffered injuries to her hip and leg, which required hospitalization. When the case went to court, Arline’s testimony was so full of hedges, uncertainties, and exceedingly polite language, that her story is discredited. A mistrial was declared. In her original version of the paper, Brenda did not reveal that she was critiquing her mother’s speech, calling her "Mrs. O" instead. In the published essay, "I VIVIDLY REMEMBER," Brenda finally acknowledges that the woman testifying is her mother: "As I reflect on this essay, . . . I recognize—not without some guilt—that I was distancing myself from my mother by analyzing her lack of authority. Ironically, to establish my professional authority, I analyzed my mother’s lack of an authoritative voice" (1998, 63).

Brenda published her second autobiographical essay, "Of Bread and Shadows, Beginnings" (1985), in a nonacademic journal. This essay caused more trouble for Brenda than her first one because it mentioned her Aunt Kari’s mental problems. She writes: "The piece received such mixed reviews from my family—it was praised by a sister, but condemned by an aunt who refused ever to speak to me again—that my anxieties about autobiographical writing only increased. When my aunt committed suicide on Father’s Day some years later, I realized that the family secrets I
had only hinted at in this essay had threatened her shaky public persona. Only in retrospect did I understand that she viewed herself as the protector of family secrets that I was threatening to reveal" (1994, 19–20). Last summer, Brenda finally heard her Uncle Olav’s story of what happened to her aunt and her father. Olav, her father’s younger brother, told her that when Kari and Jorgen were young, they were both sexually molested by a neighbor. Kari, who considered herself "the protector of family secrets," never recovered from the molestation. Obviously, neither did Jorgen Oland.

While searching for a tenure-line job, Brenda took a low-paying lectureship at Macalester College and continued to teach at the University of Minnesota. Then, she accepted a one-year teaching position at St. Olaf College. The St. Olaf job involved a move to Northfield, Minnesota. Brenda would have to sell her house, the house she had once shared with her husband and son, and which she had purchased from her husband in her divorce settlement. Since she was unable to take the necessary steps to sell her house in the Twin Cities, Brenda sought help from a therapist: "I came close to a nervous breakdown: I felt that my plot had run out. With each new challenge, old fears of abandonment and self-doubt intensified. I knew that if, by some miracle, I actually found a tenure-line position, I would have to move again. Having already lost my family, my home, and my community, I wasn’t sure I could sustain any further losses" (Daly 1998, 4–5). Her therapist helped Brenda overcome her fear and move to another house and town.

At the same time, Brenda developed closer relationships with two of her three sisters, one of whom she encouraged to attend college. In 1986, Brenda and these two sisters, Una Fay and Che Che, gave a panel presentation on sexual abuse at the National Women’s Studies Association annual meeting at the University of Illinois. The talk was entitled "Three Sisters" and, of course, the topic was father-daughter incest. A reconciliation between Brenda’s mother and the same two sisters never occurred even though Una Fay and Che Che wrote their mother in 1983 and asked
her to acknowledge their abuse. Arline was either unwilling or unable to reply. Arline's daughters were becoming stronger, healthier women, capable of setting their own boundaries, a position that Arline regrettably never attained.

In 1987, Brenda was finally offered a tenure-line job at Iowa State University of Science and Technology (ISU) in Ames, Iowa. Like most large universities, Iowa State primarily valued academic research. However, the Iowa State English department needed an individual who would teach their undergraduate methods courses, while also supervising student teachers. The good news was that Brenda's pedagogical background helped her to get the ISU position. The bad news was that she was considered "a second-class citizen" by her department and by the university. In the male-dominated, academic world, pedagogy has little to no status and secondary teaching is a profession which is associated with women. Coming from a working-class background and growing up in a home that emphasized "father rule" (Daly 1998, 130), Brenda was terribly troubled by her lack of authority and status at the university. To complicate the situation even more, most secondary teachers, whose classrooms she visited, no longer could identify with Brenda because she was now a university professor. Brenda writes: "Having felt isolated and marginal all my life—another characteristic of survivors—I was uncomfortable working at the hierarchical borders between these education institutions" (ibid., 140).

Then, an even bigger problem developed. Brenda suddenly found herself unable to speak or write in the public arena—two critical skills for an assistant professor who hoped to attain tenure. According to Brenda, "When I spoke in public, I would black out, and when I wrote, I could produce words only after waging a painful struggle against my own increasingly rigid body" (Daly 1998, 8). For a second time in her life, Brenda sought the help of a feminist therapist. Brenda suspected that, once again, her "traumatic past" was the cause of her "paralyzing fear of speaking and writing" (ibid., 8). It turned out that the culprit was the "good girl" image that she
had maintained in her unconscious mind since she was young. Her older sister was "bad" and had fought back against her father and his sexual abuse—to no avail. Therefore, Brenda tried to be "good" so that she "would be safe from his sexual attentions" (ibid.). Although Brenda understood intellectually that this good girl/bad girl myth was not true, emotionally she was still incapable of handling the impact of her father's incestuous behavior. She analyzed: "In pure physiological terms, I couldn't speak and couldn't write because I was so tensed up. I didn't know what was happening!"

In order to break her silence, a therapist helped Brenda interpret a series of images and dreams that she had been having. One image in particular consistently appeared. It was a colorless picture of a woman sitting alone in a room. Brenda continued: "The woman-in-the-room was afraid of moving out, afraid of moving on. At first I despised this frightened woman, but gradually I began to visualize her as a girl still locked inside her father's house, listening to the sounds in the night, frozen with fear. This girl had prayed for her mother's help, but she had not come. Finally, I realized that this child-self would not leave the room as long as I despised her; instead, I must grieve for her" (Daly 1998, 12). One day, the woman appeared in bright colors and emerged from her isolation. When the image changed, Brenda knew that her "metamorphosis—a moment at which the frozen image became fluid—signified my return to health" (ibid, 13). Thus through introspection, hard work, and courage, Brenda was able to break her silence, regain her linguistic abilities, and become an author.

Brenda's first research interest was to examine her mother's and her own experiences with mothering. Like Adrienne Rich, Brenda discovered that there was a "distinction between motherhood as experience and motherhood as an institution" (Daly 1998, 71). Consequently, in 1991, she co-edited her first book, *Narrating Mothers: Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities*, with Maureen Reddy. The book contained a collection of essays written from the often silenced
maternal perspective. In their introduction, the co-editors write: "The essays in this volume attempt to articulate maternal perspectives in the hope that the actual practice of mothering might give rise to other possible ways of constructing motherhood and to other-than-patriarchal ways of thinking that could have a transformative effect on literary, political, and social conditions. . . .

Rather than seeing motherhood as biologically predetermined and central to all women's lives, we . . . see motherhood as a potential relationship rooted in female physicality; but we also see it as a choice essentially separate from biology, drawing a distinction here between the ability to give birth and the decision to care for children" (Daly and Reddy 1991, 3). All of these feminist authors disagree with the essentialist argument that motherhood is solely a biological role and make a distinction between the institution of motherhood, which can be oppressive, and the experience of mothering, which can be wonderful. They also challenge the traditional, patriarchal construction of motherhood where once again we see the bipolar opposites of mother/father, private/public, and powerless/powerful.

Even with the odds against her, Brenda was on what is known as "the university fast track." *Narrating Mothers*, along with numerous other publications, allowed her "to go up for tenure" in five years, instead of the traditional seven. In 1992, Brenda earned tenure and was given a private office. Referring to the low wages that an English professor made, Brenda said: "I was tenured but I couldn't afford a vacation!" In 1993, a new English department chair allowed Brenda to redefine her teaching responsibilities to include literature courses and women's studies, along with one "graduate-level pedagogy course designed primarily for those who plan to teach English at the college level" (Daly 1998, 231). In 1995, she turned down a Fulbright Scholarship to Norway because her mother was sick, and it was too expensive to live abroad. In 1996, Brenda's second book, *Lavish Self-Divisions: The Novels of Joyce Carol Oates*, was published. Brenda achieved one of the highest levels at the university when she became a full professor in 1997. In her words,
"When I was promoted to full professor, at which time I was given a 14.6 percent raise, I finally got back up to where I was a middle-class woman again. Of course, my former husband is a multi-millionaire now."

Brenda's research interests and pedagogical practice are closely related; therefore, she also gives her students the opportunity to write autobiographically—even if it entails writing about abusive situations. She believes that father-daughter incest is more prevalent in our society than most people would care to admit. Brenda writes in *Authoring a Life*: "Father-daughter incest, which may not result in intercourse but which always involves secrecy, is a form of sexual exploitation estimated as affecting one out of every one hundred daughters in the United States" (Daly 1998, 104). She therefore recommends that incest narratives be taught as early as middle school or when girls are 12, 13, and 14 years old. Although Brenda realizes that many parents and some students will criticize this decision, it might help some young incest victims. Again, she writes:

I believe that feminist professors must support students who choose to speak out against their abusers while, at the same time, preparing them for negative responses from different audiences. The greatest danger is, of course, that victims of sexual violence will be accused of lying. Such accusations, as I know from experience, are even more damaging than the experience of sexual abuse itself. For, if a woman's reality is denied, it becomes difficult for her to assert her point of view with self-confidence. In other words, it is not only the reality that I was sexually abused as a child, but the fact that this reality was denied by my family, as well as by society, that for many years damaged my ability to speak or write with confidence. Fortunately, the emergence of the women's movement during my lifetime provided me with the healing presence of a community willing to believe my story and share my suffering.
In other words, I found a safe space in the feminist community. . . . At the same time, . . . this 'safe space' is not inviolable. I recommend, therefore, that autobiographical writing never be required in classrooms; instead, it should be offered as an option. As I know from my own experience, such freedom of choice is essential. (1994, 19)

Another example of Brenda's independent spirit can be seen in her research on Joyce Carol Oates, whom the feminist community has rejected. Despite their criticism, Brenda argues that the contemporary women's movement and issues of gender have dramatically altered Oates' fiction. In fact, Brenda credits Joyce Carol Oates with helping her achieve both professional and personal success: "Joyce Carol Oates is my friend: by speaking for me (when my voice was not yet strong), her fiction has taught me to speak for myself; by courageously developing and changing (through the past twenty-five years), her fiction has taught me to insist on growth and change; and by continuing to insist on the value of a woman's perspective—despite often hostile criticism—her fiction has also taught me to persist, despite the sometimes harsh attacks on my own work" (1993, 163). Needless-to-say, Brenda's ground-breaking research on incest and Joyce Carol Oates has caused some controversy in both the patriarchal university environment and in the feminist community.

Brenda admitted that her career in "a male-dominant university environment" has been difficult at times. Like many other institutions, Iowa State is becoming more hierarchical and competitive because "it wants to emulate corporate America," an action Brenda believes is especially detrimental to women and families. She explains: "This system is destructive because there is no institutionalized support for families, and so what we have is a situation where women are turned against women!" For example, Brenda was able to advance rapidly on the university fast track, but this same "star system" has alienated her from other women faculty in her
department. She explained, "They view me as competition." To illustrate how bizarre the competitiveness can be, Brenda told this anecdote: "One woman in our department turned to me, in front of graduate students, and accused me—because I was publishing so much—of making it hard for people like her to get promoted." Although this remark was the most openly antagonistic comment directed towards her, Brenda said that there were other more subtle ones. She theorized: "I think it's usually that women, especially women with children but not exclusively. Something has to go in their lives. They can't do their jobs, be good teachers, be good researchers, be good mothers. All those things. What are they giving up? Sleep and friends."

Consequently, Brenda's new activist agenda is to change the university, so that it contains "an enlightened feminist type of maternal ethic, an ethic of caring."

Arline Oland died in 1997 without admitting whether she knew about the sexual abuse that her daughters had endured for so many years. Brenda writes: "The fact is, my mother did not stop the abuse because, she claims, she didn't know it was taking place. My sisters have challenged this claim" (1998, 65–66). Only once, near the end of her life, did Arline admit to having some knowledge about the situation. In a phone conversation with Brenda, she said, "Once I caught your father with Darcy in his arms, and I said, 'Where are you going with that girl?' and he stopped" (ibid., ix). Even if Arline knew the truth, she probably felt she had no power to stop the abuse because she was completely dependent upon her husband. With Arline’s death, however, "some wounds have begun to heal," and Brenda is in contact with two of her sisters, Una Fay and Che Che. They are determined to resolve their "conflicts openly rather than withdrawing in silence" (ibid., xi) as their mother always did.

Brenda’s personal life has also improved dramatically. She now owns a home in Ames, Iowa, where she lives with her significant other, a retired English professor from Minnesota. Her 35-year-old son is a successful businessman, and she has one grandchild. When asked what the
future holds for her, Brenda laughs and says: "It’s time to stop working so hard. I have written two books, edited a book of essays, published over thirty articles, and presented papers at numerous conferences during a ten-year period. It is time to relax a bit and to do some traveling around the world, something that I have always wanted to do... Then, in about five years, we will probably look for a retirement home." Brenda is finally happy, content with her personal life and with her position at the university. Her future looks bright.

Beginning as the daughter of working-class parents and rising through the ranks at a major research university has been an arduous, but rewarding journey for Brenda. Was her academic success worth all of the sacrifices? More specifically, did she have to sacrifice her personal life to gain a seat in the male-dominated public arena? With such complex questions, there are no simple answers. First and foremost, Brenda had to resolve the issue of her childhood sexual abuse. As she stated in *Authoring a Life*, this task could only be accomplished in a feminist community of strong, supportive women which she found at the University of Minnesota when she began her doctoral program. Second, she was married to a very traditional man, who was unwilling to change his lifestyle for her as she did for him. As the wife of a successful businessman in Minnesota, Brenda had the chance to be "a lady of leisure" but recognized that she "wasn't suited for the life of an executive wife." If she would have had a more egalitarian marriage, more compromises could have possibly been made.¹¹

Through writing autobiographically, Brenda has been able to claim her own unique voice and feel empowered. By sharing her story, she hopes to enable other women to take charge of their lives as well—possibly through didactic writing. Although the road from incest survivor to full professor has been a difficult one, Brenda now believes that it was the only path she could have taken.
Meena’s Story

When my family moved to the East Coast in 1995, we started to attend a small Protestant church in our neighborhood. One of the first people I met there was Meena, the minister’s wife. When I asked Meena to describe herself, she said: "I'm 44 years old. I have two sons, 19 and 17. I'm an attorney. I specialize in tax law and work for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). I have been practicing law for almost ten years now. I’m married to a minister. I was brought up a Hindu, but I joined the Christian Church about 15 years ago." I wanted to discover why Meena became a lawyer, so we went back to her beginning.

Meena Smith (pseudonym) was born Meena Jain in Ahmedabad, India, on June 8, 1954. She was the third of three children; her sister, Shashi, was three years older and her brother, Rakesh, was two years older. Meena’s mother, Shanti Puri, was born in 1928. Although Shanti was a full-time housewife and went to school only through eighth grade, she was a very bright woman who insisted that all of her children receive good educations. Born in 1923, Meena’s father, Naresh Jain, acquired a mechanical engineering degree from a trade school and worked his way up the ranks in a company. Then, he went into procurement and rose to a high position in the Indian government’s civil service. He bought various items for the Indian government, at times large pieces of equipment such as tanks and aircraft. Eventually, Meena’s father became an Indian bureaucrat and was transferred to New York City for three years, where he worked at the United Nations. Therefore, the Jains would be classified as upper-middle class and professional.

Meena’s family comes from the state of Uttar Pradesh in India, and they spoke Hindi at home when she was growing up. In addition, she was born and raised in the Hindu philosophy, which Meena depicts as more of "a way of life than a religion. Hindus believe in one universal God, but it is like a spirit—not just God, the creator—but God present everywhere." Thus, the central idea of Hinduism is the concept of Brahman, the Supreme Being, the source of universal
life. A Hindu’s ultimate goal is to reach salvation, a joining with God. To illustrate this point, Meena used a water analogy: "Everybody is a drop of water and eventually when you put a drop of water in the ocean, it just merges. And that’s what happens to our souls when we reach salvation." Reincarnation is the tenet of Hinduism which allows Hindus to become one with God. Hindus believe that they are reincarnated many times until they reach the final stage of salvation. Meena added, "There is not much doctrine in Hinduism. You don’t have to go to the temple. There’s no institutional church."

According to Meena, Hinduism has a more liberal attitude towards women than the Muslims: "In Hinduism, women are independent in the sense that they can walk on the streets without their heads and faces being covered. However, Indian women don’t show their legs, so most of them don’t wear dresses after a certain age. Instead, they wear loose saris." In addition, Meena talked about how Indian society is divided into strict hierarchical castes, which are based on vocation. The four main castes in India are the Brahmins or priests and scholars, the Kshatriyas or rulers and warriors, the Vaishyas or the merchants and farmers, and the Sudras or the peasants and servants. Within these four social systems, the Jain family belongs to the second caste, the Kshatriyas. Meena said that the Kshatriyas also have a fairly liberal attitude towards women.

Although India is considered a developing country, Meena was brought up in a very progressive home environment. First, her brother, Rakesh, was treated no differently from Shashi and Meena around the house. All three children were given an equal number of household chores that were not gender related. Also, Rakesh received no special educational privileges, which is the usual practice in Indian families. In fact, he was sent to a coed private school, which was his only good option, while Shashi and Meena attended an all-girl private high school. Meena also thought that growing up in the city of Ahemdabad made a difference because a modern, urban
environment tends to be more liberal than more traditional, small towns. To illustrate this point, Meena talked about her mother’s hometown. "The town where my mother’s family lives is a little old fashioned. Hindu girls still generally cover their heads when they go out on the streets."

Although Meena’s upbringing was not typical for all Indian girls, it was similar to many of her friends’ lives who also grew up in the same social and economic class. For example, her best friend is now a medical doctor in India.

To state that Meena was brought up in a nontraditional manner is an understatement. Naresh Jain’s attitude about females was truly unique in Indian society. For example, he did not believe that the women in the house should wait on him, which is an unusual characteristic for an Indian man. Meena laughingly repeated a story she had heard: "The story goes that when my sister was born at my mother’s parents’ house, my grandparents dejectedly said to my father: ‘Oh, you had a daughter.’ And my father replied, ‘Don’t ever say that again in that tone of voice. My daughter is not going to be any different than any of the boys in the world.’ And he really kept his word. We weren’t told to be quieter than boys. We weren’t ever told, ‘Girls don’t do that!’ We even played just like the boys did.” According to Meena, her father was "belligerent" about helping his daughters to succeed in the male-dominated, Indian culture. He used to say: "I have girls but they can beat any guy!" Although he did not do any traditional housework such as cleaning, Meena’s father did help with the cooking. One day Meena’s mother was very sick, and she asked her husband to make the traditional Indian bread, Chapitas. He did and also taught Meena how to make Chapitas. If Meena’s mom left home for a few days, Naresh would look after the children, handling both the cooking and the washing. Meena commented: "It didn’t even occur to me that this was not the norm in other people’s homes."

Shanti Jain was even more adamant than her husband about her girls being successful in life. She insisted that both of her daughters become financially and mentally independent.
Meena’s mother would lecture them: “I don’t care if you ever make money or ever work, but you have to have the ability to earn a living. You cannot be dependent on a husband. If you’re a widow or something happens for some reason, you have to be self-sufficient.” Her feisty attitude can probably be traced back to her family of origin. When Shanti was growing up, her family was upper-middle class, primarily involved in the grain business. However, they did not value education because it was more important to go into the family business as soon as possible and make money. Thus, Meena’s mother was not allowed to continue in school after eighth grade. Nevertheless, she taught herself English at home. One of her brothers was college educated, and she would hide and secretly read his books. In addition, the women in her family were subservient to the men. In Meena’s words, “On my mother’s side of the family, the husbands are not college educated. And, they still treat their women as if they are children. They are like servants!”

After she was married to an educated man and living in the city of Ahemdabad, Shanti could see how badly women were treated in her small, narrow-minded hometown. Every summer, she took her children to spend a month at her parents’ home. During those visits, she disliked the atmosphere at her brother’s home because of the constant bickering in the large, extended family. Like many other dysfunctional families, however, they also had a deep-seated love for each other. During these visits, Meena remembered: “My mother would chastise them [her brothers] when the boys yelled at each other, their wives, or talked to them disrespectfully. And they would say, ‘Ah, you’ve become citified now.’ But she would tell them that was no way to speak. . . . When we returned to Ahemdabad, my mother would say ‘I don’t want my girls to marry into the business class!’” Although Shanti was not financially independent, she taught herself to be mentally strong. She ran the household without the help of servants, she participated in the family’s financial matters and decision making, and she took care of but was not
subservient to her husband. In turn, her husband never criticized her in front of others. Most importantly, Shanti provided a strong, secure, female role model for her children. Meena said, "When I say I'm a logical thinker, I get it from my mother. It's amazing! She has these ways of organizing tasks and is never overwhelmed by bigger jobs. Sometimes, I'm just in awe of her in that respect."

Unlike most Indian families, the Jains did not live with their fraternal grandparents. An extremely independent person, Naresh Jain did not want his children to live in an extended family situation. In describing this situation Meena explained: "He did not want his time taken away from his kids. He would have to spend [a lot of] time with his parents, so he decided he would just move away so he could concentrate on his family." Consequently, during most of Meena's school years, her family rented a flat (apartment), while her father saved money so that the Jains could build their own house. Near the end of Meena's high school years, the construction phase finally began, and Shanti Jain became the unofficial contractor. Every day, she would finish her household chores, take a bus across town, and supervise the building of their home. Meena said: "I think she knows every wire and every nail. She picked out everything. . . . And, she understood what was not being done right and what needed to be done." To this day, Shanti and Naresh Jain still live in that same, well-built house in Ahmedabad.

Thus, the three Jain children grew up in a gender-neutral environment where they had a happy, carefree childhood. They were close in age—only three years apart—and close to each other. Meena said that she remembered them playing together. In addition, the kids loved to discuss controversial topics. Meena explained: "We used to argue a lot—over politics, over movies, sports. Even though my mother would get tired of it, arguing was okay, but we weren't allowed to hit." Rakesh and Meena were more similar in that they were very competitive, verbal, and physical. They would play games like cricket, badminton, and volleyball on the street with
other neighborhood children. In contrast, Shashi was very sensitive, reserved, and could not handle any teasing. Meena described her sister: "My sister wouldn't play games out on the street. She was much more feminine than I am." Since Rakesh was the only male grandchild on his mother's side of the family, he was doted on by his maternal grandparents. None of the children, however, received preferential treatment in their nuclear family.

Since their parents emphasized the value of a good education, all three children worked hard and received good grades at school. Growing up in this progressive, enlightened environment was all the stimulation Meena needed to sail through her elementary and high school years. In Meena's generation, children started school when they were three years old. So, all three Jain children were quite young when they attended the same co-ed primary school in their neighborhood. Since the school was private and small, the teachers demanded top performance from their pupils. According to Meena, "It was a very rigorous school. . . . We knew the principal personally. . . . She always said that we were the star pupils." Meena attended this elementary school through sixth grade.

After elementary school, Meena took an examination to attend an all-girl, private secondary school called Mother Theresa High School, which was a prestigious, well-known academic institution. Meena recalled: "I remember the exam day—some time in the summer. There were hundreds of girls taking the test, and they would only select two or three to go in. I didn’t make it the first time, but I did the second time." Next, Meena had to decide whether to be a science or an art student, which were the only two choices for high school curriculum in India in the 1950s. She chose science, more specifically, biology. She said there was not much decision making that went into the process: "At that time in India, if you were a half-way decent student, you automatically went into the sciences." Even though most of the science teachers at Mother Theresa were women except for the three males who taught physics and one engineering
instructor, Meena said that she was not very motivated in high school: "I used to get yelled at for being an underachiever. I didn’t want to let my parents down, but I wasn’t as serious about school as my sister. I participated in some extracurricular activities such as drama and I belonged to some science clubs, [but] I was a clown more than anything else in high school." In those days, Indian students went to school six days a week and had shorter summer vacations; therefore, they graduated in three years from high school. In 1970, Meena graduated from high school at the young age of 16.

In addition to her parents, Meena credits three adults with having a positive influence on her life. The first two were the parents of her best friend, Anjana. Anjana’s mother had a master’s degree in education and ran a preschool from her home. Her father was "an eccentric intellectual" who read all of the time. Meena said: "He went to old book stores and book sales constantly. He spent all day Sunday or all holidays going downtown to look for books. I just loved the guy." Both of these people fascinated Meena, and she spent a lot of time talking with them. The other influential individual was an older, retired gentleman who lived above the Jain family in their apartment building. Meena and the older gentleman, whom she called grandpa in Punjabi, would argue about politics and religion for many hours. None of these adults ever mentioned that girls should not set high goals for themselves, and gender was never attached to accomplishments.

As a young girl, Meena had more time to pursue a rigorous academic program than her counterparts in the United States whose attention was oftentimes focused on their appearance in order to be attractive to the opposite sex. First, women in India did not wear revealing clothes. After a certain age, Indian girls and women only wore loose clothing such as the sari or salwar kameez (baggy pants and a long shirt), where a woman’s legs could not be seen. For symbols of beauty, Indians focused on facial features, such as beautiful eyes, high cheek bones, and long,
dark hair. Second, unmarried girls wore no make up other than the red dot on the forehead, which was used simply as ornamentation (called a tilak). Third, weight was not an issue for young girls. Anorexia, bulimia, or any similar problems were non-existent. Fourth, when Meena was growing up in India, all marriages were arranged by the parents. Consequently, there was no dating, not even in college. Fifth, students didn’t have jobs in India. Their lives revolved around their studies. Sixth and most importantly, women were not considered mere sex objects in India. Sexual topics and women’s bodies were not discussed by the media or openly in public. All of these issues, along with attending an all-girl high school, gave Meena the necessary time and freedom she needed to excel in her studies.

Even though she was admitted to the prestigious Mother Theresa High School, Meena described herself as "the lazy bum of the family." She explained: "My sister was so diligent that she was awarded a gold medal [at Mother Theresa]. She was first in her class. I don’t think I was even ranked." Obviously, Meena is overly modest about her academic skills because it was quite an achievement to even be selected to enroll at Mother Theresa. Both Shashi and Meena received the highly coveted National Science Talent Award when they were in eleventh grade. In India, a National Science Talent Scholar, which is comparable to being a National Merit Scholar in the United States, is awarded a full, three-year scholarship to college and the Indian equivalent of $100.00 a year for books.

Meanwhile, both Shashi and Rakesh, who were in the same academic class, went to college. Shashi went to the University of Bangalore and majored in pre-med; Rakesh went to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in the city of Bombay about 1000 miles away and majored in engineering. That branch of IIT had an Americanized system of teaching, which Rakesh liked so much that he decided to go to the United States to do graduate work after receiving his bachelor’s degree. After one year of pre-med, Shashi took her entrance examinations for medical school.
She didn't do well on the test and was not accepted. Shashi, who had never failed at anything, was unable to cope. Meena described the situation: "This is a student who was a gold medalist in high school, ranked number one in her high school, ranked number one in college, and was not accepted because of one exam in medical school. She was devastated. No retaking. She just gave up—did nothing. Then, she had to go back and start her first year of college again."

Meena followed her sister, Shashi, to the University of Bangalore and again went into the sciences. Since Shashi was in botany and doing so well, Meena rationalized that she would go into the same area. In addition: "My father encouraged his daughters to go into science. In fact, I think he would have been disappointed if I'd gone into something like home economics." Meena continued: "I wasn't going to do physics or chemistry. To major in botany was really an arbitrary decision. I didn't want to dissect animals, so if not zoology, then botany." Meena was an honors student, which meant she focused on botany and went directly into what is called a research facility. She explained: "Out of eight hours a day, I probably did five hours of botany, one chemistry class, one zoology class, and one English class. However, that's only the first two years. The last year we just did botany, which was very intense." Although Meena loved to do pure scientific research, she was also a very social person who missed being around other people.

Many of Meena's friends from Mother Theresa High School also attended the University of Bangalore majoring in all of the sciences—physics, chemistry, biology, botany, and zoology. Most of them would become professors or medical doctors. Furthermore, at least 50 percent of the Ph.D. candidates, who were the teaching assistants in the Department of Botany, were women and excellent role models for her. In Meena's bachelor's class, there were three Science Talent Scholars in botany, and all three were women. After the first-year examinations, Meena and her friends were the top five students in their class. Once again, Meena commented: "It never occurred to me to think that it was unique for a woman to win this type of honor. It was not a big
deal." At the age of 19, Meena graduated from the University of Bangalore in 1973. She was ranked fourth in her class.

A major change was about to take place in Meena's life. Soon after she graduated from college, her father was assigned to work in the United Nations in New York City for three years. Thus, the whole family moved to the United States in the summer of 1973. Rakesh had already planned to pursue an M.B.A. degree at the University of Pennsylvania, but Meena had no definite plans. If they had stayed in India, she would have gone on to graduate school. So, she decided to take that same path in the United States. Rakesh and Meena walked all over New York City looking for a graduate school: "And we walked to Columbia University and talked to a professor. I gave him my transcript and he said fine. So I applied and was accepted in a master's program in biology at Columbia. So again, without giving much thought to my long-term goals, I did what I thought I was supposed to do. It's like being on a train, and the train just keeps going. I just got on it and did it." Meena received her Masters in Biology from Columbia University two years later in 1975. Although she learned what the American educational system was like and learned how to write papers, Meena considered her two years at Columbia a waste of time. Compared to the rigorous schooling she had received in India, school was "a piece of cake" in the States. Therefore, she had a lot of free time to drive her mother around the city and help with all the entertainment that was required of a bureaucrat. Ironically, neither Meena nor Rakesh would return to live in India.

Meena met her future husband while they were both students and working at a local retail store. Although she had already made preliminary plans to start work on a Ph.D. in botany at the State University of New York (SUNY), Meena quickly changed her mind and decided to marry Reverend Michael Smith, a clergyman. Meena's father was appalled. For the first time, Naresh Jain's traditional upbringing surfaced, and he was adamantly against her marrying an American
man, especially a minister whom he didn’t think would have the financial resources to support his daughter. He fought the relationship for two months. Then, "without any rhyme or reason," he changed his mind. Meena described the scene: "My father asked me: ‘You’re not changing your mind?’ And I said, ‘No, I’m not changing my mind, whether you agree with it or not.’ He then said, ‘Invite Michael for dinner.’ And I said, ‘Okay.’ So we did on Christmas Day, 1975.

Michael came and after dinner my dad said to Michael, ‘If you guys want to get married, that’s okay with us and we are with you. One thing I want from this day on is that we’re never going to talk about the past two months—that you weren’t accepted by us.’ No one has ever brought up the topic again. It’s amazing!” Michael and Meena were married in 1976, and her father never mentioned his initial negative reaction to their relationship again. In fact, Meena says that it did not even bother her father that Michael is a Christian. Her parents were just happy that he was religious. Twenty-four years later, Meena and Michael Smith are still married, and she jokes with Michael that her parents like him better than they like her.16

Up until her marriage to Michael Smith, Meena had lived at home with her parents, which was the normal living arrangement in India. Although she had a positive relationship with both parents, it was probably good that Meena left home and got off "the educational fast track" that her parents encouraged their children to take. In fact, if she had one complaint against her parents, Meena said it would be their emphasis on doing well in the academic world: "The only time we received praise from them was for getting good grades. Failure was not an option." If she would have stayed in India or not gotten married when she did, Meena probably would have gone straight through graduate school for her Ph.D. in biology or botany without ever stopping to make a conscious decision about her long-term career goals: "It was almost like being brain washed. When I was growing up in India, if you’re a good student, you automatically studied sciences and math. So, it didn’t even occur to me to do anything else. It was just assumed. But
that's the drawback in the Asian countries. . . . We were both moving along, my sister and I, to get Ph.D.s. There was no reflecting about what I really wanted for my career." During Meena's youth, good Indian students did not generally study the liberal arts. Thus, if she had stayed in India, she believes that she never would have become a lawyer. Furthermore, at that time, law was not considered as prestigious of a profession in India as it is in the United States.

Meena knew that as a clergyman, Michael would be transferred to many different parishes during his career. This nomad-style existence did not bother her. On the contrary, she enjoyed her encounters with the different cultures in the United States. First, the Smiths moved to Chester, Maryland, for two years (1976–78). During this time period, Meena was a substitute teacher, but she discovered that she was really not interested in teaching science to high school students. If she stayed in a scientific field, she preferred to do research. Next, they moved a couple of miles outside Damascus, which is located in Southern Maryland. Meena described Damascus as "a rural culture." She continued, "It was interesting because they just didn't know what to do with me. They'd probably never seen a foreigner—close up—before. But they were very nice after they got used to me." They lived in Damascus from 1979 to 1982, and their two sons were born there—Andrew in 1979 and Mathew in 1980. When her children were very young, Meena stayed home. The next transfer (1982–85) was to Gaitherburg, Maryland. In 1983, Meena converted to the Christian religion. She explained: "I did it because I was going to the church, and I thought the kids needed to be brought up in the church where their dad preached. However, it was not for convenience's sake. I believed in the gospel and in Christ. Initially, Michael questioned my motives and wondered if I was doing it to make it easier for him as a minister. But we worked it out, and once I joined, I made a commitment to the church, which I take very seriously." Meena credits her religious beliefs with helping to make her the self-confident woman that she has become. She believes that religion helps with self-esteem issues
such as encouraging an individual to take the right course of action, or by helping a person feel good about herself and less anxious. In Meena's words, "My faith has a lot to do with who I am."

At this point, another pivotal experience was about to occur in Meena's life. When they were living in Gaithersburg, she would take her sons on walks and go by the same Presbyterian Church every day. One day, there was a sign that said "Career Counseling." Since Meena had already stopped her science education after the master's degree, she thought it would be a good idea to see which career best suited her personality. She took a battery of tests, including the Myers-Briggs, and discovered the best career for her was law. Meena was surprised: "You know, I always wanted to be a lawyer, but I would have never vocalized that in India. It would have never occurred to me. At that time, being a lawyer wasn't a lucrative profession in India like it is here in the United States." Meena had not told her husband that she had decided to go to law school. One day, when Michael was driving the car and the kids were in the back seat, Meena broke the news to her husband: "I was sitting in the front seat and I said, 'I have decided.' He said, 'What?' I replied, 'I'm going to law school.' He almost had an accident! He said, 'Don't do that while I am driving!' Then he asked: 'Who's going to take care of us if you go to law school?' I started laughing and said, 'What if I die today? What do you mean who's going to take care of you?" Accordingly, Meena prepared to take the law test (LSAT) and sent away for applications to law schools in the area.

Michael's reaction to Meena's plans was interesting because the Smiths already had an equal marriage. Even when Meena was at home full-time, Michael had done 50 percent of the housework such as cooking, cleaning the house, and errand running. Like her father, he also hated to be waited on and would always help himself to what he needed from the kitchen. However, he was born and raised in the southern part of the United States, and it was difficult for him to completely overlook his traditional upbringing. He was also probably concerned because
they had two young sons, and as a minister, Michael earned a small salary. None of these obstacles would stop Meena from pursuing her dream career.

Since the Smith family was still living in Gaithersburg in 1985, Meena applied to the University of Maryland (UMD) in Beltsville and attempted to take the LSAT. Meena recounted that incident: "I'd never taken an American standardized test in my life. I just wasn't prepared. I took it (the LSAT) one time, and I bombed because I just went in cold turkey. I had no clue what the test would be about. Then I realized that this is stupid! I'd better take a course if I'm serious about this." Meena took the LSAT a second time and was put on the waiting list at UMD. Since she wanted to go to a state school, which was cheaper, Meena also applied at George Washington University. George Washington awarded her a full scholarship. That settled the question of which law school to attend, and Michael Smith asked the District Superintendent to move them back up to Montgomery County. In 1985, the Smith family moved to Silver Spring, which was a 30-minute drive from the George Washington law school. Meena called the move "a godsend!"

Law school was a completely different educational experience for Meena. First, it was "scary." Meena had received her master's degree in 1975 and had not been in a classroom for ten years. Second, at the age of 31, she was older than most of the students and the only foreigner. Although half of her class was female, everyone was white except for three African-American students and Meena. She said that she felt more discrimination for her ethnicity than for her gender. For example, her school would give people with English as a second language (only Meena) and handicapped people an extra hour to take a test. She exclaimed: "People assumed that foreigners and people with handicaps were the same!" Next, the professors used the Socratic method of teaching and randomly called on people for answers, which Meena had never encountered before. Furthermore, few first-generation immigrants who did all their schooling in a foreign country go into law because it's based on American common law, which foreigners don't
comprehend. According to Meena, "If I’d gone to law school a year after I came to the States, I would have definitely flunked. You really have to understand the American culture to understand American legal principles."

Although most of her law school friends thought she was too intense, Meena put all of her energy into succeeding at law school. She said: "I have never enjoyed school as much as I enjoyed going to law school! You see, I really wanted to be there, unlike some of the younger students who were just going through the motions, from undergraduate to law school. I worked very hard and I did very well." Meena was finally ready to take full advantage of an educational opportunity, and she participated in every activity in law school. She was determined to learn as much as possible. For three years, Meena’s life was strictly regimented. Her classes were scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Andrew, who started first grade when Meena began law school, and Mathew who was in preschool, were almost ready for school by the time she left home. After class, she would be with her family and prepare supper. Her boys were put to bed at 8:00, and she studied until 11:00. On weekends, Meena read her law books, and Michael took the boys to all of their activities.

By the time she graduated from George Washington—fifth in her class—in 1988, Meena had won many honors. First and most importantly, she was one of only a few students who made the staff of the Law Review during her second semester in school. To get on the Law Review’s Board of Directors, Meena had to write an article. Second, she represented George Washington in the National Moot Court Competition, which was very unusual for a foreigner. Meena explained: "Some people were irate that a person from a third-world country got that honor! When we started law school, I think they had the mindset that I was a token law student and that I would fail. Most of the time, people look at a foreigner and assume we can’t even speak English." So, she worked extra hard and won the best oralist prize in an upper-class competition.
Finally, she was one hired by a prestigious law firm with an office in D.C. Meena was proud of that accomplishment: "I was 35 when I graduated. It's unusual for law firms to hire older, foreign women!"

Without taking a break, Meena began work as an associate in employee benefit practice at Jones, Brown, & Roberts (JBR) during the summer of 1988. JBR, which specializes in employment issues, was a large, national law firm with fifty attorneys in the DC area. Meena described it as being different from most traditional law firms. It was "one of the most liberal, open-minded firms." In 1988, however, even at JBR, no women were in the litigation department and there was only one female partner in the D.C. office.¹⁸ Meena became an employee benefits lawyer, which she described as "providing advice to clients on various employment issues."

Meena explained why she did not go into litigation: "Actually, when I went to law school, I wanted to do litigation, and I told JBR that I wanted to be a litigator. . . . They hired five associates at the same time I was hired. One of the women hired got to join the litigation department. I always wondered why. They told me that her father was a big client; therefore, she received preferential treatment. However, I think part of the reason was because of my ethnicity. They just assumed that I wouldn't be aggressive enough since I was Indian."

As an employment lawyer, Meena's specialty was advising large and small businesses and local governments on various employment-related issues such as pension plans, employment tax, other compensation issues, and discrimination in the workplace. Many meetings are held where all the parties in the transaction can work out the deal. Since mostly men are in management positions, oftentimes Meena was the only woman at meetings with clients. Pension plan issues intrigued Meena, so she decided to become a tax lawyer. After four years at Jones, Brown & Rock, Meena requested that she be allowed to do tax work. She was told that she could not change jobs because she was already trained in another area, where she was generating good
money. According to Meena, there was only one part-time lawyer in the entire tax department at that time, but there was a subtle understanding at JBR that men do the tax work because it required "more business acumen." Ironically, at the time Meena tried to become a tax lawyer, the managing partner at the D.C. office was a woman. That woman also told Meena that going into tax work was not a good idea and that she should stay in general employment area where there were a lot of women.

Although she loved her job at Jones, Brown, & Rock, it was very demanding of Meena's time and energy. Her days were long. She arrived at work by 7:30 a.m., ate lunch at her desk, and didn't get home until 7:00 p.m.—oftentimes later. Her commute took one hour each way. As a professional, she was always on call and had to work when a client needed her. Also, she traveled at least two times a month, which was what her family disliked the most about an attorney's life. Since there were no set breaks at the firm, Meena usually ate lunch at her desk. Meanwhile, there was turmoil at home. Her husband was under a lot of stress with his job, and their sons were misbehaving because Meena and Michael did not see each other enough "to present a united front." Since Meena thought that her work schedule was having a detrimental effect on her family, she volunteered to take a 15 percent pay cut so that she could leave work by 5:00 p.m. every day. By taking this action, she voluntarily took herself off the partnership track as well. During that same year, Michael Smith was offered another parish in Bethesda just a half-hour drive from his last position.

Even though she had been told not to become a tax lawyer, Meena began work on her Masters in Law degree (LLM) with an emphasis on taxes at Georgetown University, which she completed in two and a half years by taking two courses a semester and one each summer. With her new credentials in hand, Meena applied for a tax law position at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), received a job offer, and started her new job in January, 1995. Her specialty at the IRS
was pension plans. Although the pay was less, Meena was excited about her new schedule: 7:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., with no late nights. In addition, she was in a car pool, and it only took a half hour to get to and from work. The IRS job turned out to be mutually beneficial. Meena brought her private practice experience to the IRS, and the IRS taught her a great deal about other areas of tax laws. For example, Meena’s work at the IRS coincided with the start of a specialized program regarding pension plans, and she was able to work with the private bar to help develop and refine the pension program.

Unfortunately, “the glass ceiling” exists in the government as well as in the private sector as Meena was about to discover. In 1998, a reviewer position opened up at the GS15 national government level. Since she was well qualified for the job and it would involve a promotion, Meena applied and interviewed for the position. However, the IRS hired a male from outside of the agency. The lawyer who got the job was an excellent attorney, so Meena did not think much about the situation until other women lawyers commented, “They promoted another man!” She then realized that there were many female lawyers at the IRS but few women administrators. Of the nineteen administrative positions available in her male-dominated area at the IRS—only two full-time and one part-time were held by women. Feeling unappreciated, Meena decided to leave her national government job.

Meena applied at two private law firms, Jones, Brown, & Roberts—her old firm—and Whitney, Solomon, & Black (WSB). Both firms made lucrative job offers, but she chose WSB because the job sounded more interesting. Meena was now making almost twice as much as Michael, but this money discrepancy did not bother her husband. By fall, 1999, both of their sons would be in college, and the Smiths would need more money to pay their tuitions. Meena started work at Whitney, Solomon, & Black on February 2, 1999. She currently works in the tax department, specializing in employee benefits and tax controversy clients. Meena misses her
government position but was pleasantly surprised that she could negotiate what hours she would work at a private law firm without taking a pay cut this time.

Since tax lawyers have the highest billable rate, Meena was surprised to learn that her firm now charges $300.00 an hour for her work. However, she says that tax lawyers are not revenue generators: "For example, in my area, they generally don't have their own clients because they provide expertise to corporate lawyers. If a corporate lawyer doesn't call on you for tax advice, your billable hours aren't high." Meena's example illustrates one of the areas where subtle discrimination occurs in a traditional law firm. A client hires a male partner to handle his business, but a female associate—such as Meena—usually does all of the work. The male partner is in charge and receives credit for the work the female does. Meena elaborated further: "It's hard for women to generate business. The only way females can get clients is by providing consistent, good, legal service. Therefore, women really get hired for their merit. Men get hired for schmoozing around, having a good time, and sometimes for their merit. Mostly, it's who you know. Women seldom get hired for who they know." Thus, it is difficult for women to become partners in a law firm. She added that since there are few women partners, not much female mentoring takes place in the field of law.

It is ironic that Meena, a female from a developing country, was raised in a more gender-neutral atmosphere than most girls experience in the United States. For example, she did not have to worry about dating, makeup, nor clothes, and could concentrate on her academic studies. Furthermore, she was encouraged to be competitive and go into science, which is not considered a male-dominated field in India. Meena reasoned: "So I never got a subtle message that I had to hold back. Consequently, I am so surprised when I deal with some women in the United States, and they tell me they were treated differently from the boys." Although Meena felt that she was
pushed into science when she was in school, she was also able "to get off that train" and start her own personal educational journey by attending law school and becoming a lawyer.

Many individuals—both men and women—would not be able to cope with her twelve-hour work days and nightly church meetings, but Meena believes that her professional career is well balanced with her personal life and with the church community that is a large part of her husband's life. However, with a twinkle in her eye, she confesses: "Once in awhile, I still get that feeling of maybe I should 'go for the gold.' You know, just work and see how far I can go. As a matter of fact, there is an administrative position that has opened up back at the Internal Revenue Service. I might have a better chance of getting the position this time because I would be hired from outside of the government—not rising through the ranks. We'll see...."

Meena has managed to overcome the discrimination that she has encountered—both gender and racial. If she failed a major test to get into a special school, such as the LSAT, she studied for it and tried again. If she was not allowed to practice in tax law at her old firm, she took the necessary steps to change her status. If a male attorney was given a position that she was more qualified to occupy, she changed jobs. Most importantly, she made all of these changes without any bitterness. Meena just reconsiders the situation and says: "Okay, what will I do next?" or "All right, I'm out of here!" Meena's flexibility and persistence have contributed to her success in the legal profession.

Jennifer's Story

During the winter of 1998, I attended a national government agency's social function. An individual who works in computer networking asked me about my research. I mentioned that I was still looking for a woman scientist. Jennifer, who was also at the party, was recommended as a potential candidate since she had just headed up a government task force to increase
opportunities for women in computing. I spoke to Jennifer and asked if she would be interested in being one of my case studies. She agreed and, throughout the evening, would periodically come back to me and make suggestions for my dissertation topic. I looked forward to hearing her story.

Jennifer Conway (pseudonym) was born in Northern Europe in 1944. Jennifer was one of three children. She has an older sister, Anne, who was born in 1938, and a twin brother, David. Jennifer was born 15 minutes earlier than her twin, a fact she never lets him forget. Not until recently, did she discover that there had been a stillborn child born between Anne and Jennifer and David.

Jennifer's background would be classified as Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, and working class. Although she was baptized, Jennifer considered it a "nominal baptism" because nobody in her family went to church, which is not atypical in Europe. Her mother did send Jennifer to a children's service at the local Methodist Chapel, which she really enjoyed for a short time. That religious experience came to an abrupt end when the children were given a special project—to attend a service at the local Roman Catholic Church. Jennifer accidentally went to the wrong Catholic church. As she recalled, "I did not discover this mistake until I had sat listening to a nun play an organ with one finger for about a half hour." Her fear of authority figures was so great that she was afraid to go back to the Methodist Chapel and admit her mistake. After that incident, Jennifer never went back to the Methodist children's service. As for ethnic background, both sides of Jennifer's family have lived in the same community for many generations. In fact, 13 generations of the Conway family have been baptized in the local church. Finally, the Conway family would be considered blue collar. Her father earned an hourly wage as an electrician, and her mother was primarily a homemaker. Neither parent earned a high school certificate.

Hazel Brooke, Jennifer's mom, one of seven children, was born in 1909. Although Hazel was very bright, her mother forced her to leave school at age 14 and work in a mill to help
support their large family. When Hazel caught meningitis, the doctor sent her south to recuperate. In Jennifer’s words, "Basically, I think [the doctor sent my mother] away from her parents because my grandmother was very cruel, and I don’t think my mother was very strong at that time." She worked in a mill and met her future husband at a dance. They were married and have lived in the same small town ever since. Although her mother was a traditional housewife, Jennifer said that she always had some sort of part-time job as well. Right after World War II, for example, Hazel soldered light bulbs and later cleaned people’s houses. Jennifer describes her mother as a very warm, quiet woman, whom "I sort of hero worshipped when I was young." By her mid-twenties, however, Jennifer began to resent "the soft side" of her mother that allowed stronger people such as her father to dominate her behavior. When Hazel did speak up against her husband, however, his belligerent attitude did not change. Needless-to-say, Jennifer’s parents did not have an "obvious, loving relationship." Sixty years later, they have grown even farther apart and Jennifer says that they now "positively dislike each other, which makes it very difficult since they are both in their 80s and dependent on each other." Her parents’ uncomfortable, unhappy relationship led to Jennifer’s negative view of the institution of marriage, which would later affect her own personal life.

Jennifer’s father, Harold Conway, was also born in 1909 and left school at the age of 14. According to Jennifer, he was a remote but domineering man. He was such a strong, patriarchal authority figure around their home that it took years before Jennifer overcame her fear of her father and any other person in command. She explained: "My father was very domineering, and we were afraid of him. I was certainly afraid of him. He would never hit us, but he had this psychological way of freezing people out. If you didn’t do what he wanted, he just refused to talk to you, and you would do anything to stop Dad from getting into a mood."
Harold Conway manipulated his three children against each other. For example, David was intelligent but did not enjoy studying. When David left school, his father said to him: "You’re a failure! Look what your sister’s done. You never did what she did." In the meantime, Jennifer thought that her father had a clear preference for David. She recounted: "My father had made it clear that a son was important to carry on the family name. He did not see any point in educating girls because they would only get married and throw it all away." Since her father worked on radar in airplanes, he could have given Jennifer some excellent technological training, but he only trained her brother. She cited one incident: "He showed my brother radios. He took them apart. He never showed them to me." Most importantly, Jennifer’s father left her with a strong sense of never being good enough. No matter how good her grades were, he never praised her. One year, she came home with two silver cups from a sporting competition, and her father did not mention them. The next year she did not win anything and her father exclaimed: "Humph, not much good this year, are you?" Consequently, Jennifer was imbued with a driving force to set high goals for herself. Yet, achieving those goals failed to satisfy her. She never felt successful; thus, she has had to grapple with lifelong, self-esteem issues.

Even with an overbearing father, Jennifer described her childhood as "reasonably structured and happy." All of the residents in her hometown were in the same socio-economic class, blue collar, which means the families did not have many possessions. The Conway family had adequate income to support their lifestyle, but they lived simply. They did not own a car or have a television until Jennifer was a teenager. Her father would bicycle to work, and the rest of the family either walked or used buses for transportation. Until the age of 11 years, Jennifer said that the neighborhood children—both girls and boys—enjoyed playing good, old-fashioned games together: "We had a river close by. We’d go down to the river, and nobody worried about it then. It was very safe. . . . We had Saturday afternoon cinema, which was a big treat. It cost two cents.
They had special children's shows, an episode each week. It was Superman or something like that—usually an American one and that was great fun. We had a recreation area with swings, so it was very nice, simple outdoor, the-best-things-in-life-are-free kind of upbringing." Thus, Jennifer experienced a positive, small-town, disciplined upbringing. She does recall, however, that her brother was raised differently. He was given much more freedom. As Jennifer remembered, "It was the traditional [pattern]. I had to help my mother. He didn't. The girl had to be in, but the boy could stay out late—rules like that." She was already beginning to notice that there was a gender imbalance in society.

From the beginning, Jennifer thrived in an academic environment. In Jennifer's hometown, children did not go to preschool, and private schools were unknown to working-class parents; therefore, all three of the Conway siblings started public elementary school at the age of five. At age seven, they attended a junior school where they stayed until they were 11 years old. The junior school would be equivalent to the public elementary school system that most children attend in the United States. Unlike her twin brother, Jennifer loved the discipline of doing homework every night and studying for tests. The junior school—ages 7 to 11—Jennifer attended was co-educational, and she was one of the top students in her class. Her main competition was two boys, one of whom was the headmaster's son. Gender, however, made no difference and she vied aggressively for the top grades in all subject areas. Mathematics was her favorite subject, and girls were encouraged to excel in that discipline. Not only was Jennifer academically bright, but she excelled in sports as well. All in all, she was a competent, well-rounded student.

Anne, Jennifer, and David were all intelligent and made it into an academically challenging grade school. At this point, Jennifer could select one of three different schools. She chose the same one as her sister, which was a scholastically rigorous, all-girls school. Since the new school was quite a distance away from her hometown, Jennifer now took the bus to school every day.
Her local friends all attended other secondary schools, and Jennifer's new friends lived too far away for her to see them regularly. However, she kept busy with about three hours of homework and one hour of piano practicing every night.

Jennifer continued on her path of academic excellence in grade school. She worked hard and received A's in many courses, although the sciences continued to be her favorite subject area. In particular, Jennifer discovered that she had a natural aptitude for mathematics. After she achieved 100 percent on the first mathematics examination, Jennifer received even more encouragement from her teachers and "just blossomed out" in that subject. She was also athletic, participating in many sports, such as field hockey, gymnastics, and softball. In addition, she was the school pianist at various assemblies. The only negative aspect of grammar school that Jennifer remembers was the experimental program that was implemented with her age group. Along with her classmates, she had to choose her subject specialization at the age of 13 instead of 14, and, thus, would complete her high school certificate in four years instead of the standard five. Accordingly, Jennifer was now studying four subjects instead of the standard seven. Since she did not enjoy history and geography as much as the sciences, she was not upset about dropping those particular subjects. At the age of 16, Jennifer and two other girls were now studying nothing but pure and applied mathematics and physics.

During her teenage years, Jennifer said she was fairly reserved, shy, and did not have a lot of friends. She did not date, nor have any male friends, but again it was an all-girl school, and there was not a lot of pressure to date and to be popular in that regard. As for her popularity, she explained: "There were some people that liked me, and some people who clearly did not. . . . I remember being elected into various positions. I tended to not necessarily think of other people's feelings. I would suddenly announce something, that would not particularly be well received by some people." In addition, at Jennifer's school, girls were more admired for their athletic and
musical abilities than for their academic prowess. None of this seemed to bother Jennifer because she was becoming an independent, self-assured young woman.

Attending an all-girl school made an enormous difference in Jennifer’s life. In her words: "Being at a girls only school was just wonderful! You were encouraged to do what you were good at. ... I happened to be the person that was good at mathematics. ... But I remember some girls who were excellent in languages, modern languages. There was another who was really good at chemistry." In addition, all girls participated in sports—right through grade 12. According to Jennifer, "Everybody had to do two sport sessions a week and one gym session—field hockey in the winter and softball in the summer." Looking back, Jennifer believes that a girls-only school helps young women increase their confidence level. Furthermore, most of the teachers were women, and they presented strong role models for their young pupils. In particular, Jennifer credits the headmistress of her grammar school with helping her to stay in school—not once—but twice.

In 1960, Jennifer turned 16 years old, an age when most working-class teenagers left school and entered gender-segregated, traditional jobs such as auto mechanics or secretaries. When they turned 16, both Jennifer’s sister and brother quit school, got jobs, and paid their parents room and board. Their parents really looked forward to receiving this extra money. Jennifer’s fate, however, would be different. She would be allowed to stay in school for two more years until the age of 18, and later would be able to attend university. Her school’s headmistress and Jennifer’s mother intervened with her father to allow Jennifer to stay in school. Here is Jennifer’s version of how she became the first individual in her family to go to college: "I remember that meeting well. My headmistress arranged to talk with my parents. Nothing could be done without father’s agreement. And I remember I dressed up and I had my white gloves and my headmistress interviewed my mother first. (hushed tones) ‘What are your husband’s interests?’ ‘He likes cars.’
'All right. Good.' Then, my father was there. I remember her talking about cars, and he was very happy chatting and she basically persuaded him to let me go to university." Although her mother was the instigator, Jennifer said that her father later told her friends, in her presence, that he had to put up with a lot of derision from the other electricians who worked in his factory. They repeatedly asked him: "Why are you letting your daughter go to school? Why isn’t she working?"

In truth, Jennifer’s additional schooling did not cost her parents any extra money because she was awarded a scholarship; nevertheless, it was a financial hardship for Jennifer’s parents not to receive room and board from her.

Since her parents were not close to either of their families of origin, Jennifer does not remember any particular relative having a strong influence on her upbringing. The only adult mentor Jennifer can remember was her headmistress. Ironically, when Jennifer first met this administrator, she thought she looked like a "witch," but that particular headmistress was instrumental in providing Jennifer with a quality education. For example, she insisted that "her girls" read good literature. She also asked Jennifer’s parents to subscribe to a quality daily newspaper, not the supermarket tabloids. Finally, her headmistress recommended that Jennifer attend an all-girls residential college.

By the time Jennifer reached college age, her reputation in mathematics was well established. She received a prestigious scholarship to a college, which had an excellent reputation for mathematics. Although sixteen girls started out in Jennifer’s mathematics class, only eight would complete their degrees. Unfortunately, Jennifer also experienced a rude awakening in her academic endeavors. It was her first time away from home, and she was unable to structure her time for studying. As she relates: "I sort of went a little wild the first two years." First, Jennifer discovered boys and began to date graduate students. Second, the level of university mathematics was much more rigorous than grammar school and, for the first time, she encountered people
who were better at mathematics than she was. Consequently, she "lost" the first two (out of three) years of her undergraduate program and thought she was in danger of receiving no undergraduate college degree.\textsuperscript{27}

Jennifer credits her first male mentor with helping her regain her academic equilibrium. As a new professor on campus, he treated all of his students equally, which Jennifer admired. He also introduced her to new, exciting subjects such as Special Relativity. Thanks to his attention and encouragement, she came rebounding back in her third year and managed to complete three years of study in one. However, she received a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1965, but it was the equivalent of an A- or B+. To a perfectionist such as Jennifer, receiving less than an A was the equivalent of a failure. Consequently, she was determined to work even harder: "I'd do a Ph.D. and make up for it. But there was another reason too. I thought if I got a Ph.D., then I could not be discriminated against. I would just have too high of a qualification. Little did I know. . . ." Although she later said that she pursued "a Ph.D. for all the wrong reasons," the most important point was that Jennifer stayed in school.

Jennifer's awareness of gender issues was deepening. In particular, she recalled three incidents that had a major impact on her life. When she was about five years old, her elementary school had a wonderful rocking horse. She asked a woman teacher if she could ride the rocking horse. The teacher replied that only boys were allowed to go on the rocking horse. Jennifer recalled: "That is my earliest memory of the unfairness at that time. I so wanted to ride that horse! I bought my daughter a rocking horse when she was growing up, so she would have the rocking horse that I did not." The second example occurred when Jennifer was in grade 11 of her grammar school. At the end of the school year, Jennifer's advanced mathematics teacher, a woman, told her students that there was no point applying to AOV Engineering because they never hired females. Jennifer said: "And I just accepted that! It never occurred to me to object to
Third, Jennifer had a summer job at an engineering company when she was in college. Also employed by the same company were two boys whom Jennifer supervised. She was not surprised to discover that the boys, who were still in grammar school and also younger than she, made more money. Jennifer explained: "It was accepted that men were paid more than women for exactly the same job!" As a result, she was determined to rectify that situation in the future.

As she predicted, Jennifer stayed in school and began work on her Ph.D. in atomic physics at the same institution's mathematics department where she received her undergraduate degree. She completed two years of research and worked as a graduate assistant of mathematics. Then, another major change occurred in her life. In 1967, her major professor, who was the same person who encouraged her to complete her bachelor's degree, took a job in the physics department at a Midwestern university in the United States. Jennifer and three other graduate students followed him to that university in order to complete their degrees. It was at this point that her graduate program began to mirror her undergraduate studies in that almost no work had been accomplished in her first two years. This time, however, it was not for lack of trying. Instead, it was due to poor supervision from her major professor. Although he had inspired her to complete her bachelor's degree, he lost interest in the research problem he had given Jennifer and failed to provide her with adequate direction for her dissertation. Fortunately, another physics professor in the department volunteered to be her "de facto thesis supervisor." During her last year in the Midwest, he inspired Jennifer "to do all of the numerical computations from scratch again," which she did.

It was quite a culture shock for 23-year-old Jennifer when she moved to the middle of the United States. In her words, "I was extremely lonely. No culture, no scenery, hot summers, cold winters, no springs, no autumns." In addition, she and two other graduate students were the first
women to be in the physics department. She stayed for only two years, 1967-69. She explained: "I could not stand the Midwest any longer." One experience, however, that Jennifer did enjoy was her first teaching opportunity. Consequently, she began searching for a teaching job. Although she had not completed her dissertation, she accepted the first job offer she received which was from a college on the East Coast. Unbeknownst to her, she would never live in her own country again.

Since her Ph.D. remained unfinished, Jennifer was hired as a lecturer of computer science, with the understanding that she would become an assistant professor after her degree was finished. As so often happens, the completion of Jennifer’s dissertation was not going as well as she hoped. She was running computer programs at the Midwestern university from a terminal at her East Coast school, but her data did not converge. Jennifer explained: "I was trying to solve integro-differential equations by approximation methods, but the answers were jumping all over the place." She arranged to spend the next summer in the Midwest working on her research. Her thesis supervisor suggested she use a simpler system to check her very complex computer program. In doing this procedure, Jennifer saw a slow convergence which pointed to additional numerical techniques that could be used with her original problem. By the end of the summer, she had succeeded in obtaining the results she needed for her thesis. So, she went back for her second year of teaching on the East Coast and finished writing up her results. In 1970, Jennifer successfully defended her dissertation, received her Ph.D. in Mathematical Physics, and was promoted to the rank of Assistant Professor. She was 26 years old. Much later, Jennifer realized that she did not enjoy her university experiences. As an undergraduate, she felt unprepared for the new challenges that faced her. When she was a graduate student in the United States and her research was not going well, she wishes that she would have changed to the American system.
where everyone takes courses, then writes a dissertation. Meanwhile, her professional career was about to begin.

Having left the physics field behind her, Jennifer concentrated on her new interest, computers. Her primary responsibilities, as the first Assistant Professor of Computer Science at her East Coast school, were teaching and curriculum development, which she worked on in a unique manner. To learn a new computer science topic, for example, she would take a graduate course at another city university, then turn around and develop it into an undergraduate class for her school. During her first four years of teaching, Jennifer said: "The number of students zoomed up from 400 to over 2000, . . . and we had our first graduate [Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science] in my fifth year at that college." Her research interests now lay primarily in two areas: programming languages and computer graphics. Jennifer also enjoyed the academic atmosphere at her college. She stated, "Before my college became a part of a larger university, it had been a top-ranked women's school. Although it was now coeducational, many students and faculty were women, and the atmosphere encouraged women to excel in all fields."

Jennifer's personal life was not going as well as her career. She married an engineer, during her second or third year on the East Coast. Jennifer elaborated: "It [the date] is a bit hazy. It's not something I choose to remember. . . . It was a terrible marriage! I married somebody in the image of my father. I didn't realize that until I signed on the dotted line. It was awful! I left after one year when he became physically violent, but it took five years to get a divorce." The reason it took so long was because her husband refused to agree to a divorce and later demanded alimony. Jennifer's husband had kept all their money, and she had to go to court and prove that her salary went into their joint savings account. Furthermore, he was a Southern Italian, and he was insulted that she had left him. "He was determined to make me pay for leaving him," she explained. "Italian wives don't leave their husbands!"
At this point, Jennifer decided it was time to get away from the unhappy, personal memories. Even though she was being considered for tenure by her current college, she decided to look elsewhere for a new position. She accepted an offer to manage the undergraduate and graduate computer science programs at another East Coast university. Once again, she was the first full-time professor of computer science. Until she arrived there in 1975, however, Jennifer did not know that there were two computer science departments, a daytime program and a separate evening one. She had been hired for the evening program, which was for part-time students and had only adjunct faculty. Dismayed but undeterred, Jennifer immediately started to revamp the outdated curriculum. She reported: "They had—I counted them—13 programming language courses. Computer science was at that time trying to get over the image of programming. That was just a tool. When I saw this, I was just horrified, and I immediately started removing these courses." Eventually, Jennifer redesigned both the bachelor's and master's degree programs in computer science and information systems. Furthermore, she upgraded the adjunct faculty and hired business people with Ph.D.s working in high technology companies to teach the courses. In just four years, the enrollment in the evening program jumped from 400 to 3000 students.

In 1979, Jennifer decided to apply for early tenure. She was hired as an associate professor, and there was an American Association of University Professors' (AAUP) provision that allowed a professor to be considered for tenure after only four years of work if she had prior experience in a tenure-track position. Unfortunately, the provost turned down her application and asked her to reapply the next year. Jennifer later learned that her university actively discouraged faculty from applying for early tenure. So, the following year, she applied for tenure again. Although the computer science department, deans, and university review committee recommended tenure, Jennifer was denied promotion by the provost's office because of the unusual nature of the
evening computer science program. She appealed the decision, had a successful interview with the provost, and was granted tenure. Jennifer was now 36 years old.

When computer science was made into a formal department, Jennifer became its first chair. Even though she was now an official administrator, it was not easy for Jennifer. She explained: "After I had been in the department chair position for about nine months, I was starting to get frustrated. I was really annoyed at what I saw as discrimination by the dean against me which, in my opinion, was because I was a woman. I had tolerated that for a long time, but I got tired of seeing other people being rewarded and I was not. My salary was very low and that wasn’t being addressed. So I felt that I was being used, and I had to go outside [the department] to receive acknowledgment for what I was doing." In addition, Jennifer had discovered that she loved "to build programs." Since she had already accomplished that task, she started the search for another job.

Meanwhile, a new College of Information Technology was advertising for its first dean, and Jennifer applied for the job. The Advisory Committee thought that she was not well known enough in the computer industry to be dean. She was, therefore, offered the position of full-time associate dean, while a man on the advisory board who did have name recognition was hired as dean on a one-day-a-week basis. Jennifer was granted a leave of absence from her other university in 1980.

Since she had already started bachelor’s and master’s programs for two computer science departments, Jennifer said that it was not a difficult task building the institute. Her job was multifaceted. She needed to recruit students, faculty, and staff; obtain computer equipment; write a course catalog and do public relations; and obtain official approval from the state to grant degrees. After a few months, the part-time dean quit and Jennifer became the dean. Unfortunately, despite its initial approval, her other university did not cooperate and denied
Jennifer a leave of absence. After several discussions with its president, she was able to convince him that the Master’s degree in Software Engineering did not compete with any of its programs and that there was no "conflict of interest." The president then personally granted her a one year leave of absence.

In the meantime, there were other problems to overcome. At her new college, Jennifer was treated more like a secretary than a dean by the founder of the institution. The founder of the school was Asian by birth and was unused to working with senior professional women. When she accepted the dean’s position, Jennifer indicated that she would stay an additional nine months in the job, then return to the university where she held tenure. After 18 months of excitement, achievement, and frustration, Jennifer returned to her first love—teaching and research. The College of Information Technology did not succeed and was closed several years after Jennifer left. Ironically, its campus was sold to her university, and one of the college’s financial advisors ended up on her university’s Board of Directors. In spite of this advantageous situation for her university, Jennifer returned to a hostile environment. Her dean considered her a rival for his position, and once again her salary was low, less than half of what she had received at the other institution. Jennifer stayed three and a half years longer in that city. All in all, she taught 16 years at that university, the longest time she has spent in any job.

One of the biggest challenges in Jennifer's personal life occurred in 1984 when she turned 40 years old. Since she had not had any luck meeting someone she would like to marry but she still wanted to have a family, she decided to create one for herself. She explained: "That [age 40] was one of the very big dates for the biological clock ticking. I had decided I wasn’t going to have my own child, and now it was a question of adoption. I didn’t want too big an age gap between the child and me. I thought about how old will I be when the child is 21." Thus, she initiated the first part of the long, tedious adoption process. In late summer of 1985, Jennifer
received a telephone call. A baby girl was waiting for her in South America, and she had exactly 24 hours to decide whether or not to adopt this child. Jennifer decided to go through with the adoption, but the timing was bad. First, it was one week before classes started, and she was required to spend six weeks in South America. Second, her university had no parental leave policy in place for childbirth or adoption. Jennifer was able to find friends to teach one of her classes, and she was allowed to postpone teaching the other one. However, she was informed that she was expected to teach an extra course in the spring to make up for the missed class in the fall. On a positive note, her school gave her no committee assignments when her baby was young for which she was grateful.

Jennifer discovered that parenting, especially single parenting, was her most difficult job yet. Her daughter, Judy, was a colicky baby. For the first three years of Judy's life, Jennifer was unable to do any research and said she "just managed to squeak through teaching." Since Jennifer did not earn enough money to pay an attractive salary for a live-in nanny, those she hired did not stay long. Consequently, her mother frequently flew over from Europe to babysit. Jennifer's big break occurred when Judy turned four years old and could be put in a full-time nursery school. In addition, Jennifer would hire students to live in and babysit two evenings a week and during the weekends in exchange for free room. Since the discrimination continued at her university in the form of low wages and tension within her department, Jennifer knew that it was time to search for a new job. An offer came from a West Coast university, but an even more attractive position was available in Washington, D.C., at a national government agency. A male mentor of hers recommended the federal government job saying that it would suit her extremely well, and Jennifer decided it was time to break away from the academic world for awhile.

In 1990 at the age of 46, Jennifer took a second leave of absence from her university and went to work for a national agency as a scientific program manager. In her new position, Jennifer
handled research and educational programs. She described her job: "My primary charge was to bring expertise and interest to the educational side of the research organization." Jennifer thoroughly enjoyed her work that first year because her supervisor and colleagues were enthusiastic about their programs, and there was an excellent esprit de corps. After one year, her supervising director suggested that she become a permanent member of this national agency. Since Jennifer had not been happy at her other university and was enjoying the Washington, D.C., area and the new job, she agreed to stay and, therefore, resigned her university position.

In her first five years in the agency, Jennifer gradually moved from managing educational programs to directing the research programs, although she retained her links to education. An additional task that Jennifer undertook was to head an initiative to increase opportunities for women in computing. She explained: "It is vital to me to be a good role model for my daughter. That is one reason I moved to Washington, D.C., in 1990. I wanted to be in an environment where I could contribute in a different way to research and education as well as increasing opportunities for women in science." Jennifer's first women's committee was poorly managed, and she left in protest. Then, the educational branch formed a new committee, and Jennifer was chosen to represent her research organization. Although it was difficult to obtain a consensus of opinion, after six or seven months, the committee came up with an agency-wide program for women in all of the scientific and engineering disciplines.

The highlight of Jennifer's federal government career occurred in 1996 when she received an award for outstanding contributions to improve opportunities available for women in the computer and information sciences and engineering disciplines. Although she was recognized for her enthusiastic support of women in the computing disciplines, she was also honored for being a strong advocate for greater representation of women in higher positions in all federal organizations.
In a speech opening a conference for women in computing, Jennifer gave these examples to illustrate some of the difficulties facing women in computer science: "So it is disquieting to see that the numbers of women being attracted to computer science have been dropping steadily over the past ten years. In 1987, 35% of bachelors degrees in computer science were awarded to women. In 1994 (the most recent year for published figures) that percentage has dropped to 29%. If we examine the absolute numbers these percentages represent, the 1987 figure corresponds to 13,889 and the 1994 figure corresponds to 6,992, about 1/2 what the numbers were 10 years ago." Jennifer added that research has not been able to pinpoint whether the low numbers of women in computer science is due to professional and societal barriers or to the fact that women are finding other disciplines to be more attractive. Whatever the case, she encouraged women, both young and old, to examine "non-traditional entry points into computing" such as the field of graphic arts.

As has happened in her past positions, Jennifer was acting as the deputy director in her division without the official title. Thus, when a deputy director position opened up in another division, she applied for it and got the job. Jennifer thought that she was hired for the position because the new division director was "a strong academic who gave research leadership to the division, but they needed a strong manager, administrator type, to work with him, who knew the whole federal government agency and could get that division in order." The job turned out to be a bureaucratic nightmare and, once again, Jennifer found herself acting more like a secretary than a deputy director. After one year, she put in a request to return to her old division. She was welcomed back and given a promotion to the newly created deputy position.

In the meantime, after seven years in the national government agency, Jennifer was becoming increasingly frustrated. She explained: "It was just an old boys network. I hate to use that phrase, but there were hardly any women in my division. We were down to four, and I was
the most senior woman, managerial-wise, and I just saw very little opportunity for any career prospects there." In other words, like many other male-dominated institutions, the federal government had the infamous "glass ceiling." Women and other minorities do not have the same access to senior positions or important projects as men do. Jennifer added: "They [women] are not being hired in the numbers I think they should. . . . Instead, they [the men] wring their hands and say 'Oh! We don't have any women candidates, and we don't have any minorities.' The top leadership does not try sufficiently hard to bring women in. I call this 'the wring your hands syndrome.'"

Feeling discouraged about all of the roadblocks in her path, Jennifer decided it was time for another career change. She stated: "I did not want my daughter to see me unhappy in my work." Quite by accident, she discovered that she could rotate out of the federal government on a temporary basis in the same fashion that individuals are able to rotate into the organization. She decided to take a year off from her government work and return to academia. A local university offered her a teaching position, and her federal agency agreed to this arrangement and said that it would pay her similar salary, so she could start her research again.

In the fall of 1997, Jennifer became a Visiting Professor of Computer Science at the local university. She was to teach two classes in the fall and two in the spring. Everything looked good until the university assigned her a large introductory computer science course with 60 students in it. Furthermore, the university was not adequately supporting their computing program. Jennifer detailed some of the problems she encountered: "Its infrastructure for computing is obsolete! I had no office for three weeks. They finally put up partitioned offices, but there's no privacy. The classroom space is poor; it's not air conditioned. Some days, the temperature in a classroom can be over 100 degrees." Her department did agree to her teaching only one class in the fall since it was so large and a new topic for her, the C++ programming language, but it was a rough
semester. In the spring, she taught two courses—the C++ Programming Language and Data Structures—with 40 students in each class. Still, Jennifer signed on for a second year as a Visiting Professor. In the fall of 1998, Jennifer was teaching two classes, computer ethics which she thoroughly enjoyed and the C++ introductory course again, but she was discouraged that no changes had been made in the department. Consequently, she declined the university’s offer of a permanent position and returned to the federal government position one semester earlier than originally planned.

In January, 1999, Jennifer returned to her previous position of Deputy Director but to a reorganized division. Since many changes had occurred in senior management while she was gone, Jennifer was hoping for some new and challenging opportunities. In addition, the number of women in her division had increased. Jennifer was encouraged by these positive changes at her federal agency. Since she will be 55 years old in 1999, she is also thinking about the possibility of retiring in nine years when her daughter, Judy, finishes college. She hopes that her decision to return to the federal government was a good one because she would be happy to stay with that agency until she retires. If not, she will change jobs.

Handling her personal life has been more difficult. Part of the problem is that not many women in her generation have a Ph.D. in any discipline, let alone in the sciences. Consequently, men have oftentimes been intimidated by her degree and her professional status. As more women "enter the pipeline," Jennifer believes that changes will be made that enable both women and men to acquire Ph.D.s, maintain professional lives, and have equitable, happy marriages. A second problem that has inhibited Jennifer personally is the poor relationship she had with her domineering father. Unfortunately, negative childhood experiences can influence an individual for the rest of her life. As with the other adversities in her life, however, she has been able to overcome most of the obstacles. Jennifer’s creative solution to help fill the "spare room in her
emotional life" was to adopt a child, which allowed her to re-evaluate her life and set more realistic goals for herself. Since her "career and life have been tightly entwined," her daughter and friends provide a buffer zone from the stresses at work.

After thinking a lot about her life and family, Jennifer can now accept her strengths and weaknesses. Since she is a perfectionist, she limits the number of responsibilities she assumes. Although she admits to lacking self-confidence, she has tried to build up the positive events in her personal life and to ameliorate the negative ones. Jennifer, for example, prefers to remember her father as a hard-working, honest individual, and she hopes to be known for these same qualities. In addition, she has tried not to give in as easily as her mother did.

Finally, Jennifer wants to be a strong role model for her daughter. Since attending an all-girls school made a tremendous difference in her own life, she enrolled her daughter in a private, all-girl Catholic school when Judy turned 13 years old. She hopes that Judy will be instilled with the same love of reading and academic endeavor as Jennifer has had all of her life. However, it has taken great sacrifice on Jennifer's part to allow her daughter to attend a single-sex school. For the first year, Jennifer drove one and a half hours each day just to get her daughter to and from the car pool that took Judy to school. Since the commuting was extremely inconvenient and interfered with Jennifer's job, she sold her house and moved into a condominium so that she could live closer to Judy's school. In addition, she said: "Private schools are very expensive in the United States! There is only one income in my family."

Jennifer is a survivor. Even though she came from a working class background, she earned her Ph.D. in atomic physics. As a single parent, she has persevered in a world that primarily caters to two-parent families. In computer science, she has overcome the barriers of occupational stereotyping to achieve a high-level position in a primarily male profession. Although she feels she has not been successful in breaking the gender barrier as much as she would have liked,
Jennifer is helping to pave the way for other women in computer science, women who dare to enter the masculine domain of technology.
CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF THE THREE LIFE STORIES

In *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography*, Jill Ker Conway writes: "What makes the reading of autobiography so appealing is the chance it offers to see how this man or that woman whose public self interests us has negotiated the problem of self-awareness and has broken the internalized code a culture supplies about how life should be experienced" (1998, 17). An analogy can be drawn between Jill Ker Conway’s quotation and the lives of my three respondents, all of whom have managed to negotiate the imaginary line that exists between their private lives and their public professional personas. By analyzing "what these women faced and mastered in their development," I hope "to discover the types of environment and support necessary" (Mulqueen 1992, 69) for other individuals who desire careers in nontraditional work environments. To begin the analysis of their private and public lives, I will first compare and contrast Brenda’s, Meena’s, and Jennifer’s backgrounds to discover what motivated them to pursue a profession in a male-dominated field. Then, I will assess the different types of discrimination they have experienced in the workplace and evaluate the impact it has had on their careers. The analysis of their life stories will illustrate how these women have encountered and overcome the obstacles that were placed in their path by our patriarchal society. I will first compare and contrast the respondents’ families.

**Family of Origin**

All three of the respondents grew up in homes that had a traditional division of labor. Their fathers were regarded as "heads of the households" and worked outside of the house, while their mothers, who were economically dependent on their husbands, primarily took care of the home and the children (Ehrenreich 1983). Brenda and Jennifer were raised in rural communities, and
their families were blue collar or working class. Since the gender-role expectations are lower in blue-collar families (Dubeck and Borman 1996), they had more obstacles to face and overcome in their development than Meena, who grew up in a city environment and a white collar, professional family. Two of the mothers, Brenda’s and Jennifer’s, had part-time jobs to help supplement their family incomes, but their fathers controlled most of the money. No one questioned this "great imbalance in power" (Daly 1998, 66) because it was part of the "dominant ideology" of the 1950s (Bloom 1998, 109). Brenda and Jennifer were too young to comprehend this form of domination; however, it would have a huge impact on their lives. As bell hook explains, "Unlike other forms of domination, sexism directly shapes and determines relations of power in our private lives, in familiar social spaces, in that most intimate context—home—and in that most intimate sphere of relations—family" (1989, 21). To better understand their families of origin, it is necessary to take an in-depth look at their parental relationships.

Maggie Mulqueen states: "In the area of competence development . . . [researchers] have found a positive relationship between mothers’ perceptions of their self-esteem and competence and their young daughters’ perceptions of their self-esteem and competence" (1992, 74). During their early years, all three girls had a good relationship with their mothers. Looking back, however, Brenda primarily remembers her mother as an insecure, timid woman: "Even in her role as a mother, I felt that my mom did not have much power. She would always say, 'Now, wait until your father gets home!'" In one of her interviews, Brenda attempted to compliment her mother by praising her domestic skills of sewing and quilting, but she then added that it was "women’s work." In Under the Sign of Hope: Feminist Methodology and Narrative Interpretation, Leslie Bloom points out that "women’s work [or] tasks associated with the home are [considered] inferior" (1998, 104). On the other hand, Meena and Jennifer greatly admired their mothers. Meena’s mother was not educated beyond the eighth grade, but she was a strong, intelligent
woman who taught herself English and helped build the family's house. She was not subservient to her husband and insisted that both of her daughters receive the best education possible so that they could lead independent lives when they grew up. Jennifer's mother was more passive than Meena's, yet she was a warm, loving woman whom Jennifer "hero worshipped" when she was young. No matter what happened, Jennifer's mom "always kept the family going."

When they grew older, Brenda and Jennifer re-evaluated their mothers' roles in their upbringing. More specifically, they were critical of their mothers' lack of authority and passive natures, or what feminists call "secondary, nonauthoritative" roles (Aisenberg and Harrington 1988, 22). Like her sisters, Brenda questioned why her mother was not strong enough to protect her daughters—all four of them—from paternal incest. Jennifer wondered why her mother allowed her father to dominate their household in such a tyrannical manner. Feminists who have studied "patterns of female subordination" (Jackson and Faulkner 1993, 183) in patriarchal families point out that women like Brenda's and Jennifer's mothers had little to no power. Therefore, Arline Oland and Hazel Brooke could not "exercise agency under conditions of oppression" (Meyers 1997, 2). Sara Ruddick agrees: "Almost everywhere the practices of mothering take place in societies in which women of all classes are less able than men of their class to determine the conditions in which their children grow" (1997, 585). Conversely, Meena's admiration of her mother became even stronger as she grew older. She said recently, "My mom's just amazing!" or "When people comment on how logical I am, I reply that I'm just like my mother." Meena's statements about her mother and herself reaffirm their positions as accomplished women who can "broaden, modify, or expand stereotypical definitions of what it means to be female" (Bloom 1998, 105).

Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer had equally complex relationships with their fathers. Carolyn Heilbrun refers to this complexity as "the great difficulty women have in coming to terms with
this figure," with whom they are "connected passionately and intimately, however painfully" (1988, 65). Brenda’s and Jennifer’s fathers were domineering, strong-willed males. Their wives and children were afraid of them and avoided being around them in order not to incur their wrath. It would be difficult for Brenda and Jennifer to escape this type of "patriarchal control" and "emerge from their marginalized status" (Bloom 1998, 67). Even though Brenda was allowed to attend college, it was not until her father’s death in 1976 that she was able to take charge of her life. Jennifer’s inability to meet her father’s impossibly high standards left her with a basic insecurity that her performance, her efforts, were never good enough. Ironically, but not uncommon, both Brenda and Jennifer would marry and divorce men who were similar to their fathers. "Feminist narratology" would interpret their actions as a "reproduction [a conventional marriage], subversion [questioning the "rules" of the marriage], and rebellion [a subsequent divorce] against patriarchy" (ibid., 94).

Unlike Brenda’s and Jennifer’s fathers, Naresh Jain was an affectionate, supportive parent. Meena’s father encouraged his daughters more than his son because he knew they would have difficulty going beyond the traditional sex-role identities of India. The encouragement that he gave his daughters cannot be underestimated. In other words, there were no "limitations imposed on them as women" (original emphasis, Bloom 1998, 65). Like the other two respondents, Meena married a man who was similar to her father. Her egalitarian relationship has lasted 24 years.²

Of the three respondents, Meena’s parents provided the healthiest home environment. In Reviving Ophelia, Mary Pipher writes: "Androgynous parents are the best. Good fathers are nurturing, physically affectionate and involved in the lives of their daughters. Good mothers model self-sufficiency and self-love and are responsive, but not responsible for their family members" (1994, 286). Naresh and Shanti Jain were strong, positive role models for their children. They easily moved back and forth between their public and private worlds, between
their masculine and feminine selves. Naresh rose to a high rank as a bureaucrat in the Indian government but also baked bread and took care of his children. Shanti took responsibility for all of the housework and was the main contractor when they built a new home as well. The Jains gave their daughters and son the same number of gender-neutral household chores. Meena did not encounter any "apparent stereotypes of her parents' roles and relationship" (Bloom 1998, 20), and her self-esteem flourished in this more progressive home environment.

Since the terms of self-esteem and self-confidence regularly appear in the research on women, it is necessary to distinguish between them. Robert White (1975) defines self-esteem as an individual's affective view of herself. Sarah Ban Breathnach adds: "Many women confuse self-esteem with self-confidence" (1995, March 21). In her best-selling book, Simple Abundance, she elaborates: "The quality of our self-esteem is very deeply connected to the relationship with our first and most important critics: our parents. If they unconditionally loved, accepted, and approved of us, then we probably do too" (ibid.). On the other hand, self-confidence can be learned. Sarah Ban Breathnach defines self-confidence as "an aromatic blending of invigorating essences: attitude, experience, knowledge, wisdom, optimism, and faith." The author continues: Self-confidence can "help each of us face and surmount the challenges of life" (ibid.). Meena grew up in a loving, supportive home—thus, her self-esteem is strong. Brenda and Meena were not as fortunate and have struggled with self-esteem issues. Their self-confidence, however, has grown immensely as a result of their education, work, and life experiences.3

Being "socialized to femininity" (Bloom 1998, 19) is damaging to girls' self-esteem and self-confidence. Carol Gilligan, the feminist scholar who first documented plummeting self-confidence in young girls, states: "Early adolescence [is] a crossroads in women's lives" (1992, 1).4 In Meeting at the Crossroads, Carol Gilligan and co-author, Lyn Brown, write that the phrase "I don't know" is a warning signal that a young girl is beginning to have grave doubts about both
herself and what she knows: "Women . . . tended to speak of themselves as living in connection with others and yet described a relational crisis: a giving up of voice, an abandonment of self, for the sake of becoming a good woman and having relationships" (1992, 4). Researchers have confirmed that adolescent girls in the United States are obsessed with their body image, suffer sexual harassment, and lag behind boys in academic performance, especially in mathematics and scientific areas (AAUW 1992, Orestein 1994). Thus, females have difficulty grappling with the contradictory set of expectations that are presented to them by their families, schools, and society. "They are to be sexy and flirtatious but at the same time remain 'good girls'; . . . Females are to put domestic life first at the same time that they prepare for financial independence" (AAUW 1996, 2). Maggie Mulqueen agrees: "Until [females are] able to develop their own internal criteria for what constitutes success and failure and recognize both, their sense of competence and sex-role identity [remain] mutually exclusive and their path to balancing blocked" (1992, 91). Their families would not be the only important influence in Brenda’s, Meena’s, and Jennifer’s young lives. Many other factors, such as educational background and the country where each girl was raised, would also affect their development.

**Early Educational Opportunities and Single-Sex Schools**

From the beginning, all three respondents had an intelligence that could not be denied. Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer all loved school, enjoyed the discipline of homework, and received high marks for their efforts. Each girl was also involved in many extracurricular activities such as the school newspaper and cheerleading for Brenda, drama and science clubs for Meena, and music and sports for Jennifer. However, none of the respondents saw herself as different or special. By seventh grade, their paths diverged. Brenda began to date, which became one of the major focal points in her young life, while Meena and Jennifer continued to put most of their time
and energy into their homework. Meena did not have to deal with "sex-role socialization, such as being praised for [their] appearance; [their] self-esteem [was] not completely shaped by societal messages" (Mulqueen 1992, 71). Although Jennifer had to contend with some sex-role stereotypes, attending an all-girl school minimized those issues.

Brenda took the same route that most females traveled in the United States in the 1950s. She was taught that females were secondary to males and that men "controlled women’s bodies" (Daly 1998, 36). Brenda was conforming to what Mary Pipher describes as the "gap between girls' true selves and cultural prescriptions for what is properly female" (1994, 22). Consequently, she learned to flirt with boys, ignore inappropriate sexual behavior, and undervalue her intelligence. Although she had good grades, Brenda was not encouraged to excel academically during any part of her elementary, secondary, or undergraduate years. She explained: "Smiling and cheerful, an ‘all American girl,’ I became an honor student (smart but not too smart), a cheerleader (athletic but not in a ‘masculine’ way), a homecoming princess (not a queen, just a princess), coeditor of the student paper (competent but not too competent), and a Thespian (who played only bit parts, never major roles)” (Daly 1998, 31–32). Brenda’s "all American girl” list is an excellent example "of the human construction of a binary gender/sex system in which women are hierarchically placed below or subsumed by men” (Bloom 1998, 139). Brenda had learned the societal lesson that she should not be too smart or competent at any activity so that boys would not be overwhelmed by her accomplishments.

Although there are many differences between schools in the United States and schools in India and Europe, I would like to discuss one major dissimilarity: single-sex schools. "Virtually no public, single-sex schools exist in the United States. The majority of single-sex school research comes from abroad, where single-sex settings are much more common” (Streitmatter 1999, 36). In one of the earliest books that relates to this topic, The Adolescent Society (1961), James S.
Coleman states that adolescents in the United States have created a culture in schools that is based on appearances and possessions rather than on academic achievement. Furthermore, girls and boys distract each other. He concludes that coeducational schools enhance this adolescent culture at the expense of academic goals.

The educational milieu overseas is different. All-girl schools, which provide nonsexist environments and can have a tremendous impact on academic achievement, abound. They were an extremely important part of Meena's and Jennifer's education. First, all-girl schools have rigorous entrance requirements, which prepared them for the competition they would encounter later in life. Meena had to pass a difficult examination before she could attend a prestigious, all-girl secondary school. When she was 11 years old, Jennifer received high marks on an intelligence test that allowed her to attend an academically rigorous, single-sex grammar school. Jennifer also attended a women's college. Although the schools had high standards and were competitive, girls were taught to compete with each other in a supportive environment. In her book, *For Girls Only*, Janice L Streitmatter writes that this type of atmosphere gives girls "a place where they create their own culture, where the talk is meaningful and inclusive, and where they either confirm or learn that they can 'do the work'" (1999, 124). Second, most of the teachers are women and strong role models for their students. Many feminists believe that strong female mentors can boost young girls' self-confidence (Brown and Gilligan 1992, Mann 1994, Daly 1998). Third, a girls-only school gives females the ability to go above and beyond what girls in regular schools might pursue. Girls are encouraged to excel in any subject they enjoy and are good at, such as science and mathematics. This is true for both secondary and undergraduate institutions. Subsequently, "Riordan [1990] found that women who attended at least two years at a women's college were more likely to go on to post-graduate levels of education and occupations on a higher or more professional level than those in coeducational colleges" (Streitmatter 1999,
Meena and Jennifer took full advantage of their fortunate circumstances and were at the top of their respective classes, which helped them to win scholarships and enter academically rigorous universities.

"A limited but growing body of literature exists that examines the effects of single-sex schooling" (Streitmatter 1999, 35; Tidball, et al., 1999). According to Janice Streitmatter, "While the majority of the qualitative studies suggest that some and varied benefits exist for students, especially females in single-sex educational settings, the results, based on quantitative measure, are not conclusive" (1999, 45). This disparity can be traced to the variables that each type of research uses. Quantitative methodology evaluates traditional educational goals such as test scores, and qualitative research studies the effects of teaching methods and classroom atmospheres. Many feminist theorists, however, "identify [traditional] schools as playing a major role in oppression of females, or at the very least, in supporting unequal and inequitable educational experiences for female students" (ibid., 48). They believe that single-sex schools rectify this inequality by providing the best educational atmosphere for females. In Taking Women Seriously, M. Elizabeth Tidball, et al., list some of the characteristics of all-girl schools: "high expectations for excellence in all dimensions of community life; a wealth of spaces and places where women's voices are heard; personal responsibility as exemplified in the operation of an honor code, along with a large measure of trust and responsibility; the celebration of traditions and institutional history that tie the present to the originating events, thereby assuring a future with depth and meaning" (1999, 140–141). According to these authors, women's colleges provide this type of invigorating atmosphere; consequently, they "produce the largest proportion of women career achievers and participants in graduate and medical education" (ibid., 138). The girl-enhancing environments of single-sex schools are empowering. These schools teach women
"to see [that] their own activities, projects, preferences, goals, [and] careers" (Bem 1998, 97) should be taken as seriously as men's.

When they looked back on their early years of education, Meena and Jennifer had one complaint: They were forced to specialize in one subject—science for Meena and mathematics for Jennifer—much sooner than they would have preferred. Neither girl had any other choice because that is how her country's educational system was designed. The early specialization in nontraditional subjects for women, however, probably contributed to their successful careers in male-dominated fields. They were also encouraged to do well by their families and school systems. According to C. Dianne Martin and Caroline Wardle, "Numerous researchers have identified the key societal factors that influence the interest of women in studying scientific and technical fields. They include inadequate mathematics and science preparation, external expectations, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and prior computer experience" (1999, 4). In contrast, Brenda received the societal message that men have more authority than women; therefore, she studied English in college—an acceptable major for females—and picked up her high school teaching certificate in order to find a gender-appropriate job.

The United States Congress has passed only one significant piece of legislation that was designed to provide girls and boys with the same educational advantages. Title IX, passed in 1972, guarantees "full access to participation in all functions of schooling, regardless of gender. . . . Single-sex schools are not prohibited when comparable educational opportunities are made available to the other gender in a comparable facility" (Streitmatter 1999, 3). Janice L. Streitmatter states that Title IX has been ineffective because it attempts to correct "gender inequities and perpetual disempowerment of female students on a short-term and superficial basis" (ibid., 128). She claims that Title IX only offers "quick fix remedies that with some teacher training can be implemented without making anyone uncomfortable" (ibid.). Meanwhile, "The
balance of resource distribution is not disrupted, and the group [males] that historically has received the greater amount of resources continues to do so" (ibid., 129). That is, male curriculum and pedagogy continue to be offered in most public, coeducational schools in the United States. One way to correct this inequity is to offer and federally support single-sex classrooms, programs, and schools so that female students, like Brenda, can benefit from those girl-enhancing, nonsexist educational environments.

Graduate School: Gateway to Success

It is not unusual for intelligent students to attend graduate school, and my three respondents are no exception. Brenda and Jennifer both attained Ph.D.s, the highest academic degree in their respective fields. Since they were the first individuals in their families to attend college, their advanced degrees are remarkable achievements. Initially, Meena received her Masters in Botany but later became an attorney and acquired her Master’s Degree in Law. They did, however, vary in the way they pursued their advanced degrees. Neither Brenda nor Meena went directly into her current career. Brenda was 46 when she received a tenure-line position at Iowa State University, and Meena was 34 when she became a lawyer. Only Jennifer went directly to graduate school. Although she received her doctorate at age 26, she was unexcited about physics and changed her area of emphasis to computer science. Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington refer to the transitional period that all three women experienced as a "transformational process," when women's "moves are marked by hesitations, shifts in direction, false starts" (1988, 23). These authors believe women follow this particular pattern because of "the barrier of the old norms, their continued power and the amount of time and energy it takes to surmount them" (ibid., 23). They define the old norms as "the fact and rightness of a distinction between men and women in their capacities and proper roles." The new norms state that "We have new social and political
commitments to individual equality, openness of opportunity, and equal responsibility for men and women" (1988, 5).

Of the three respondents, Brenda took the most circuitous route before acquiring her Ph.D. She interviewed and received a high school teaching job after graduating from college but did not start the job because she was pregnant. Brenda then started a Master’s Degree in English, but she became disillusioned and dropped out of graduate school without completing her degree. Continuing along with her "All American girl" script, Brenda attempted to be the perfect wife and mother by supporting her husband’s career as he climbed his way to the top of the corporate world. To help her husband, Brenda taught at three different high schools as she followed him to the East Coast and back again to the Midwest. Up until this point in her life, Brenda was following the dictums of "the patriarchal myth." Christiane Northrup describes this myth: "The patriarchal organization of our society demands that women, its second-class citizens, ignore or turn away from their hopes and dreams in deference to men and the demands of their families" (1998, 6). Fifteen years later, Brenda finally received her Master’s Degree. She then insisted that her family move to a city where she could pursue a Ph.D. in Literary Studies and become a college professor, her dream career.

Meena and Jennifer went directly from undergraduate to graduate school, but later both admitted that they attended graduate school for the "wrong reasons." Meena’s career path was not planned or well thought out. She said: "I just followed in my older sister’s footsteps. I really did not want a Ph.D. in Botany." Hoping that a Ph.D. in Mathematics would make her so highly qualified that she would not experience any more gender discrimination, Jennifer did make a conscious decision to attend graduate school, but she had no long-range career plans. Meena’s and Jennifer’s indecision is not atypical for women: "Most often, the initial sense of determination
goes no further than a rejection of limits and does not include a specifically formulated ambition” (Aisenberg and Harrington 1988, 21).

Public versus Private: Negotiating Marriage and a Career

“One of the main themes in Gloria Steinem’s later writings [is] that the process of freeing oneself from harmful gender stereotypes is lifelong, and that the ability to question authority in one area of one’s life doesn’t necessarily extend to others” (Conway 1998, 140). Even though Gloria Steinem was able to take a strong, public stance as one of the leaders of the Women’s Liberation Movement, she was 50 years old before she could resolve her inner, private travails. Likewise, Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer experienced conflict—in varying degrees—when they attempted to reconcile their professional aspirations with their private lives.

Interestingly, none of the women was able to live in “the bourgeois, patriarchically oriented family serving as the model in contemporary society” (Epstein 1993, 342). Each respondent had to deviate from her cultural mandate before she was able to find an acceptable relationship for herself. Brenda, for example, thought that a two-career household would guarantee her an equal share of power in her marriage. It did not. When she returned to school for a Ph.D., her 19-year marriage broke up. As Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington acknowledge: “The problem for women is that the two processes—professionalization and transformation—can make different and conflicting demands, most pointedly at the stage of graduate school when serious professional study begins” (1988, 20). Further, she only saw her son part-time after the divorce due to the joint custody agreement with her husband. It would take many years before Brenda felt satisfied with both her professional and private lives.

Although Jennifer did not marry until after she had completed her Ph.D. and was a professor, her husband could not handle an egalitarian relationship. He was Italian, and he wanted
a traditional marriage. In Jennifer’s words, the marriage was a "disaster from the beginning," but it would take five years to get a divorce. Both Brenda and Jennifer experienced complicated legal problems before they were divorced. They said that the main problem was fighting over money. After her divorce, Jennifer found it difficult to meet men who were not intimidated by her Ph.D. In her words, "When I was a graduate student, my thesis supervisor told me that gaining a Ph.D. in Atomic Physics would severely reduce the number of men that would be interested in me. He was right."9

Meena met her husband when she was a graduate student, and he was in seminary. They were married soon after she received her Masters Degree in Botany. Since she did not want a Ph.D. in Botany, it was a good time for her to take a break from school and think about what she truly desired professionally. Two sons, four moves, and five years later, Meena decided that she wanted to become a lawyer, a professional move which put great strains on her personal relationship because it required "an inversion of roles" (Aisenberg and Harrington 1988, 125). When Meena was given a scholarship to a university in another part of the state, her husband changed jobs so that the family could be closer to her law school. Furthermore, during her tenure in law school, Meena was unable to attend her children’s extracurricular activities. Michael Smith, her husband, assumed most of the parenting responsibilities during that time. At each stage of their relationship, however, she and her husband have been able to negotiate an equitable living arrangement.10 When Meena stayed home with their young children, her husband did his share of the household chores. At her first law firm, Meena chose to go part-time when her 60-hour weeks and travel schedule adversely affected her family. Twenty-four years later, she earns almost twice as much as her minister husband, and they still attempt to evenly divide all their responsibilities. Meena laughingly describes their marriage as an on-going, but workable, power
struggle. She explained: "My husband does not like me to have so many male lawyer friends, and I would like him to take off some weekends during the year—especially around holidays!"

An egalitarian relationship works the best for professional women because it allows them to integrate their private and public lives. Brenda's and Jennifer's marriages failed because there was no equal distribution of power; therefore, they were unable to negotiate with their husbands. They learned that there are dire consequences for defying age-old traditions: "We must acknowledge that when women flout the marriage plot, in this as in other ways, society exacts its price" (Aisenberg and Harrington 1988, 133). Since a conventional marriage did not work for them, both Brenda and Jennifer made other choices for a happier personal life. Brenda now lives with "her significant other," and Jennifer became a single mother.

**Children and Careers: The Biggest Complication**

For many women, the most difficult "management problem is not their love lives or their husbands, but how to care for their children" (Epstein 1993, 358). When children arrive in their lives, professional women have to contend with yet another cultural misconception. According to Sue Middleton, "Women who wish to work outside the home are seen as endangering their children's well-being" (1993, 122). Despite this societal message, Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer all said that motherhood is the most important role they have; however, it is not their only job. They all desired a fulfilling profession as well. If anything, motherhood has helped them cope with their work. Families "enable women to put work-related concerns in a softer light. The role of children in moderating women’s attachment to work has been a focus of much research, but tests of this hypothesis have met with mixed results" (Hodson 1996, 294). As Jennifer's experience verified, "Working women with children under six are less satisfied than working women without young children. But single women and married women without children are less
satisfied with their jobs than women with children" (ibid.). Therefore, the combination of a career with motherhood has helped my three respondents balance their public and private lives.

Each woman has handled her mother role differently. Brenda said that she was married and had a child before she "was awakened by the Women's Liberation Movement." Determined to be "the perfect mother," unlike her own, she wrote: "I vowed never to abandon my son" (original emphasis, 1998, 66). Then, Brenda read Of Woman Born (1976) where Adrienne Rich distinguishes between the institution of motherhood and the experience of mothering. "Rich distinguishes between the social institution of motherhood which controls women's reproductive and sexual possibilities, and the experience of motherhood which, either as fact or as potential, gives women great pleasure and great power" (original emphasis, Burke 1992, 269). As she revealed in her life story, Brenda found "institutionalized motherhood" to be stifling, and she made the agonizing decision to have an abortion after discovering she was pregnant with a second child that her husband did not want. It was not until later in her life that Brenda found the courage to return to graduate school and write "a new script, a script in which mothers have the authority to define maternal practice" (Daly 1998, 70).

Although Meena said that she would not call herself a feminist, her husband and she have shared all of the child-rearing activities. In addition, their sons regularly observed both parents taking turns cooking meals, volunteering in the community, cleaning the house, running errands, and working outside the home. As with her mother and father, Meena and her husband practice healthy, androgynous parenting skills, and they have not instilled any "naturalized common notions of gender hierarchy" (Lewis 1993, 83). However, there have been problems to negotiate. Since a career in the legal profession is "highly demanding of commitment and time" (Epstein 1993, 8), Meena experienced her biggest personal problems when she worked at her first private firm. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein writes: "Law creates time demands that are quite beyond
gamesmanship in the service of ambition. . . . Deadlines on presentations to government agencies and corporate clients may mean that preparation be made intensively in a short period of time” (ibid., 319). When Meena had to work late one evening after she had been traveling, her husband responded in a passive-aggressive manner. She recalled: “I had been traveling. Then, I had to stay late at the office to prepare some papers for early the next morning. I called home and Michael refused to even talk to me. He made one of our sons answer the phone. Finally, he came to the phone, but he was giving me the silent treatment. So, we had a big argument on the phone, and I told him I didn’t need that kind of crap! I had enough stress working that many long hours, and I didn’t need him to put this guilt trip on me. So, we worked our way through that problem.”

Jennifer encountered yet another unique situation. With her family of origin in Europe, she talked about her lonely personal life: “I wanted my own family. I was not lucky enough to meet someone I would like to marry, and I had a lot of spare room in my emotional life for someone.” Her solution was to adopt a baby and become a single mother at the age of 40. She is now experiencing the difficult balancing act—combining single parenthood with a challenging career. As a new single mother, Jennifer had no options. She could not opt "out of the workforce for a period of years to devote herself full-time to parenting" (Kennedy, Carsky, and Zuckerman 1996, 425). However, she was unable to do research for the first three years of her daughter’s life. This "career interruption" had a negative impact on her academic career (Even 1996, 422). Fourteen years later, Jennifer remarked: "It is still difficult to be a single mother. But I now hire a live-in nanny, usually a student, who can be home when I can’t. My current nanny is good, but she doesn’t drive, which really complicates my work schedule." Being a mother has imbued Jennifer with the goal of being a good professional role model for her daughter, and her daughter has helped Jennifer put more emphasis on her personal life. Jennifer summed up: "Before I became a mother, I was a single, career woman, which means my professional and personal lives were
closely entwined. I worked seven days a week—sometimes around the clock. Now, my daily schedule revolves around my daughter's school commitments. I also try not to work on both Saturday and Sunday."

The answer to negotiating careers, marriage, and children for professional women might be "refusing to choose." That is, women "refuse to forsake one major part of life, and insist on the possibility—and the rightness—of integrating personal and professional, private and public realms" (Aisenberg and Harrington 1988, 112). After all, most men don't have to choose. Unfortunately, none of the institutions in our society—from the family to the male-dominated workplace—are designed for women to easily integrate their personal and professional lives. Therefore, females wanting to "have it all" must become "superwomen" (ibid., 117).

Time is a precious commodity for all three women. Consequently, each woman has worked out creative ways to juggle all of her responsibilities. Since she has been employed at Iowa State University, Brenda said that she uses the summers to do the bulk of her writing. She is tremendously disciplined. Most mornings and afternoons are spent writing, and the evenings are spent reading. She takes breaks to eat and exercise. Brenda sighed: "I have almost no social life. Fortunately, my significant other is also a writer and understands how I work." Meena does her share of the cooking on weekends. Since she is a vegetarian, she usually makes a large batch of bean soup on Saturday. She then eats it for lunch every day, usually at her desk while she works, and does not waste energy on other lunch plans. She is extremely organized and prepares ahead of time for all of her home, church, and work-related activities. Finally, Jennifer admits that her life has become even more complicated since she became a single mother. For example, she recently moved so that her daughter can attend a private school for girls. Somehow, she still manages to handle all of her jobs efficiently and smoothly.
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The Patriarchal Workplace: A Chilly Climate for Women

At the end of the twentieth century, "the old rules defining the power relations between men and women are breaking and re-forming. The premise of the relation inherited from past centuries was unequal power, without any question" (Harrington 1995, 5). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Women's Liberation Movement challenged "the old rules" and endorsed new norms that support equal opportunities for women. When women enter masculine domains such as academia, law, and computer science, however, they immediately encounter the "old rules" which have become entrenched in these male-dominated professions. In "Travels in the Postmodern: Making Sense of the Local," Elspeth Probyn refers to this imbalance of power: "In its hierarchical movement, location insists on a taxonomy of experience. One doesn’t have to scratch the surface very deeply to find that class, race, and gender have a lot to do with whose experiences are on top" (1990, 184). Therefore, one of the biggest issues each respondent has encountered in her respective career is power, who has it and who is willing to share it. One of Brenda’s professional experiences illustrates this dilemma.

In 1995, the introductory women’s studies course at Iowa State University (Women’s Studies 201) was changed from a small classroom with 25 students to the large lecture format with 250 students. This change in format was imposed upon the women’s studies department by the dean of Brenda’s college who was a woman. Brenda explained: "She was a very destructive dean, who came in with the attitude that women’s studies was not intellectually rigorous. It’s really a masculinist perspective and very misogynist!" According to Brenda, the problem was not so much the content of women’s studies courses, but the fact that the program was under-funded. She continued: "So rather than provide financial support, the dean just tried to make it into a money-making venture which was what the large lecture format was all about." One of the main tenets of feminist pedagogy is to provide a safe environment for girls in order for them "to
reclaim their voice" and "to be no longer silent" (Walkerdine 1990, 157). This goal can only be accomplished in a small classroom (Noddings 1984; Kramarae and Treichler 1990) where "feminist pedagogies [can] draw on students' experiences and [enable] them to make choices and decisions concerning their own goals, objectives, and actions" (McCormick 1994, 89). Since the chair of women's studies had resigned in protest to this new policy and no other English professor would teach the course, Brenda volunteered. She informed her administration: "Okay, you are going to give me discussion groups on Wednesdays and Fridays or it's no go. (Aside: I tried to give what little muscle I could to the situation.)" The actions of Brenda's dean illustrate how patriarchal hegemony can be practiced by both men and women.12

After teaching the class for a few sessions, Brenda discussed the anxiety and "the feeling of estrangement" she felt when she looked out at her students in the large lecture hall: "I think I was putting a strain on my own feelings of competence. I haven't had the training to deal with a [large-lecture] course like this and, philosophically, I am opposed to it. I don't think the lecture format, that sort of consumer model of knowledge transmission, is a way of empowering students at all.13 And so I feel like here I am caught between an administration who wants to control pedagogy based on what is allowed in the budget, and people in women's studies who are so opposed to that format that they resigned. . . . Maybe they even see me as a traitor to the cause. I finally decided that turning away students because there was no one to teach this course was not going to work." Brenda took a courageous stand in volunteering to teach the introductory women's studies course. She was willing to experience "profound discomfort and a great deal of stress" plus incur the wrath of her feminist colleagues rather than have Women's Studies 201 dropped from the curriculum. Since she experienced such tremendous inner turmoil for challenging the patriarchal system, Brenda taught the course for only two semesters. She did, however, have some impact on Women’s Studies 201. The next year, the dean made the lecture
smaller, 125 students, and offered to fund at least two teaching assistant positions to help with the small group sections.

Meena described two types of discrimination that she has either experienced or observed at her law firm. The first is gender. In her department, there are two attorneys who formerly worked at the IRS—a man and herself. She explained: "Since the male lawyer was hired first, he thinks he is in charge of me. He's not!" She added: "He gets most of the work and the best cases because he's a man. Then, he comes to me and asks if I can help because I know more about employee benefits than he does. You see, he is being 'groomed' to become a partner in our firm, and I must threaten his position." With a gleam in her eye, Meena confided: I could tell him that he has nothing to worry about, [long pause] but I won't." Meena is experiencing the "barriers . . . [that] come from prejudices and stereotypes lodged in habits of thought, unstated agendas, informal verbal and non-verbal communication, and from the nature of the practice of law in this country. . . . Of utmost importance to women's ultimate equality within the legal profession is the extent to which the patterns of social structure that cement the brotherhood of men at the same time reinforce the outsider role of women" (Epstein 1993, 266).

The second, "most insidious" type of discrimination is racial (Davies 1994, 30). Meena explained: "Another Indian lawyer, a man, was hired from the State Department and came into our firm as an income partner." Even though he is currently working on a high profile case, Meena said that the white male lawyers make fun of him and say that he is "small and too pushy for being from a third-world country!" Meena concluded: "Law firms are one of the last white-male bastions of power! They're still a part of the old boy network."14

Another frustration Meena has experienced in the male-dominated environment of law is what she labels "the double bind."15 As a woman, she must not appear tentative or she is perceived as not having a firm grasp of the issues. On the other hand, if she is too assertive, she
is considered pushy. Meena cites another incident: "My IRS boss told me that I intimidate people because when I make a point, I tend to be too forceful. I told him that he was saying that because I’m a woman. He probably wouldn’t say that same thing to a man. He just started to laugh. Sometimes, I think it is a lose-lose battle!"

Although Meena has managed to enter one of the most prestigious law firms in the country and is well paid for her efforts, she is frustrated by Whitney, Solomon, & Black’s traditional, masculinist mindset. As Cynthia Epstein notes, "The structure of the profession and the cultural views about the nature of men and women often prevent women from becoming fully integrated into the legal profession" (1993, 265). In particular, Meena discussed the interactions which occur during business meetings. She said: "If a woman makes a point at a meeting, it is oftentimes ignored. If a man makes the same point five minutes later, everyone thinks it is a wonderful idea. It’s as if the woman was invisible and could not be heard when she spoke."

Meena thinks part of this problem involves communication patterns. She explained: "American women are frequently taught a different language from men. For instance, women tend to begin their ideas with weak statements such as: ‘So what do you think...?’ or ‘May I interject here...?’ If women want to be successful lawyers, they must be more assertive!"

Feminine versus masculine styles of communication have been verified by feminist researchers. Robin Lakoff, one of the first individuals to document these differences, wrote: "Women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways: in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language use treats them" (1973, 46). She argues that one way men have more power than and authority over women is through language. Furthermore, differences in the ways women and men communicate are the result of socialization. That is, "women’s language" is a result of society’s attitude that females are less important than males
Robin Lakoff surmises that women's powerless and men’s powerful languages can have a tremendous impact on male/female relations in the masculine workplace.

Of the three respondents, Jennifer is in the profession with the smallest number of women, computer technology. Although she has observed both subtle and overt discrimination, Jennifer said that the more difficult type is subtle. She described her workplace: "In my federal agency, women are usually assigned 'people-type projects' that involve working on bureaucratic, internal projects. The more visible, scientific, external projects are then given to men, which helps them improve their visibility and status in the organization. The 'natural result' is that mostly men are promoted into administrative positions." Jennifer is referring to the fact that many professional women are handicapped by working in support functions such as "human resources, public affairs, and certain kinds of finance jobs" ("Jill-in-a-Box" 1999, 2). Dana L. Stover concurs: "Gender segregation remains a significant problem within organizations today. It is unarguable that the vertical segregation of women is occurring, with women significantly underrepresented at higher levels within firms. Yet, also occurring within organizations is the more subtle form of horizontal segregation, with women being streamed to less powerful or important areas of the firm. Not only does this distribution pattern affect subsequent career moves of women, but also salary levels" (1996, 320).

Jennifer also contended that a woman needs a mentor who will "champion her career" in the masculine world of computer science. Such mentors are scarce. Linda Grant and Kathryn B. Ward discuss this problem: "From graduate school on, women often lack effective mentors who can aid their academic careers, and few have worked with female mentors who might serve as role models for handling issues specific to women, such as pregnancy, maternity leave, or sexual harassment (1996, 165)." Obviously, with few senior women in most male-dominated professions, there are fewer opportunities for mentoring women's advancement.
If a woman manages to attain a senior position, she encounters numerous other roadblocks. Again, Jennifer explained: "I do not like what I have seen here [in the United States]. The way women have been able to get equal treatment is to switch to the things men are doing. For example, in the sports arena, there are no longer girls' sports. Girls have to drop their sports and pick up boys' sports in order to get closer to equality. I don't see the reverse happening." Jennifer is referring to the liberal feminists' position from the 1970s, which was "that women must be considered the same as men in order to maintain or gain ground in the struggle for equality" (Streitmatter 1999, 107). It is on this same premise that "federal policy, most local practice, and court decisions affecting females . . . are based" (ibid.). Jennifer continues: "And, I think there's an analogy in the business world. What I see is this whole endemic thing going through society—of women having to adapt by becoming more like men in order to succeed in what is currently a man's world." Instead of the male-dominated workplace changing to accommodate them, women are forced to change and behave like men. It is this type of corporate mentality that only exacerbates sexual inequities. "Indeed, the very character of organization—with its stress on male-associated factors of formality, lack of emotion, instrumentality—acts as a barrier to female opportunity" (Mills 1996, 322).

Finally, two of my respondents, Meena and Jennifer, believe they have "hit the glass ceiling." Meena would like to leave her law firm because of the blatant gender and racial discrimination that exists there. Furthermore, she regularly observes "corporate greed," which upsets her. She explained: "The partners in my firm already earn one or two million dollars a year. But all they can talk about is making more money. It's ridiculous!" However, she added: "I would still like to go for the gold" such as interviewing for a high administrative position back at the IRS. On the other hand, Jennifer said that she wants to stop "hitting her head on the glass ceiling." She is tired of the stress and frustration that go hand-in-hand with middle-level
administrative jobs in computer technology. Since she is now spending 85 percent of her time in programs supporting women and other minorities, Jennifer has decided that she can be more effective by being a group manager in that area. Discouraged as she is about her own job potential and the lack of intellectual challenge in her current work, Jennifer believes there will be enough "women in the pipeline" so that future generations won't have to encounter the same problems she had.\textsuperscript{17}

As has been shown, patriarchal structures have hindered Brenda’s, Meena’s, and Jennifer’s advancement. It is in the masculine, corporate culture, however, that women encounter the strongest bastions of male power. In Chapter 5, some suggestions will be made to modify this "chilly climate."

**Summary**

I began this chapter with the Jill Ker Conway quotation which discusses how famous people have managed to reconcile their private and public lives. Although they are not famous, each of my respondents has struggled with this same issue. Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer had to confront powerful cultural norms before they could have successful careers in the patriarchal workplace. They did not intentionally challenge these public/private stereotypes. "Instead, the modes of self-representation embedded in their life history narratives suggested the complex way in which they negotiated understandings of self against and with/in the dominant discourses" (Munro 1998, 27). Since they were intelligent, ambitious women, they chose more nontraditional routes through life.

All three women experienced some difficult, painful periods in their lives as they moved from their families of origin to their patriarchal workplaces. Nevertheless, they persevered and are satisfied with their current status in life. As for their personal crises, Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer would consider them a part of their lives whether they had pursued a male-dominated
career or not. Stephanie Golden summarizes their experiences in *Slaying the Mermaid: Women and the Culture of Sacrifice* (1998). She uses Hans Christian Andersen's Danish fairy tale, "The Little Mermaid," to illustrate how women continually sacrifice their personal potential for other people. Likewise, my respondents have had "to slay the mermaid" and stop being "nice girls, good girls" (Daly 1998, 31) before they could live a balanced life which would combine the best parts of their private lives with their fulfilling careers in academia, law, and computer science.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: "WOMEN IN THE FULLNESS OF BEING"

I began my dissertation by discussing how women, in the late twentieth century, have made phenomenal advances in both the educational and the male-dominated professional worlds. In education, for example, "women now receive over half of all bachelor's degrees. They outnumber men among the entrants at Yale, Johns Hopkins, and Stanford medical schools, while in pharmacy and veterinary science they now make up most of the graduates" (Hacker 1999, 27). Once a woman receives her degree and is working in a high-status, masculine occupation, however, numerous problems occur. Andrew Hacker describes one obstacle, "the glass ceiling": "Thus far, relatively few women have attained prominent positions in medicine and law, or in finance and the corporate world. . . . Of America's one thousand largest corporations, only three have women chief executives" (ibid., 28).

To discover why such a disparity exists, I examined the lives of three women who work in the male-dominated fields of academia, law, and computer science. Born in the 1940s and 1950s, my three respondents are the second generation of twentieth century women who have entered high-status, masculine occupations. I believe that many lessons can be learned from Brenda's, Meena's, and Jennifer's narratives, that their lives are exemplary of what many professional women are experiencing. First, I will revisit my three research questions and discuss some of their implications. Then, the praxis of my feminist methodology will be examined.

Background

As Magda Lewis states, "It matters where, how, and with whom we live. . . . The conditions of lived experience shape our subjectivity and understanding" (1993, 79). To this end, my first research question was: "What type of backgrounds did these women have?" Two of the
backgrounds were similar. Patriarchal, working-class home environments and mothers who "lacked authority both in the family and in public" (Daly 1998, 65) had a strong influence on Brenda’s and Jennifer’s young lives. Judy Mann discusses parental influence in a young girl’s upbringing: "The psychological and educational research is replete with information that points to the role fathers play in influencing girls’ career choices, their sense of competence and worth, and their willingness to take risks" (1994, 270). She continues: "When mothers who were brought up to placate and defer to men fail to communicate forthright to their husbands about their own needs, their daughters notice this . . . [and may] assimilate this pattern of communication" (ibid., 271). Both Brenda and Jennifer would have to overcome the limitations placed on them by their patriarchal home environments before they could become strong, independent women. "How an individual surpasses the 'givens' of her life is well suited to exploring nonunitary subjectivity" (Bloom 1998, 65).

Ironically, Meena—who was raised in India, a developing country—experienced an entirely different background from Brenda’s and Jennifer’s. Her upper-class parents were able to provide their children with what radical feminists label "an androgynous culture in which male and female differences are minimized" (Tong 1989, 95). Since "patriarchy is a powerful system in India," (Ramamurthy 1996, 471), it is amazing that Meena grew up in such a liberal, progressive atmosphere. However, not only Meena but her best friends as well had similar upbringings and are now all working in professions such as medicine and finance. When they were young, sex-role stereotyping was not an issue for Meena and her friends.

Of the three life stories, I most closely identify with Brenda’s. Our lives have many similarities. We both are Scandinavian and grew up in the Midwest. When we were young, we
escaped into a world of books to avoid our dysfunctional home environments. In high school, we were both "activity jocks." We studied English in college and became secondary English teachers after graduation. Our fathers were only 56 years old when they died. At that point, our life histories diverged. Brenda is now a full professor with tenure and a prolific author, and I am still a struggling graduate student. In many ways, however, I have never felt stronger. Gloria Steinem once said that women's liberation should be called gray liberation because most women are not ready to be liberated until their mid-life. I agree with this concept but also wish that it were not true. There are too many "lost years" in many women's lives.2

Two important implications from my research, self-esteem/self-confidence issues and all-girl schools, can be traced to my respondents' backgrounds. "Research has demonstrated that girls will not easily cross the line into 'masculine' [domains] . . . unless they have a great deal of self-confidence and [are] supported by a network of family, advisers, teachers, and peers" (Mann 1994, 108). Since Brenda and Jennifer came from patriarchal families, they had to rely on other resources to improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. Jennifer, for example, was greatly empowered by attending single-sex schools from her grammar school days through her undergraduate college years. Since all-girl schools are not available for most girls in the United States, Brenda experienced a much more sexist educational environment than Meena who grew up in India and Jennifer who was raised in Europe. These academically demanding schools would enhance Meena’s and Jennifer’s self-confidence and prepare them for the most challenging fields of science and the highest levels of mathematics. Meanwhile, the Women’s Liberation Movement would be Brenda’s "wake-up call."3

After examining the many influences in their backgrounds, I believe their families of origin had the greatest impact on Brenda’s, Meena’s, and Jennifer’s lives. Brenda has documented in her many publications the road she traveled as she made the transition from incest victim to being "a
woman in the fullness of being." However, she writes about not taking charge of her life until after the death of her father. Meena said that she had never thought about her "whole life journey" before she participated in my research. Reflecting back, however, she said: "Our discussions made me realize that I had a very secure upbringing, and my parents instilled in me a deep sense of self worth. It also made me realize that I should consider myself fortunate as contrasted with a number of women of my age in the United States who did not have parents encouraging their children, regardless of gender, to excel in whatever they do." When I asked Jennifer who influenced her the most, she replied: "my parents." She continued: "I believe there is a balance between the positive and negative traits we inherit from our parents. My perfectionism and lack of self-confidence can be traced back to my father's lack of encouragement throughout my school years. Those two attributes will be with me forever. My lack of self-confidence will always be a barrier to my career aspirations. However, I enjoy having a strong work ethic, which is a result of my perfectionism."

**Private/Public Dichotomy**

The first research question naturally leads to the second: "How have these women negotiated the imaginary line between their private and public lives?" Many feminists believe that the private/public dichotomy is one of the most powerful tools our society has to keep women subordinate to men (Rich 1976; Aisenberg and Harrington 1988; Young 1990; Ortner 1996). Although it can be difficult to determine where the "male as norm" barriers hold women back versus where natural obstacles occur, there is not much question that gender stereotypes have played a strong role throughout my respondents' lives. Leslie Bloom draws similar conclusions in her research on feminist narrative interpretations: "Gender, gender equality, and gendered relations within their families-of-origin, marriages, and work sites were central concerns of the
participants and major themes that emerged in their life history narratives" (1998, 144). If this is true, how can women successfully integrate their private and public lives?

Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington state that there is "no panacea" for this gendered societal dilemma. They believe that "a major restructuring of the workplace and of marriage roles is required, and [that] will not be achieved until the attitudes that they presently reflect have also changed" (1988, 134). Brenda's, Meena's, and Jennifer's experiences identify other options. For example, all three women have redefined the traditional expectations of mothering. Brenda talked about "maternal thinking" (Ruddick 1997) which she described as "an enlightened feminist type of maternal ethic. It's not the kind of mother who sacrifices herself and suffers on the cross of motherhood. [In] the feminist maternal ethic, the mother counts herself in. She's of value; she's worth something!" Meena's course of action concerning motherhood and career illustrates the "refusing to choose" theory that Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington discuss in Women of Academe (1988, 112). Meena explained: "I really wanted to have kids. I just assumed I would stay home and be a housewife. Actually, I never really thought about it that much. When the kids were about three years old, they went to Montessori School for a large part of the day. I think that's when I realized that there was just so much else to do." Of the three respondents, Jennifer took the most unique stand. At the age of 40, she chose to become a single parent. Maggie Mulqueen sums up Jennifer's action: "To move beyond stereotypes or expectations that requires first a capacity to think creatively and to see options beyond those presented, and then the opportunity and courage to attempt to live differently from others" (1992, 69).

Like my respondents, my experiences as a mother did not follow traditional norms. If I were to describe my maternal role, for example, I would say that I am currently the biological mother of two sons, the step-mother of two daughters, and the grandmother of six children with another grandchild on the way. In addition, my second son was born three months before my first
granddaughter when I was 38 years old. As all four of my children grew up, I watched them struggle with the sexual stereotypes that are so pervasive in our society. The most important part of the girls’ lives was to have a boyfriend, while my boys are still dealing with our culture’s rigid expectations about manhood and masculinity. The following anecdote sums up their gender dilemma. Last year, I told one of my sons that he needed to be more sensitive after he told me about an incident that had occurred at his high school. He replied: "You need to tell all the other boys that first. If I show any sign of weakness, they’ll beat the crap out of me!"

It can be difficult to assess the pragmatic impact of feminist research on gender disparities, but I can say that writing this dissertation has changed my life. Although I am one of those individuals who immediately embraced feminist teachings, I am also old enough to recognize the realities of life—that is, there are no simple solutions to any of the gender issues. Like many women, my life continues to be a balancing act of exploring public, theoretical information while living a private life "where complex gender negotiations occur every day" (Lewis 1993, 156).

Using gender as an analytical category has made me realize how privileged I am as a white, middle class, Christian, heterosexual, married woman. As a result, I no longer place all women together "into one similarly oppressed or marginalized category" (Harding 1991; Hooks 1989; Bloom 1998, 141). In Chapter 2, I discussed how gender should not be the sole analytical category used in feminist methodology. Meena, for example, who was born and raised in India, stated unconditionally that racism was a more prevalent problem for her than sexism. Similarly, in their interviews, Brenda and Jennifer regularly mention their working-class backgrounds. Therefore, "Gender as an analytic category remains powerful only in that it has the flexibility to be adapted when multiple subject positions and the complexities of life, nonunitary subjectivity, and interpersonal relationships are considered in relation to gender" (Bloom 1998, 144).
The life stories of my three respondents illustrate how difficult it is for women to balance their private and public lives. Each respondent has had to overcome tremendous barriers—either personal and/or professional—before she could succeed in a male-dominated profession. Therefore, fighting patriarchal structures has been critical throughout my respondents' lives, as well as in my own.

**Male-Dominated Professions**

The third and final research question was: "How can the environments of the patriarchal workplace be made more conducive for females?" It has been shown that more women are entering high-status, masculine occupations, but that an open-door policy is not enough. Professional women walk into cold, hostile work environments where they have almost no role models or mentors. Therefore, they "make up" their professional lives as they go along—speaking out in all-male gatherings, promoting themselves, and fighting pay inequities. Although my research has illustrated the complexity of the diverse problems women face in male-dominated professions, strategies can be devised for sustaining support for professional women. Three areas—language usage, job flexibility, and lack of support—will be examined more closely and some possible solutions will be given.

As my three respondents' experiences have verified and as communication research has identified, there are two language patterns—"powerful and powerless." These language patterns reflect how a person feels about her degree of control in a situation. Ronald Adler and George Rodman give six examples of powerless language: hedges, hesitations, intensifiers, polite forms, tag questions, and disclaimers, all of which are apologetic and uncertain (1991, 72). These behaviors cause the communicator, whether female or male, to be in what social scientists call a "one-down position." On the other hand, powerful language is more dynamic, strong, and
assertive. Fewer questions are asked, and it is quite common for the more powerful communicator to interrupt the less powerful speaker frequently. Powerful communication also appears as fluent, active, confident, and effective. In our society, according to Robin Lakoff, females are trained from a very early age to use the powerless style, while males are encouraged to use powerful language. Therefore, power has been attached to gender, the male gender, and women are systematically denied access to power—partly due to their linguistic training (1973, 47-48).

Gender theory, however, suggests that communication behaviors that we have assigned to women may in fact be useful for men. That is, politeness, tact, and indirection, all considered to be female communication patterns, may be valuable assets in some situations. For example, Elizabeth Tebeaux discusses in her research how gender flexibility in communication styles can be effective in the business world. She theorizes that "direction and dynamism" (traditionally attached to males) and "tact and creativity" (traditionally associated with females) "are all necessary, depending of the audience, purpose, and . . . context" (1990, 27). Although Tebeaux's research is concerned with written business communications, I believe her theory can be applied to other aspects of professional rhetoric as well. "Code switching" is what Fern Johnson calls the technique of selecting "language [that] is appropriate and expedient in particular situations" (1983, 137), while Mary Lay calls it "androgyny" (1991, 354). Both researchers believe that rhetorical flexibility will benefit both women and men.

Karen Sterkel writes about another aspect of gendered communication. She states: "Men are known to hold the power in business situations and because the language of the powerful group is usually adopted by the less powerful group, women may be changing their style of communication" (1988, 35). In other words, females can learn to switch from powerless language to a more assertive tone when circumstances require. Males can be taught the opposite technique.
In another study, Laura J. Solomon, et al., show that aggressive, direct communication by women is more acceptable to management than the stereotypical, non-aggressive behavior expected of women (1982, 60). Increasing the ability of women and men to freely choose from either feminine or masculine styles to meet the communication situation appears to be the most effective approach. Code switching or androgynous styles can be taught to students before they enter the male-dominated workplace in English, speech, and business classes and/or through special educational seminars to people who are already employed.

A second implication from these three women's workplace experiences is flexibility. As Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer journey through the "patriarchal wilderness" (Pagano 1990), they are forced to re-invent themselves and find special areas in which they can excel. In the publish or perish university environment, Brenda discovered that she could not only work on her "inner script" (Conway 1998, 17) which involved incest, but she could write about it as well. Her "Authoring a Life" (Daly 1998) strategy assisted Brenda in that it only took her five years to reach the rank of associate professor with tenure. Similarly, Jennifer made an excellent decision when she left the fields of physics and mathematics for the world of computer science. In the early 1970s, computers were just emerging as a powerful technological tool. Then, as Jennifer's career progressed, she was able to re-invent herself by working in the many different areas of computer science—from programming languages and computer graphics to software engineering and information systems. Finally, Meena has been able to evolve professionally by specializing in very technical areas of law where few attorneys work. She began her career as a transactional lawyer dealing with employment issues, then became a tax lawyer specializing in employee benefits such as pension plans. As she said in one of her interviews, "At this point, my skills are very marketable." Being able to specialize and to re-invent themselves is one solution to "the glass ceiling" phenomenon as well.
An additional finding was the obvious lack of role models, mentors, and support networks for women in male-dominated fields of employment. Brenda, for example, found strong feminist professors at the University of Minnesota who mentored her while she was working on her Ph.D. Since she has been at Iowa State University, however, she has had to create her own mentoring system. She explained: "I had fantasy mentors. I fantasized Joyce Carol Oates as my mentor. It was very important! It gave me direction and sustenance." In her law profession, Meena is able to work more productively than most of the other lawyers and improves her career status in that manner. Finding no mentors in her government agency, Jennifer has decided to put a positive spin on her situation. Therefore, she is currently mentoring other women and minorities so that they can have successful careers in one of the lucrative fields of computer technology.

As has been shown, the central issues in the patriarchal workplace are the unequal distribution of power between women and men and the lack of support networks for women. The women who participated in my study were able to succeed in their nontraditional careers by defying gendered cultural expectations, re-inventing their lives, and becoming indispensable in their fields through specialization. The last section of this chapter will discuss the relationship between theory and practice.

Research as Praxis

For me, the most important part of my research has been the opportunity for self-reflection and the praxis of feminist narrative interpretations. Patti Lather discusses this application. Feminist methodology, she states, "offers a powerful opportunity for praxis to the extent that it enables people to change by encouraging self-reflection and a deeper understanding of their particular situations" (1991, 56). As I mentioned in my life story, studying feminist theory and writing Brenda's, Meena's, and Jennifer's narratives have been two of the highlights of my life.
In the past four years, I have learned more about myself than I did in the first fifty. Jill Ker Conway concurs: "That magical opportunity of entering another life is what really sets us thinking about our own" (1998, 18).

When I began this research, I worried about whether I would be able to find three women who would agree to participate in my project and if we would be able to sustain our relationship throughout the long, arduous process. My misgivings were unfounded. Although they are extremely busy, my respondents gave me as much time as I needed to interview them, observe them at work, and gather samples of their paperwork. Furthermore, they sent me additional articles that they thought would be relevant to my topic. I feel privileged that they allowed me into their lives. In fact, their life histories were so powerful that I felt compelled to re-examine and retell my own story. As Leslie Bloom concluded: "Women learn only to see themselves through masculine eyes, what is commonly referred to as 'the male gaze.' It is only when women are given the option, through the lens of feminism, to read as women or as 'resisting readers' that the masculine nature of the texts is revealed (Fetterly 1978). When texts are created for women, by women, with women as the subjects of the narrativity, women are made free to read as women and to see themselves through a (potentially) more empowering women's gaze" (1998, 69).

Hopefully, this dissertation is also a reciprocal, emancipatory process that will help each of my respondents gain self-understanding and determination. Although Brenda has already written and talked about her life many times, I hope that seeing her story in relation to Jennifer's and Meena's will give her added insight. On the other hand, neither Jennifer nor Meena had participated in this type of interpersonal, reciprocal research before. They both commented on how empowering the experience had been. Jennifer explained: "I found the [interview] process [to be] interesting and informative. Although our discussions naturally stirred up some unpleasant memories, the intervening years have mellowed their impact. The pleasant or merely interesting
memories far outweigh the disturbing ones, and all in fact, contribute to completion of the jigsaw of life." Meena said: "Your research helped me to realize that I should consider myself fortunate. Although I already knew it, it was wonderful to be able to articulate and get a deeper understanding of the fact that higher education and working in a 'high powered job' does not necessarily cause a person to be secure, content, and self-assured."

In conducting my research, I have found this feminist approach to be true not only for myself and my respondents, but also for other women with whom I have shared my findings. My dissertation appears to validate their experiences, which allows them the opportunity to tell their stories and to have their histories be heard. It is this "ripple effect" that is so powerful. Petra Munro concurs, "The life history process can address feminist concerns that research be empowering and transformative" (1998, 9).

Finally, this research is on-going. As of the final draft of this paper, Jennifer and Meena are in the process of changing jobs, while Brenda wonders: "Where do I go from here?" She explained: "Even though I will retire in seven years, I want to think in terms of what might be the last 20 years of my life (age 58 to 78): what will be the richest life? the most generous?"

Final Thoughts

In reviewing Susan Faludi's latest book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (1999), Andrew Hacker discusses our changing society at the end of the millennium. He states: "The lives and expectations of women have undergone a major historical change" (1999, 30). He continues: "Faludi seeks to show how the past impinges on the present, how forces converging since World War II have served to shape the lives of men today. Since most of these shifts were not anticipated, more men are in a state akin to shock than in any previous period" (ibid., 28–29). Despite these historical shifts, gendered cultural norms and the patriarchal workplace have not
changed significantly. Therefore, life can be difficult for women like Brenda, Meena, and Jennifer who are not content with traditional, feminine roles. In many ways, they pay a "high price" to have successful careers in high-status, masculine occupations. However, they "have developed [their] own sense of agency and can sustain it despite nagging cultural doubts" (Conway 1998, 88). As Brenda said in one of her interviews, they have become "women in the fullness of being."

I am optimistic that the future holds many opportunities for both women and men to explore new roles in both the private and public spheres of life. Elinor Gadon’s words capture this new spirit of the twenty-first century: "Ours is a search for meaning, for what has been lost and for what can be recovered. Our challenge as women and men of the late twentieth century is to open ourselves to other realities, to find other lenses through which to view human life, our relation to each other and to the world around us. To do so we must go beyond the old ways so deeply ingrained in our culture. . . . In recovering our full human history as men and women, we can learn other patterns of behavior. We can redress the imbalance . . . between men and women, exploring the possibility of living in harmony and justice with all things" (1989, xiv–xv). Thus, the answer to the gender dilemma lies in deconstructing sexual identities and privileged positions so that society can move beyond the stereotypical themes of femininity and masculinity. In my own life, "living in harmony" with myself, my family, and my work requires daily negotiations over complex gender issues. It is this struggle, however, that has made all the difference in the world in that I, too, have become a "woman in the fullness of being."
APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS FORM
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects
Iowa State University
(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project: How Women Can Survive in Male-Dominated Work Environment

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

   Candace A. Strawn
   Typed Name of Principal Investigator
   Date: 5-23-96

   Curriculum & Instruction
   Department: None
   Campus Address

   703-319-2180
   Phone Number to Report Results

3. Signatures of other investigators

   Theresa McCormick
   Date: 4-29-98
   Relationship to Principal Investigator: Major Professor

4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)
   ☑ Faculty  ☐ Staff  ☑ Graduate Student  ☐ Undergraduate Student

5. Project (check all that apply)
   ☑ Research  ☑ Thesis or dissertation  ☐ Class project  ☐ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)
   3 # Adults, non-students  0 # ISU student  0 # minors under 14  0 # minors 14 - 17
   See attached document for complete explanation

7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, Item 7. Use an additional page if needed.)

   See attached document for the response to this item.

(Please do not send research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed Consent:
   ☑ Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)
   ☐ Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)
   ☐ Not applicable to this project.
9. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

See attached document for the response to this item.

10. What risks or discomfort will be part of the study? Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)

See attached document for the response to this item.

11. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:

☐ A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
☐ B. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
☐ C. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
☐ D. Samples (Blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
☐ E. Administration of infectious agents or recombinant DNA
☐ F. Deception of subjects
☐ G. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or
☐ H. Subjects 14 - 17 years of age
☐ I. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (Attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in 11, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

Items A–E Describe the procedures and note the proposed safety precautions being taken.

Items D–E The principal investigator should send a copy of this form to Environmental Health and Safety, 118 Agronomy Lab for review.

Item F Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

Item G For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects will be obtained.

Items H–I Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. [x] Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. [x] Consent form (if applicable)

14. [x] Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)
    List of interview questions

15. [x] Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   
   First Contact | Last Contact
   ______________ | ______________
   June, 1998 | April, 1999
   Month / Day / Year | Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   ______________
   April, 1999
   Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer | Date | Department or Administrative Unit

   ______________ | 5-27-98 | ______________
   Richard Amsden | Cur of Circl.

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

   [x] Project Approved
   ____ Project Not Approved
   ____ No Action Required

   ______________ |
   Patricia M. Keith
   Name of Committee Chairperson

   ______________ |
   6-9-98 PM Keith
   Date | Signature of Committee Chairperson
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects for Iowa State University:

#6 Number of Subjects

The researcher believes that three case studies will be a sufficient number to gather all the research data for her dissertation. Due to the emergent nature of qualitative research, however, more case studies may be necessary.

#7 Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects

For my dissertation, I will conduct three (or more) case studies of women who work in male-dominated professions to discover what can be done about the paucity of women in those fields of employment. After discussing my case studies, I will suggest a number of ways in which this research and the issues it raises can be incorporated into the classroom and into the male-centered workplace. I also want to determine what type of women can successfully compete in nontraditional environments. My research questions are: Why did these women choose to enter nontraditional work environments? What characteristics are necessary for women to survive in male-dominated jobs? How can other women—both young and old—be encouraged to pursue careers in male-centered professions?

I will be using qualitative research and feminist methodology in my dissertation. I have already located three individuals who are willing to share stories about themselves and their work in male-dominated professions. My first case study involves a woman who is a full professor with tenure at a research university. The second case study will be with a woman who is a scientist and an administrator at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The third case study involves a woman who is a lawyer and has worked for a private law firm but is currently working for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Each woman will be studied for a period of nine months—from June, 1998, through February, 1999. Since most case study researchers are concerned about validity, triangulation is employed in qualitative research as an alternative to validation. The multiple methods of collection and analysis that I will use are: in-depth interviews (direct quotations), direct observations (field notes), and written materials (documentation). In addition, member checks will be used to verify the collected data.

#9 Confidentiality of Data

The respondents in the case studies will each have a pseudonym, and the person will not be identifiable by description, title, etc. All precautions about confidentiality will be taken unless the respondent requests that her name be used. Each individual will also have an opportunity to read a draft of her case study and the dissertation and may negotiate with the researcher on the accuracy of the material.

#10 What risks or discomfort will be part of the study?

All precautions will be taken as listed in question #9 to prevent any risk or discomfort. Respondents are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, please see the signed informed consent page that will be used in my project.
APPENDIX B. PERMISSION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM
LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

May 25, 1998

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research for this dissertation. As a participant in a case study, you will be interviewed a minimum of five times and observed a minimum of five times with each time period lasting at least one hour. The information gained from the interviews and observations will be used to write my Ph.D. dissertation. In addition, I will examine some documentation (a minimum of ten examples) you have written that relates to your job. The following points are the terms of participating in this case study:

1. The information obtained during this project will be used to write my Ph.D. dissertation which may be read by my respondents and will be read by my committee. After the degree is successfully completed, the paper will be filed with other dissertations.

2. Real names will not be used during data collection nor in the dissertation unless special permission has been given.

3. A tape recorder will be used during the interviews and observations.

4. You have the right to withdraw at any time from the study, for any reason, and the data will be returned to you upon request.

5. You will receive a copy of your case study and the dissertation before the final draft is written, and you will have the opportunity to negotiate changes with the researcher.

6. You will receive a copy of the dissertation soon after completion.

If you agree to participate in this case study for my dissertation research according to the preceding terms, please sign the attached form and return it to me, the researcher. Thanks again for your cooperation.

Candace A. Strawn, Researcher
505 Ayrhill Ave. NE
Vienna, VA 22180-4732

Theresa McCormick, Major Professor
Iowa State University
Curriculum and Instruction Dept.
N165E Lagomarcino Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011

Signed Consent Form

Researcher ___________________________   Respondent ___________________________
Date ___________________   Date ___________________

I (do/do not) grant permission to be quoted directly in my case study and in the researcher's dissertation.

Respondent ___________________________
Date ___________________
APPENDIX C. SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Sample List of Interview Questions

1. What was your home life like when you were growing up?

2. What was your relationship with your mother and father?

3. Were you encouraged to enter a nontraditional field of endeavor?

4. What courses did you take in high school and college, and what was the classroom atmosphere like in the more technical courses?

5. Did the media affect your childhood in any way?

6. What courses did you take in high school and college, and what was the classroom atmosphere like in the more technical courses?

7. How did you get your position, and what are your job responsibilities?

8. Describe your schedule during a typical day.

9. Tell me what you think about the masculine and/or feminine qualities that are necessary to handle a job like yours.

10. Do you make as much money as a man would make in a comparable job?

11. Tell me about the significant people who are in your life right now.

12. How do you manage your time—both at work and at home?

13. Would you choose the same occupation if you were to start all over?

14. Tell me about the job opportunities in your field for the twenty-first century.

15. What percentage of young women consider entering your profession?

16. Do you consider yourself a feminist?

17. Do you see yourself as "a forerunner" for other women in your profession?
Chapter 1: Introduction

1 In my proposal, I will follow Shulamit Reinharz's lead as much as possible and use full names, i.e., "Sandra Harding," rather than impersonal, masculinist surnames such as "Harding." I will also use the generic pronoun "her" instead of "him."

2 According to poststructuralism, language is an unstable system of referents, thus it is impossible ever to capture completely the meaning of an action, text, or intention. Postmodernism is a contemporary sensibility, developing since World War II, that privileges no single authority, method, or paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 15).

3 Standpoint epistemologies are "a proliferation of interpretive epistemologies grounded in the lived experiences of previously excluded groups in the global, postmodern world," e.g., Native American, Asian (1997, 53).

4 ISU did not offer a B.A. degree at that time. I was required to take two years of science and mathematics classes in order to receive my B.S. degree.

5 My mother was now a school librarian and had encouraged me to go into library science.

6 My stepdaughters came to live with us because their alcoholic mother had attempted suicide.

7 After I gained no weight in the first three months and twenty-five pounds in the second trimester, I told my male gynecologist that people were guessing I was pregnant with twins. He replied: "I'm your doctor—not them!" Then, he chuckled, patted my belly, and said: "You have a nice big boy in there."

8 Actually, I was one of the first individuals who bought a subscription to MS. Magazine when it began in 1972. My stepdaughter loves to tell the story of how a friend and I pretended the subscription was a gift from the other so that our respective husbands would not get angry. I did not fully understand the women's liberation movement, however, until I studied it in graduate school.

9 "Feminist interview researchers tend to interchange the terms unstructured, intensive, in-depth, and open-ended" (Reinharz 1992, 281).

10 Structured interviewing or closed-end questions ask respondents to choose their answers from a select list. Unstructured interviewing or open-ended questions allow respondents to choose their own answers.

11 According to Virginia Olesen, "In 1987 Sandra Harding, a philosopher, described certain social science models as reflecting transitional epistemologies, a characterization that would still
Mainstream feminist empiricists attempt to use rigorous, research practices in order to give their findings credibility. Postmodern feminists regard "truth" as "a destructive illusion"; therefore, they "view the world as endless stories or texts" where "gender is no longer privileged" (ibid., 164).

According to Patricia Hill Collins, "The Eurocentric masculist process is defined here as the institutions, paradigms, and any elements of the knowledge-validation procedure controlled by white males and whose whole purpose is to represent a white male standpoint. While this process represents the interests of powerful white males, various dimensions of the process are not necessarily managed by white males themselves" (1989, footnote 21).

Some individuals believe that validity is the single most important characteristic of research. That is, does the research fulfill the purpose for which it is being used?

"Thick description" does not mean the amount of detail provided. Instead, it is what anthropologists call "emic." That is, it describes the person's intentions, what the actions mean to her.

In Revolution from Within (1992), Gloria Steinem points out that this transformation would include women "and" men. It is not an "either/or" situation such as previously existed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Women and Work

Iris Marion Young uses the texts of Jacques Derrida, Theodore Adorno, and Julia Kristeva, "who have a similar critique of Western metaphysics," to develop her "metaphysics of presence" theory (Young 1990, 321).

This division of roles does not preclude the concept that most men also have a powerful role in the private sector. That is, many men are considered "the head of the household."

In The Second Sex, which was originally published in 1952, Simone de Beauvoir claims that what keeps women inferior to men is not their ability to produce children, but their inability to risk their lives for their country—as in war. Simone de Beauvoir theorizes: "For it is not in giving life but in risking life that man is raised above the animal; that is why superiority has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills" (1989, 64).

Various academic honors such as distinguished professor or professor emeritus can also be added. Each institution has its own set of honorary titles.

According to Myra Sadker and David Sadker, "Three out of every four professors are male" on the faculties of colleges and universities across the United States (1994, 166). Nationally, 68 percent of male faculty members have tenure, while only 45 percent of the women enjoy this lifetime job security" (ibid., 166).

A large law firm will be defined as more than 100 lawyers.
If a partner owns part of the firm, that individual is called a capital partner.

Billable hours are interpreted as the number of hours that a lawyer works with a client. A law firm's profits increase with the number of hours an associate bills to clients. Firms oftentimes have a minimum number of billable hours that each attorney must meet, usually between 2000 and 2200 per year.

If the partners in a private law practice like a young lawyer, they will also "groom" him in the ways of their firm. This "grooming process" is generally reserved for males.

Most CEOs or CFOs of businesses are male. Consequently, they network with other males in private clubs or on golf courses. Usually, these executives hire a lawyer they know and feel comfortable with.

The term 'glass ceiling' was first coined by The Wall Street Journal in 1986 to describe the invisible barriers that stand between women and their rise to higher jobs. Though women have done well in the United States—better than women in many other countries—the glass ceiling still remains" ("Women: Looking Beyond 2000" 1995, 45).

Iowa State College is now called Iowa State University.

In 1973, a federal judge ruled in a patent infringement lawsuit that Atanasoff’s research was the source of most of the ideas for the modern computer. For more information about the Atanasoff/Berry Computer, see Clark R. Mollenhoff’s book Atanasoff: Forgotten Father of the Computer and The First Electronic Computer (1988): The Atanasoff Story by Alice R. Burks and Arthur W. Burks (1989).

In computer terminology, "'computer' originally meant the person who did calculations for scientists" (Lubar 1993, 361).

The information management workforce ... is made up of executives, managers, professionals, sales and administrative personnel. The people in these occupational categories create, distribute and consume information. ... The information management workforce now makes up 55% of U.S. employment and earns a remarkable 64% of all wages and salaries" (Strassmann 1999, 1).

Chapter 3: Brenda’s, Meena’s and Jennifer’s Life Stories

Brenda Daly did not choose to use a pseudonym.

All quotations that are not otherwise signified are from Brenda’s transcripts.

Initially, Brenda didn’t identify herself as an incest victim because her father "abused her sisters much more severely" (Daly 1998, 4).
Brenda credits her short height with helping her to have so many dates. She explained, "When I danced with them, I made the boys feel taller!" Later, she acknowledged that the descriptive adjectives used to define her, "cute" and "petite," also "trivialized" her (Daly 1998, 140).

Brenda’s mother asked her parents to pay for Brenda’s college education. Brenda wonders: "Why, then, did my mother fail to intercede for my older sister? I am not yet sure how to understand the differences between the way my mother treated my sister, her supposed ‘bad’ daughter, and the way she treated me, her supposed ‘good’ daughter" (Daly 1998, 45).

In one of her interviews, Brenda mentioned that she might have gone to college because it was just the opposite of what her father did "or some sort of strange relationship like that."

Brenda did not learn to drive a car until after college; however. She said that was an advantage for her when dating. The boys always drove and paid all the expenses.

In a later conversation, Brenda told me that she was able to convince her husband to move back to Minneapolis because it had an excellent private high school for their son.

In Authoring a Life, Brenda writes: "In divorce papers, my husband actually claimed that he had been the primary parent, and I had no opportunity to defend myself against this falsehood" (1998, 65).

Ironically, this analysis of her mother’s feminine speech, was the same paper that Brenda wrote to earn an "A" in the "Introduction to Linguistics" class that she had deliberately failed ten years earlier.

Brenda is cognizant of the fact that as a member of white, middle-class society, she was privileged to return to school, pursue an advanced degree in English, and meet other feminists who gave her the opportunity to finally break her silence and tell her story. Due to circumstances beyond their control, many women do not have this same opportunity.

All of the names and places in this story have been changed to protect Meena’s identity. Meena’s quotations are taken from her interview transcripts.

All of the names and places have been changed to protect the identity of my respondent.

Originally, the tilak indicated that a woman was either married or participating in Hindu rites.

Meena said, "There have always been a lot of women doctors in India because many women don’t feel comfortable going to male doctors."

Meena’s father had a heart attack and died while this dissertation was in the final stages of revision. He was 76 years old.
Every law school has a Law Review, which is a student-run magazine that publishes articles on law. Students both write and edit the articles.

Litigators represent clients in a controversy against another person where a case may go to trial.

Three years after she arrived at JBR, a new male attorney was hired who immediately was allowed to do tax work.

Working from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. is not considered part-time anywhere except in a private law firm. In addition, Meena worked so efficiently the first year she went "part-time" that she had a higher number of "realizations" than any other associate in the firm! Realizations are the total number of hours for which you are actually paid by the client.

Although Meena's part-time position took her off the partnership track, it did allow her to pursue her LLM degree.

WSB is a large, national law firm with 180 lawyers in the Washington, D.C., area and more than 700 lawyers nationwide. There are only three women capital partners in the tax department of the D.C. office.

All of the names and places have been changed to protect the identity of my respondent.

All of Jennifer's quotations are taken from her interview transcripts unless otherwise noted.

In addition to piano, Jennifer played the cello and sang in high school.

Jennifer stated that the accelerated program was dropped after three years because too many girls were having nervous breakdowns.

In Jennifer's country, degrees were awarded if the candidate passed a series of three-hour examinations. Her college offered these examinations at the end of the third year of study.

Although girls were encouraged to do well in mathematics in her country, Jennifer stated that "only boys could be engineers. If I had been a boy, I would have done engineering."

At Jennifer's college, graduate students did not take classes; they only did research.

In the United States, Jennifer's work in applied mathematics was regarded as theoretical physics.

Jennifer later found out that other deans arranged a semester's leave for women expecting or adopting a baby, but Jennifer's dean refused to release her from any teaching obligations.

Jennifer stated that an efficiency analysis had just been done to discover which divisions were the slowest, and her new division had the worst record.
Chapter 4: Analysis of the Three Life Stories

According to Jennifer, her mother paid the family’s bills. She then gave her husband “a significant amount of spending money” and kept “a small amount of cash” for herself.

During the course of this research, each of my respondents experienced the death of a parent. Brenda’s mother died in the summer of 1997. Meena’s and Jennifer’s fathers died within a week of each other in May, 1999.

I use the essays in Sarah Ban Breathnach’s book, Simple Abundance (1995), to achieve balance between my professional and personal lives. Using the six principles of gratitude, simplicity, order, harmony, beauty, and joy, Simple Abundance offers daily readings that help women connect to their “inner strength” and lead more authentic lives.

Boys also encounter unrealistic cultural expectations. In his book, Real Boys (1998), William Pollack discusses the dysfunctional gender stereotypes that are the cause of many boys’ current crises.

Maggie Mulqueen would not agree with their assessment. In conducting similar research, she discovered her respondents had “a sense of internal strength and ability to survive, be it through escape into books, music, or a group of friends, [which] fosters a certain independence of thinking” (1992, 70–71).

Brenda was also the primary caretaker of their young son.

Jennifer also said that she went to graduate school to prove that she could do better than her second-class undergraduate degree indicated.

In “Ruth’s Song (Because She Could Not Sing It)” (1983), Gloria Steinem writes about her mother’s mental illness and her own lonely childhood. Relatives had told Gloria that her mother’s problems were hereditary. No one looked for any other causes. When she finally started to ask questions about her mother’s past, Gloria discovered that her mother had managed to attend college—even though she was from a working-class family—and had been an ambitious, spirited, competent woman. Her mother worked as a reporter until she was 30 when she went to Michigan to help Gloria’s father run a summer resort, “the most practical of his many dreams” (Steinem 1983, 131). She suffered her first nervous breakdown before Gloria was born and never recovered from “the spells of depression, anxiety, and visions into some other world that eventually were to turn her into [a] nonperson” (ibid., 132). When the Michigan resort failed, Gloria’s father deserted his family.

Statistics are changing in this area as well. “The average age at which [women] eventually marry is at an all-time high. Of women aged twenty-five to twenty-nine today, fully 38.6 are still unwed, as are 21.6 percent of those between thirty and thirty-four” (Hacker 1999, 27).

Sandra Bern discusses this type of marriage in An Unconventional Family. She states: "The essence of an egalitarian relationship is that both individuals are equally entitled to be taken seriously in every decision, every conflict, every interaction" (1998, 97).
In *Women of Academe: Outsiders in the Sacred Grove*, Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington define the marriage plot: "The marriage plot, in all its possible permutations, defines the old norms through heroines whose lives exemplify the orthodox goals and virtues for a woman, and conversely, through ill-fated characters who dramatize the pitfalls and vices that threaten to disrupt the happy ending—the marriage—that the plot requires. And we would emphasize here that the marriage plot applies to all women, married and unmarried alike, because it defines what women should want, the way they should behave, and the choices they should make under the old norms. Women may follow the plot successfully, try to follow it and fail, or decide not to follow it. But because it has for centuries been the paradigm for women’s lives, the one thing women cannot do is ignore or rid themselves of the marriage plot entirely as a guide for their proper conduct and a measure of their success" (original emphasis, 1988, 6).

As indicated by her "little muscle" comment, Brenda now has some power of her own (tenure), in addition to her college needing a professor who will teach its popular Women’s Studies 201 course.

For more information about feminist pedagogy, see *The Feminist Classroom* by Frances A. Maher and Mary Kay Tetreault (1994).

“Old boys’ networks” [are] where the social activities of an organization are built around expectations of men only participation (such as golf)” and private male clubs (Mills 1996, 322).


A good example of Jennifer needing a strong mentor can be found in her life story. When she suddenly became a single mother while she was teaching at a university that had no set policy on adoption, her dean refused to release her from any teaching responsibilities. She later discovered that other deans gave a minimum of one semester maternity leave to their female professors.

“Women in the pipeline” refers to the fact that more and more women will enter male-dominated professions. Therefore, it will be easier for females to reach high managerial positions and enter job areas that were previously restricted to them.

Chapter 5: Conclusion: "Women in the Fullness of Being"

Leslie Bloom defines nonunitary subjectivity as being "active and continually in the process of production within historical, social, and cultural boundaries" (Bloom 1998, 4).

As I relate to my friends, I was 40 years old before I came "up for air" and looked around to see what other women were doing.

Although I do not have a career in a male-dominated profession, I do have a similar educational background to Brenda’s. I find it interesting that neither Brenda nor I would start work on our Ph.D.s until we were in our late 30s and early 40s.
I would like to thank Dr. Theresa McCormick for sharing her research with me on women re-inventing themselves as they move through the various stages of their lives.

My doctorate will enable me to re-invent my teaching career so that I can work at the college or university level.

For more information on emancipatory research, see Patti Lather’s Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern, 1991.

According to Andrew Hacker, in Stiffed, Susan Faludi "sets the interplay of men and women on a historical stage, on which she considers the effects of social forces on human choices in today's sexual terrain" (1999, 25).
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