MOTHERHOOD STATEMENTS:

Mothers and their Adolescent Daughters

Submitted by:

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Statement of Authorship

The work in this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

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Abstract

Despite significant change in women's lives in recent decades, the prevailing ideology of motherhood is predominantly based on nineteenth-century ideals. Underpinned by a socially-constructed, idealised version of womanhood, the dominant paradigm promotes an essentialist model of maternal excellence largely grounded in the early childhood context; that of the 'good mother'. Amidst deviancy discourse that has historically beleaguered women who failed to fulfil prescribed standards of good mothering, this thesis contends that the ideology of motherhood that remains dominant requires substantial revision.

Central to this is the need to understand the range of historical factors that shape and influence cultural, and thus, personal understandings of the role of a good mother. Accordingly, the literature reviewed is subjected to critical analysis, examining stereotypical depictions of women that have historically typified the archetypal ideal. Particular consideration is given to sociological, psychoanalytic and feminist accounts of motherhood, mothering and the mother-daughter relationship. Therein, the focus of this study involves assessment of the degree to which the cultural meaning attributed to being a good mother influences personal perceptions and the lived experience of mothering.

While the literature reviewed provides a useful foundation for considering the likely impact the ideology of motherhood has upon the lives of contemporary women, it also highlights that the maternal perspective has been noticeably absent from much of the literature. Given the centrality of the maternal role in reproducing existing conditions of mothering, and indeed, the mother-daughter relationship (Chodorow, 1978), this study is perhaps long overdue. Based on a case study involving twelve Melbourne mothers, this thesis highlights both the commonalities and considerably divergent experiences of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship in the postmodern context.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The central objective of this thesis is to explore how the experience of mothering daughters changes in the transitional period commonly known as 'adolescence'. While the genesis for this has been my own experiences as both mother and daughter, the process of developing this thesis has been instrumental in contextualising my perceptions of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. This study encompasses interviews with twelve Melbourne mothers, each of whom had one or more adolescent daughters. While their experiences appeared widely divergent, a largely shared ideology appeared to contribute to common understandings of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. This thesis acknowledges motherhood as both an experience and an institution (Rich, 1986; McMahon, 1995) and contends that:

- The traditional ideals of the 'good mother' and the idealisation of motherhood continue to dominate and influence maternal practice in contemporary mother-adolescent daughter relationships.

- Mothers whose own experience of being mothered was subjectively perceived as unsatisfactory, experience difficulty adjusting to relational change in the mother-adolescent daughter relationship.

As a small study, no claims of universal truth are made. Furthermore, while the bi-directional influence of the mother-daughter relationship is acknowledged, daughters' accounts are noticeably absent. No apologies are made for this. This thesis redresses a significant gap in the existing literature. In presenting the maternal perspective of contemporary motherhood and the mother-adolescent daughter relationship, this thesis aims to stimulate further discussion about the contemporary Western experience of mothering daughters.

Rationale

There can be little doubt that while the experience of becoming a mother is shared by the vast majority of women, the experience of motherhood itself is markedly variable. Historically, becoming a mother has been defined as 'the norm', a biological *fait accompli* that places motherhood at the centre of women's vocation. It is somewhat paradoxical then, that the

substantial attention given to motherhood in the Western world has largely neglected the 'voices' of mothers themselves (Rich, 1976; Oakley, 1986; Nice, 1992).

Unlike many aspects of history, the history of motherhood encompasses no singularly spectacular event to highlight its existence as a valid research domain (Vandenberg-Daves, 2002). While renewed consideration of women's experience of mothering has been the subject of much debate (Rich, 1976; Gilligan, 1982; Oakley, 1986), the historic neglect of women's subjective knowledge and experience in this realm has largely omitted women's lives from history. Moreover, the knowledge likely once passed down from grandmother to mother to daughter has often been rendered obsolete. With the exception of privately secured diaries and letters, subjective recollections of the lived experience of mothering have been difficult to access (Cott & Pleck, 1979; Vandenberg-Daves, 2004).

Traditionally, the voluminous body of literature surrounding motherhood has demonstrated a predominantly functionalist perspective; that is, issues of women's identity have largely emerged within a context of what they do rather than who they are (Ruddick, 1994). In effect, womanhood and motherhood have been deemed largely synonymous (Chodorow, 1989; Mann & Kelly 1997), taking little account of either historical context or individual circumstance.

While some attention has been paid to issues of race and class related to women's lives (Collins, 1990/1994), historic concepts have predominantly depicted motherhood as a universal experience. Based largely on white middle-class perspectives of women, family and childhood (Thorne, 1993), the dominant ideas that have emerged fail to encompass the heterogeneousness of maternal experience. Indeed, where variations from normative standards have been considered, the predominant discourse has been one of deviancy rather than diversity (Fineman, 1995; Arendell, 2000).

Dominant ideas about women's role in society, and more particularly, women's function, have emphasised parenting tasks as women's primary domain. Beyond issues of conception and birth, while it has been well established that men are capable of childcare (Lupton & Barclay 1997), the notion that women are by nature more inclined towards nurturance has seen motherhood emerge as a "natural" identity for most women (Rich, 1976, p.3).

In effect, historically and biologically-derived arguments characterising women as more suited to the work associated with raising children (Ruddick, 1994), have promoted an ideology based not on reality but on idealised constructs of women, motherhood and mothering. Such perspectives have been substantially supported by the growing academic and professional interest in motherhood arising in the nineteenth century (Arendell, 2000). Therein, the prevailing ideology both reflects and reinforces an inherently child-centred perspective (Hays, 1996) based on several assumptions. The predominant view is that:

- Motherhood is an essential part of womanhood (Wearing, 1984; McMahon, 1995; Arendell, 2000).

- A "good mother" is one who puts her children first, willingly submerging her own identity and her own needs in the task (Wearing, 1984; Rich, 1976; Everingham, 1994).

- 'Good mothering' requires a labour intensive, child-focused approach (Hays, 1996).

- A "good mother" loves her child unconditionally and unambivalently (Rich, 1976; Fellman, 1990; Bassin, 1994).

- Mothers are predominantly responsible for ensuring the physical, psychological, emotional and social wellbeing of their children (Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985; Hays, 1998).

In forming the core of the ideology of motherhood that has emerged, and remained prevalent, within the Western post-industrial world, such ideals have substantially reinforced women's central submergence in the maternal role. Despite considerable social and historical change, this ideology has perpetuated and reinforced the notion of a good mother as "one who is always there, ready to sacrifice herself" (Benjamin, 1994, p.142) to motherhood.

The concept of maternal practice that has emerged, amidst deviancy discourse for those who failed to comply (Stacey, 1996), has been central in driving forward a mother-blaming perspective that continues to permeate contemporary life (Caplan, 2000). Consonant with increasing interest in child welfare and development, the imagery surrounding the dominant ideals of a good mother continue to be reinforced, both overtly and covertly, in popular literature, media and other cultural abstractions (Kaplan, 1992).

Indeed, motherhood itself has emerged as something of a sacrificial altar, providing testimony to the value of a woman's identity based on maternal willingness and capacity to attain the

prescribed ideals of good mothering. Despite substantial cultural revision of traditional ideals about women in recent decades, the inherent assumptions of the good mother continue to be instrumental in circumscribing the freedom of women to be themselves (Summers, 1975; Rich, 1976). Underpinned by gender-divided constructs of human capacities and personal attributes, subjective doctrines of motherhood reflect a fusion of personal and cultural meaning (Chodorow, 1995).

For the most part, the dominant ideology of motherhood takes little account of modern childhood as a period of protracted dependence. Coupled with nineteenth-century notions of childhood as a period of innocence (Birns & Hay, 1988), the extension of compulsory education has undoubtedly contributed to this (Clark, 1978; Kociumbas, 1986). Furthermore, the considerable legislative attention to child welfare that has arisen amidst substantial academic attention, has reinforced the view that 'adolescence' is a normative life-stage. While this has been vehemently debated (Mead, 1930; Aries, 1962; Pearl, 1981), the implications this holds for motherhood have historically been neglected.

Certainly, it is clear that varying forms of biological, psychological and social change take place across the life-cycle (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Erikson, 1980; Miller, 1986; Ryff & Seltzer, 1996). However, the prevailing ideology of motherhood, and more particularly, its entrenchment within the Western cultural psyche, makes little distinction regarding the process of mothering across the life-span. The historic failure to acknowledge motherhood as a dynamic process of change and development taking place within a particular historical context, renders the traditional ideology of the good mother generically applicable. This disregards the extensive changes in the socio-cultural landscape that have altered the contextual environment within which women mother. The traditional ideals of motherhood remain prevalent despite substantial change in recent decades (Wearing 1984; Lupton 2000). Such changes include, but are by no means limited to:

- A prolongation of childhood and a subsequent extension in the period of relative dependency upon parents.

- The emergence of reproductive technologies changing, in some instances, the means by which women becomes mothers.

- Increased variation in, and access to, a broader range of female role-models, including greater participation of women in education and the paid workforce.

The persistent incarnation of women within a deified model of motherhood presents significant difficulty for mothers in contemporary society "since it poses the insoluble dilemma of reaching perfection in imperfect circumstances" (Oakley, 1981, p.86). While the contributions made to human development and child-welfare arising from historic interest in motherhood are acknowledged, they fail to shed light on the lived, and undoubtedly complex experience, of mothering in the new millennium.

The 'middle years' of mothering, in particular, remain a largely neglected phenomenon (Ryff & Seltzer, 1996). While some attention has been given to developmental issues arising between mothers and daughters, such perspectives are predominantly derived from masculine understandings of adolescent and human development (Apter, 1990). In highlighting nurturance and autonomy as competing tasks, mother-daughter conflict and the role of mothers within this, has often been subjected to negative connotations (Flax, 1978; Basoff, 1987; La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990).

While there are exceptions recognising the need for a paradigmatic shift (van Mens-Verhulst, 1993; McMahon, 1995), most accounts fail to consider that the frameworks underpinning dominant developmental theories may not be representative of women's primary concerns. It has been argued that women's connections with one another constitute an important element in the female individuation process that is often neglected (Miller, 1976; Gilligan, 1982). Given this recognition, "mere intellectual thoroughness demands that attention be given to the distinct adult dilemmas and issues experienced by women. Until this is done, one cannot be sure that the categories of analysis and theories of development are not somehow flawed by attention to only half the human race" (Zollinger-Giele, 1982, p.2).

While the influence of the maternal role in socialising males is acknowledged, the writer argues that the complexities of postmodern mothering are most evident in the challenging and changing context of the contemporary mother-adolescent daughter relationship. This dissertation explores the maternal aspect of this experience, focusing on the ways in which both the role and experience of mothering daughters change within the transitional context commonly deemed 'adolescence'. Accordingly, the following research question and aims guide this exploration.

Primary Research Question

To what extent does the role and experience of mothering daughters change in the adolescent context?

Aims

- To determine the extent to which the traditional ideology of the "good mother" continues to shape and influence the role and experience of motherhood within the contemporary mother-adolescent daughter relationship

- To explore how relational and developmental change within the mother-daughter relationship impacts upon the contemporary maternal experience of motherhood

- To consider the implications of this in relation to traditional theories of women's development emphasizing separation and individuation as primary developmental tasks

While by no means claiming to offer a comprehensive basis upon which to understand women's experiences as mothers, this dissertation aims to stimulate further discussion about the maternal experience of mothering as a dynamic process encompassing changing relational dynamics between mothers and their daughters.

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective adopted in this study embraces a postmodern feminist approach. It acknowledges that although women most certainly share prime responsibility for the caring work of raising children to adulthood, their experiences in this realm are widely divergent. Historically, feminist forays into motherhood have concentrated on structural factors (Chodorow, 1978; Oakley, 1986; Hartsock, 1986). While this has highlighted the need to contextualise women's experience (Smith, 1987; Collins, 1990), it is only in the last decade that the importance of exploring the individual, lived experience of mothering has taken hold (Arendell, 2000).

Traditionalist forms of feminist inquiry related to motherhood have shown a tendency to appear competitive and contradictory (Harding, 1987). Radical and liberal feminism, for example, have at times presented motherhood itself as a major obstacle to women achieving personal fulfillment (Friedan, 1963; Millett, 1971). Others have embraced motherhood within a context tantamount to mother-blaming (Friday, 1977; van Mens-Verhulst, 1995).

In the case of the latter approach, perhaps substantially influenced by expectations of a biologically-driven maternal instinct, women have emerged with an apparent monopoly on, and proclivity for, the care of children. Notwithstanding the mammoth gains made as a result of traditional feminist discourse and analyses, the 'voices' of women, and their individual and collective knowledge regarding the process of mothering, have traditionally been ignored.

In seeking to illuminate the lived realities of women's experience mothering daughters, three central strands of inquiry emerged as potentially useful to this exploration; feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory and feminist postmodernism (Flax, 1987). While each of these conceptual frameworks provide some reference for this study, potential difficulties with these approaches were identified. Firstly, while feminist empiricism undoubtedly has potential to contribute to a "truer understanding of reality" (Baber & Allen, 1992, p.9), this approach is largely focused on structural factors. Furthermore, in focusing on the universal, the empirical emphasis fails to adequately acknowledge and validate differences in the experiences and circumstances of women at the micro level.

While feminist standpoint theory more closely considers individual cultural and class factors in the oppression of women, it also encompasses a presumption that as a subordinate group, women possess something of a monopoly on reality precisely because they "live out their lives in both the dominant culture and their own subculture" (Baber & Allen, 1992, p.9). While perhaps useful in contextualising subjective perspectives within specific class, race, age and cultural frameworks, feminist standpoint theory has a tendency to reinforce the notion of women as 'victims' of structural oppression. Therein, it too, is liable to embrace the very trap of universalism it seeks to avoid (Mann & Kelley, 1997).

Certainly, structural factors have significant bearing on the ideological concerns of this thesis and are centrally important to the concluding analysis. However, the conceptual emphasis feminist standpoint theory places on the political as personal fails to highlight women's individual experience as a legitimate research domain. Notwithstanding its potential contribution to this study, the lack of emphasis on differential subjectivities, reinforces the absence of individual women's lives from the sociological domain (Hekman, 1997).

While both the above approaches are fundamental to understanding the impact of structural oppression on women's individual experience, the emphasis remains on shared experience within

specific social groups and locations (Collins, 1990; Mann & Kelley, 1997). Given the emphasis on the personal experience of motherhood in this study, neither is appropriate in pure form.

Postmodern feminism offers a theoretical approach with the capacity to highlight both macro and micro level issues. More importantly, in the context of this thesis, it gives credence to the feelings of mothers. While quantification is often presumed fundamental to substantiation, in the absence of historic interest in the lives of individual women, this remains a matter for future consideration.

Notwithstanding the integral connections between personal experience, social structure and ideological discourse, the postmodern approach adopted herein acknowledges the inherent value of subjective versions of reality. It makes no presumption of women as victims of institutionalised motherhood, rather, it embraces notions of "multiplicity, randomness, incoherence, indeterminacy and paradox…" (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990, p.56). A willingness do so is vital to shedding light on a relatively unexplored area. Therein lies the value of the postmodern feminist approach (Viney, 1992; Lippert, 1997).

The following chapter reviews some of literature related to both the historic evolution of motherhood and conceptualisations of the mother-daughter relationship. More specifically, it examines the influence of the traditional model of the 'good mother' and the role this has played in promoting an essentialist perspective of motherhood. This chapter also considers historical and theoretical contributions to the emergence of a strong culture of mother-blaming, exploring traditional and contemporary paradigms of the mother-daughter relationship and the implications these may hold for the lived experience of mothering.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: The Ideological Construction of Motherhood

Overview

This literature review explores the ideological construction of motherhood, considering some of the key factors that have influenced and regulated women's lives as mothers. More specifically, it examines the dichotomous images that have played a role in promoting and affirming the good mother as an essentialist model of maternal excellence. This is followed by a critical examination of some of the key theoretical paradigms shaped by historic and contemporary constructs of the mother-daughter relationship and the implications this may hold for the experience of mothering. Central to this is an understanding of the context underpinning the prevailing ideology of motherhood. This literature review therefore provides a foundation for contextualisation of the case study which forms the central focus of this thesis, and includes consideration of:

Mythological perspectives of women's biological capacity for motherhood. Particular attention has been given to the ways in which women's biological capacity for motherhood has been characterised and used to construct idealised versions of both womanhood and motherhood.

Philosophical and theological perspectives of motherhood. The role played by Christianity in reinforcing the dichotomized images of women grounded in a deified model of moral motherhood are examined. This includes exploration of cultural representations of the good mother in the industrial capitalist structure and their contribution to a largely universal and synonymous association between womanhood and motherhood.

Motherhood and social reform in colonial Australia and the emphasis placed on women as moral guardians of family life. The role played by class-based perspectives of appropriate mothering that emerged amidst a continuing emphasis on social control of the masses is considered.

The ideological construction of modern motherhood predominantly arising from interest in child welfare and development in the early twentieth century is explored. The role played by the relative professionalisation of maternal practice in affirming utopian ideals of good mothering, and their influence in stipulating the central importance of women's function as mothers is also presented.

Historic and contemporary paradigms of the mother-daughter relationship and their implications for the lived experience of mothering. The conceptual frameworks of psychoanalysis, and their influence upon historic and contemporary feminist perspectives of the mother-daughter relationship, are examined. Particular attention is given to the prevalence of mother-blaming that gave rise to a perspective of the mother-daughter relationship as a potentially destructive one. This will be followed by exploration of a postmodern, relational paradigm that presents maternal subjectivity as a key strength in the evolutionary development of the mother-daughter relationship.

Mythological Perspectives

Women's gender, and thus their reproductive capacities, have long been used as a basis for subjecting them to idealisation. Explorations of pre-historic societies suggest that in the absence of a firm body of scientific knowledge, women's biological capacity for motherhood was perceived as something of a supernatural phenomenon. Central to traditional stories of creation and survival across and within various mythological contexts, "from at least 25,000 BC to AD500, there was never a time at this stage of human history when woman was not special and magical" (Miles, 1989, p.38).

The high degree of status given to women in this regard deemed them 'goddess-mothers', highlighting their cultural position as "the great mother, the earth mother, whose magical powers assured the food supply and the continuance of the human race" (Barstow, as cited in Olson 1983, p.18). While male Gods were certainly deferred to in this period of history, the idealization of women's capacity for reproduction appears to have been a largely universal phenomenon, extending across most geographic and cultural boundaries. "The Mesopotamian Goddess Ishtar, the Sumerian Inanna, Egypt's Isis, Greece's Gaia, The Caananite-Hebrew Anatha, the Aboriginal Earth Mother – all have been presented as integral to mythological stories of creation and survival" (Miles, 1989, p.35).

While this, in essence, resulted in some focus on division between the sexes, it did not deny women's integral involvement in other areas of the political, social and economic organisation of the communities in which they lived. While it appears women were primarily responsible for the early, physical nurturance of infants on the basis of biological capacity, it has been suggested that their involvement in all facets of the organizational structure of their hunter-gatherer societies was critical to primitive, tribal life (Miles, 1989). This appears to have constituted a primary

factor in isolating women as innately different to men. Venerated for their presumed monopoly over life and death, women's capacity for fertility accorded them considerable status in mythological society. "Woman was divine, not human, gifted with the most sacred and significant power in the world" (Miles, 1989, p.39).

The degree of power attributed to women on this basis was reflected in a cultural emphasis on women as all-powerful beings. Inherent in this perspective, the notion that women's responsibility and love for their children took precedence above all else, was a significant one. Greek mythology, in particular, highlighted the maternal capacity to bring about both great love and great suffering. Perhaps best known is the story of Demeter, the Goddess of Life, and her quest to retrieve her daughter Persephone (also known as Kore) from Hades, God of the Underworld. Responding to the abduction of her daughter, Demeter set aside her worldly responsibilities "until her daughter was returned...all growth on earth ceased" (Leira & Krips, 1993, p.86).

In highlighting a model of maternal love in which children take precedence above all else, such myths perhaps served as a reflection of masculine concerns at the degree of power invested in women. The assertion of women's power presented in this classic myth, suggests a degree of wariness with regard to female dominance over broader survival issues. Adrienne Rich (1986) suggests that Demeter's response was not related to unwarranted malevolence but was a direct result of the masculine assertion of power attempting to divide the mother-daughter relationship.

While the gods and goddesses of primitive society were each attributed responsibility for various aspects of social organisation (Barstow, 1983), women's life-giving capacities were integrally connected to agricultural production and survival (Salzman, 1983). In setting women apart from men on the basis of their presumed, magical hold over primary production and reproduction issues, the seeds were sown for a continuing and pervasive gender-division within the greater organizational structure of society. Amidst the reverence attributed to women's ascribed position as 'great-goddess-mothers' was a fear that, like nature, women were capable of imposing great nurturance and great suffering. Here was a theme that would arise again and again, albeit in varying forms, as the ideological position of motherhood evolved throughout history.

The contradiction inherent in the status assigned to women as goddess-like mothers is typified in the following address by Orpheus to the 'Great-Goddess-Mother' of the Earth, Gaia. "Divine Earth, mother of men and of the blessed gods, You nourish all, you give all, you bring all to Fruition, You destroy all" (Orpheus, as cited in Apostolos 1977, p.37). The inherent dichotomy reflected in this view suggests that any failure in the realms of production or reproduction could be attributed to women. The stories of both Demeter and Gaia appear to have provided strong foundations for the historic emphasis on 'mother-blaming' that followed.

The notion of maternal love as power may well have been women's downfall. Coupled with the rise of scientific knowledge beyond basic symbolism to cause and effect, the largely worldwide growth of religion began to raise serious questions that challenged women's position as goddess-mothers, and, in effect, women's position in the social order. Coupled with the evolution of religion in both Western and Eastern society, a largely monotheistic perspective in which the duly appointed God was deemed male, emerged triumphant (Barstow, 1983; Miles, 1989). In contrast to previously-held prevalent beliefs, the cogent perspective now was that women were recipients of the power of creation. "Walking in the garden that had been Eden, Mother Nature met Father God and her doom" (Miles, 1989, p.82).

Philosophical and Theological Perspectives

While primitive beliefs regarding women's 'magical' qualities were not wholly eradicated, religion and philosophy, coupled with a growing understanding of natural phenomena, helped provide a basis to explain away women's capacity to conceive. In doing so, newly-emerged ideas began to render the mystery surrounding women's biological capacities, increasingly obsolete. In effect, such change signalled the beginnings of a fundamental questioning of existing female-male power relations. If women were not the sacred, powerful beings they had long been portrayed as, what was the nature of their role?

While religion, and thus the emerging monotheistic patriarchy, were significant factors in challenging the prevailing social order, the views of prominent philosophers were also highly influential. By the fourth century BC, Aristotle provided some reassurance that all was unfolding to plan. "The male shapes and moulds society and the world. Woman, on the other hand, is passive. She stays home as is her nature. She is matter waiting to be formed by the active male principle" (Aristotle, cited in Fisher, 1979, p.83).

In keeping with the growing emphasis on women as inactive agents in their own destinies, justification for their change in status continued to ensure the demise of the sense of wonder women's biological capacities had long invoked. While women were clearly still important to the development of society, the growing emphasis on the scientific laws of nature reinforced the notion of women's primary function as incubators. "She just nurses the seed that is planted within her by the child's true parent, the male" (Aeschylus, Eumenides, 5th century BC, cited in Thurer, 1994, p.65). Such philosophies appear to have substantially negated women's rights of citizenship.

Along with the rise of patriarchal religion, women's status was largely relegated to that of a necessary commodity, valued for their breeding and nurturing capacities, but with little to offer beyond those confines. While there were doubtless different cultural understandings of who God was, it would appear that, long before the coming of Christ, there was a growing universal acceptance that the ultimate deity was male (Thurer, 1994). The identification of a solitary 'Father-God', with the apparent power of all the mythological gods and goddesses combined, reduced the age-old stories of creation to mere fallacy.

In the Western world, Christianity, coupled with the 'knowledge' proffered by key philosophers, ensured that any enduring beliefs related to the Magna Mater (Great Mother) were subject to vilification. They represented a significant threat to the religious ideology now taking shape. Any evidence to the contrary was met "by insisting on the One God who required neither mother nor consort" (Atkinson, 1991, p.111). Inherent to the broader acceptance of a revision of women's position in the political, social and economic order, were the construction of dichotomized images of women that served to justifying the demise of pre-historic stories of creation and survival.

The *piece de resistance*, affirming Christianity's claims, was the starkly opposing images of first woman Eve, supposedly fashioned from the rib of Adam, and the paragon of virgin mother Mary. Both images served to highlight that the adoration previously accorded women's life-giving powers had been starkly misplaced but this was where the similarity ended. As the chosen virgin mother of God's son, Mary became the ultimate, archetypal Mother, emphasizing not only the power of a solitary male God but an ideology of incarnated, spiritual motherhood that was entirely consistent with Christian morality and the needs of patriarchy.

The notion of God's ever-prevailing love for humanity saw the Virgin Mary's labour occur "without a murmur or lesion" (Warner, 1976, p.45). Encased within an ideology of God-given motherhood, direct links were made between maternal love and God's love for humanity. "As one whom a mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (Isaiah, 66:13, *The Holy Bible*, 1978). Eve, on the other hand, provided a useful, deviant contrast. Her labour consisted of intense pain and suffering. According to the biblical story of Genesis, God's admonishment reinforced the notion of a severe labour as punishment for procreative sin, reminding her of the natural social order of patriarchy in the process. "I will increase your labour and your groaning, and in labour you shall bear children. You shall be eager for your husband, And he shall be your master" (*The New English Bible with the Apocrypha*, 1974, p.4).

The images of both Mary and Eve reflected disconnected concepts of women as mothers, deeming both relatively powerless in a patriarchal world. While Mary served the purpose of highlighting altruistic notions of Christian motherhood, (evil) Eve provided a concrete example of the dangers of non-submission. Mary came to represent an accepted model of maternal devotion. Her deference to God, husband and family constituted an important function in upholding patriarchal-determined ideals of social order. Subservience to both God and patriarchy was critical to the regulation of women's sexuality. Viewed within the Christian framework of marriage and motherhood, the ordinance of such ideals was critical to ensuring the safe passage of property from fathers to sons.

The reinforcement of the Christian ideals surrounding motherhood was undoubtedly instrumental in restricting the choices available to women. They fulfilled their expected roles as wives and mothers, immersed themselves in religious vocation or provided domestic help. Inherent in these arrangements was the clear message that the father was the master of the family, an arrangement apparently legitimised by God himself. Procreation was presented as functional, and sexual desire, as depicted by first woman Eve, as sinful. Good Christian mothers were to replicate the pure motherhood of Mary – they must be all-loving, all-sacrificing, hard-working and above all, chaste.

While early Christianity was, in time, largely accepted by the upper classes, the influence of paganism was still present. The notion of (non-Christian) women as 'wicked' saw the various forms of witchcraft associated with fertility, midwifery and herbal medicine come under attack in

the middle ages (*Macquarie History of Ideas*, 1983). Witchcraft was seen as a denial of God's divine plan and substantive links were made between women's involvement in midwifery and devil worship. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in particular heralded dire warnings against such involvement. Viewed as a particularly threatening form of heresy, the mid-fourteenth century practice of organised 'witch hunts' was not uncommon in European society.

Women were clearly warned about the dangers of following established midwifery traditions. Henry Boguet (1590) cautioned that:

> ...those midwives and wise women who are witches are in the habit of offering to Satan the little children they deliver, and then of killing them before they are baptised... . They do even worse; for they kill them while they are in their mothers' wombs (Quoted in Parinder,1958, p.51).

Many thousands of women were 'burned at the stake' because of their perceived involvement in witchcraft. Notably, while a large number of men were also dealt with in this way, consistent with patriarchy, they were presumed to be male leaders of covens. The publication of a guide to witch hunting in 1486 (*Malleus Maleficarum*), advocating torture as a means of confession, declared witchcraft to be 'wickedness inherent in women' (Kramer & Sprenger, 1971). Such admonitions were undoubtedly instrumental in decreasing women's traditional involvement in assisting others with the birth process.

While formal professionalisation of the medical field was yet to be institutionalised, therein lay the beginnings of a historic de-emphasis on women's integral involvement in most matters of fertility and maternal health (Ehrenreich & English, 1973). In fact, women's participation in the realms of reproduction was largely reduced to that of child carer as Christian ideals took hold. While male intrusion into the realms of motherhood was well underway, motherhood itself was not singled out as a primary role for women in the middle ages.

The perfectionist maternal model represented by Mary was more an aspirational one within broader medieval society. The lower classes, in particular, were predominantly still concentrated in rural areas and the substantial involvement of mothers and their children in broader agricultural production remained critical to their survival. "It would never have occurred to medieval mom [sic] to gratify her child in as unconditional a way as Mary, nor would material circumstances even remotely have permitted such indulgence" (Thurer, 1994, p.123).

By the turn of the sixteenth century, however, amongst the upper classes at least, Christian notions of marriage and family had taken firm hold. Arranged marriages often proved fruitful business propositions, leading to increased family-held land holdings and resources. Such activity was instrumental in creating greater class-division amongst the growing population (Goldthorpe, 1987).

Along with the growth of the population, the expansion of wealth amongst the upper classes saw a pattern of large-scale enterprise emerge, making it difficult for lower-class families to compete. The growth of industry in Britain from the sixteenth century onwards, (*Macquarie History of Ideas,* 1983) resulted in many previously self-sufficient individuals and families being forced to seek work in urban-based factory environments. The shift from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial economy was undoubtedly instrumental in reinforcing what would become continuing divisions between family and work. The Industrial Revolution was responsible for "splitting apart what had previously been the one indivisible whole of husband, home and family" (Miles,1989, p.187).

Despite being a largely gradual process, by the mid-eighteenth century, the seemingly inevitable surplus of labour that arose was without precedent. Central to addressing this, was the delineation of women's primary role as mothers (Glazer-Malbin, 1976). In addition to being fundamentally important to the reproduction of the capitalist labour force, women's central immersion in the home-based roles of wife and mother was viewed as separate to the broader economy. The survival of industrial capitalism and its workers require "somebody to buy the food, cook the meals, wash the clothes, clean the home and bear and bring up the children" (Oakley, 1986, p.167).

While it was generally understood that the involvement of working-class women in the paid workforce was necessary to economic survival, the emphasis was on domestic service work where wages and conditions remain largely ignored by industrial awards (Kingston, 1975). The idea of women working outside the home was of some concern, and while many upper-class families were happy to employ them in domestic service, the involvement of women and children in non-domestic work was contradictory to idealised notions of family, women and children (Pinchbeck, 1969).

While the ideal of modernisation was embraced with much vigour, large-scale industrialisation and the resultant mass-urbanisation became something of an unanticipated problem. Lower-class urban migration classes led to a highly visible population of poorer-class men, women and children in the search for work to sustain their families and many purportedly turned to theft, prostitution and other activities that constituted a substantial breach of bourgeois morality. There was continual anxiety amongst the upper classes that unless something was done to maintain social order, the aspirational urban society they sought to create would be in danger of imminent collapse.

What was emerging, amidst largely bourgeois notions of childhood and family, was an ideology of motherhood that required women's central involvement in the domestic sphere. For the most part, women's position in society was predominantly viewed as secondary to men. Consistent with Christian notions of legislated marriage, the prevailing view was that "her body, earnings, children and domestic services belonged to her husband" (Oakley, 1986, p.2). Unmarried women, irrespective of their circumstances, were viewed somewhat unfavourably. Their presence was unsettling and the general view was that economic survival alone provided no justification for involvement in 'criminal' activities. Consequently, the practice of transporting convicts to Australia was embraced with vigour (Summers, 1975).

Motherhood and Social Reform in Colonial Australia

The British tradition of transporting convicts to Australia was also instrumental in transplanting the Christian values of the motherland although the colony itself was far from settled and the desired moral standards virtually non-existent in practice. While it is clear that male convicts substantially outnumbered female convicts, from the time of the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, there was considerable emphasis on 'civilising' the colonies and women were to play a central role in this.

It has been suggested that, until at least 1840, women in the colonies were largely perceived as 'damned whores' (Summers, 1975). There is substantial evidence to suggest that a high proportion were subjected to the sexual demands of the largely male colonial population, convicts and officers alike. Miriam Dixson (1999) cites numerous government reports from the early nineteenth century on, presenting evidence of women bearing children out of wedlock as a direct result of their work assignments.

Other historians refute the notion that the label of 'whore' was applied indiscriminately to all convict women. Using assignment and appropriation records, albeit predominantly Tasmanian in origin, Kirsty Reid (2003) notes a central emphasis in these on the occupation, skills and work histories of the women involved. She suggests that the presumption made by many feminist historians, that women in colonial Australia were little more than passive agents in a government-run prostitution scheme, denies the fact that many had both strong agency and bargaining power.

While conditions in colonial Australia were undoubtedly harsh on women, there is considerable suggestion that in the absence of "a really solid middle bourgeoisie" it was difficult to attain any sort of "moral hegemony" amidst a predominantly poor and working-class population (Dixson, 1999, p.179). While some middle-class officers and their wives and families were in residence, the difficult conditions meant these were in the minority in the early stages of colonial settlement. The perceived social and moral disorder, no doubt influenced by the British experience, saw an increasing call for 'respectable' families and single women to move to the colonies in the 1840s. As a presumably 'civilising' force, it was hoped that their influence in the formative years of Australia's history would result in a more stable and desirable social order.

Just as (moral) Mary had been used as a contrast to (evil) Eve, so too did the arrival of non-convict women, allow for the strengthening of dominant notions of women as moral guardians of family. The emphasis on following the British philanthropic tradition towards women and children, remained fundamental to reinforcing such responsibility amongst women of the upper classes. By 1890, amidst the depression, notions of women's charitable work towards poor women and their children had taken strong hold (Roe, 1988).

Many took up the challenge of resettlement in the colonies, most of them married women, bringing with them entrenched and moralistic Christian values. Much of their attention was focused on the needs of women and children, and in particular, young women, who were thought to be particularly vulnerable to moral danger (Roe, 1988). The ascribed role of good wife-good mother was deemed essential to promoting a stable model of family life amongst the Australian population and imbuing a (presumed) morally-superior example of bourgeois family life.

Some of the middle and upper-class women emigrating displayed a high degree of empathy towards the plight of unmarried and unsupported mothers. Caroline Chisholm's work finding

these women suitable accommodation and employment is a case in point (Dixson, 1999). Single mothers and illegitimate children were of particular concern and numerous state-funded 'foundling homes' emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Swain & Howe, 1995).

The increasing and highly-visible poor also saw substantial attention paid towards children of the lower classes. Social reformist, Mary Carpenter, showed great concern with the children of the "perishing classes who have not yet fallen into actual crime but who are almost certain...to do so" (Quoted in Maunders, 1987, p.34). The involvement of bourgeois women in charitable pursuits no doubt further reinforced the prevailing view of women as more characteristically inclined to 'caring' work. While their efforts were admirable, in perceiving illegitimacy as a social problem, they were undoubtedly also instrumental in sustaining "a stereotype which devalues the role of women in negotiating their own sexuality" (Swain & Howe, 1995, p.14).

Amidst Victorian notions of childhood as a period of innocence requiring both parental protection and guidance, considerable attention was also paid to children working in urban factories or as street hawkers (Jaggs, 1987). Little account was taken of the fact that they may well have provided an important economic contribution to struggling working-class mothers and families. While these issues had been of concern for some decades, the second half of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of a large number of legislative measures related to the care and protection of children emerge.

The growing professional emphasis on child-centred mothering, saw the emergence of numerous philanthropic associations. Predominantly organised by upper-class women with time on their hands and a Christian perspective underpinning their actions, their central aim was to address issues identified as integral to children's welfare. Dubbed 'God's Police' by social reformist, Caroline Chisholm, the work of such women was fundamental to the institutionalisation of marriage and motherhood as a way of life for women (Porter, 1988). Granted, many showed dedication to assisting their lower-class sisters to better themselves, but the ultimate aim was to raise moral standards.

Married motherhood provided a subtle form of social control that would propogate the desired standards, thereby ensuring the transmission of Christian moral values throughout broader society. While it is clear that this did not occur without struggle, the building of a 'respectable' society, with fathers as 'breadwinners' and mothers at the helm of family life became a focal

point.   For those who failed to meet the aspirational ideals of middle-class, child-centred mothering the penalty was often severe.

Considerable concern was shown towards unmarried mothers. Irrespective of whether they were single, or living in a *de facto* relationship, a range of philanthropically-inclined structures resulted to deal with what was essentially seen as a problem of morality. While many of the 'foundling hospitals' and 'infant asylums' that emerged were apparently designed to assist women to find 'good homes' for their children, many such acts of 'child-rescue' were statutorily authorised. In Victoria alone, more than 1,100 children were in government custody by the end of 1865 (Jaggs, cited in Bessant, 1987). Shirley Swain and Renate Howe (1995) report that in Victoria, "in the period 1850-1915, 55.4% of the children (in care) who survived their first year were living apart from their mothers" (p.124).

Here was the beginnings of a largely class-based ideology of motherhood that separated women into the value-laden categories of 'good' and 'bad' mothers. That some families, or mothers, may have struggled amidst the poverty arising from the emerging capitalist structure appears to have been given little consideration. Given the immorality associated with sexuality outside of the confines of heterosexual marriage, the assumption "that the single mother wanted to be rid of her child was never questioned" (Swain & Howe, 1995, p.121).

Public attention to both children and mothers who failed to meet the moral confines deemed necessary to the stabilisation of both present and future generations, resulted in numerous Royal Commissions being held to determine how best to address the social disorder arising in the Australian colonies. Considerable emphasis was placed on the need to formally educate the children of the lower classes. The introduction of free, compulsory, state-funded, primary level education in Victoria in 1872, saw all Australian colonies follow suit by 1895 (Porter, 1988).

While this was clearly important in training future generations of the working-class labour force, it also served the purpose of keeping poor and working-class children off the streets. Truancy often proved a problem, however, resulting in the later appointment of truant officers. It was not uncommon for habitual truants to be institutionalised, along with those deemed criminal or neglected (Jaggs, 1987). Social control of the masses became the order of the day.

Amidst recognition of the need for vocational training for boys, the need for girls to be educated

for womanhood was also a factor. While both sexes were generally taught to read and write, arithmetic was thought to be too taxing "and instruction in sewing and needlework was thought essential" for girls (Porter, 1988, p.251). Such instruction was explicitly designed to prepare girls to fulfil their (presumed) future roles as good wife and mother, or, in the case of (future) unmarried women, the (presumed) likely role of domestic servant.

This notion of women's natural inclination towards domestic pursuits fitted nicely with middle-class ideals of both family and femininity. While the inculcation of lower-class daughters was largely taken care of by compulsory schooling, the problem of conveying this information to their mothers remained a salient one. As primary carers, mothers were fundamental to bringing these values into the home. Evidently, there was strong concern that without this, women were potentially noxious agents in their children's development. Amidst the intensified focus on women's 'specialist' role as mothers, there was little acknowledgement that some women might not want to become mothers.

Women who did not become wives and mothers were regarded as "only half woman" (Summers, 1975, p.331). Encapsulated in values and actions supporting women's apparent natural inclination towards care and nurturance, it was not enough that women had successfully raised children without external assistance for generations. The dominant perspective was a functional one, in which the family, and the role of mothers within it, was central to ensuring social and moral order. Motherhood was increasingly depicted as a prime purpose of women's lives, reinforcing the notion that they were predominantly responsible for the continuing welfare of both present and future generations (Sutherland, 1994).

The emergent model of 'education for womanhood' supported motherhood as women's *raison d'etre*, giving little regard to individual desires, talents, aspirations or potential intellect. Calls for access to academic scholarship by upper-class women, who no doubt had substantially more time available to them than their working-class counterparts, were largely rejected on the basis of professional recommendations that "high mental culture is antagonistic to healthy sexual development and childbearing" (Summers, 1975, p.332). Indeed, there were vehement arguments against this in the press. "Any education which unfits her for the fulfilment of her maternal responsibilities is not only useless – it is most emphatically a curse" (*Bulletin*, May 10, 1890).

The transformation of colonial society, from one in which ideas and values were predominantly

transmitted verbally, to one in which there was greater access by all classes, to both the written word and technologically-driven imagery, saw Victorian notions of motherhood and childhood loom increasingly larger. The turn of the century saw the romanticised imagery surrounding the mother-child relationship in European art and literature take strong hold (Thurer, 1994) within post-industrial Australian society. The growth of the media in post-industrial Australian society, and in particular, advertising and popular literature, substantially reinforced "the belief that mothers were at the heart of domestic life, nurturing their families without concern for their own needs and desires" (Pascoe, 1998. p.6).

The Ideological Construction of Modern Motherhood

The public dissemination of 'proper' maternal practice was critical to achieving the structural integration of ideological motherhood. Notions of 'bad mothering' had been at play for some time. Guided by the 'expert' opinions of both the medical profession and religious texts, mothers had been bombarded with admonishments since at least the early nineteenth century. Such warnings demanded attention by mothers. Any oversight in this regard could, if left unchecked, lead to mothers causing their children all manner of irreversible ills. "Let not the fairest part of the creation be offended with me for saying, that, in all cases of dwarfishness and deformity, ninety-nine out of a hundred are owing to the folly, misconduct or neglect of mothers" (William Buchan, M.D (1815/1804) cited in Malamud-Smith, 2003, p.69). Indeed, Christianity itself had decreed that the death of a child could be traced to the sins of the mother who made the fatal mistake of loving her child too much. "If the jealousy of the Lord hath removed that which drew away too much of your heart from him…O then deliver up all to him" (Flavel, J. (1813) cited in Malamud -Smith 2003, p.85).

Such arguments provided a firm foundation for the views of twentieth-century social reformists. Amidst the rise of professionalism, there was notable confirmation that straying from the path of 'scientific' motherhood was tantamount to being a 'bad' mother, and even minor deviations from the perfectionist model risked significant damage to the child. Finding the right balance required immense devotion and dedication, taking little account of maternal needs or circumstances in the process. Mothers were frequently reminded that "the slightest mistrust, the smallest unkindness, the least act of injustice or contemptuous ridicule, leave wounds that last for life in the finely strung soul of the child" (Key, 1911/1909).

The emphasis on women's natural inclination for motherhood was fraught with contradiction. On the one hand, women's greater involvement with children presumably demonstrated a natural difference between women and men. Women were presumed to possess a kind of maternal instinct, based on an apparent genetic and instinctual predisposition towards nurturance and emotional bonding (Tiger & Fox, 1972; Haralambos, van Krieken, Smith & Holborn, 1996). On the other, the emergent ideology of motherhood was increasingly presented as a way of life for women that required training based on "a body of scientific knowledge that had to be mastered" (Thurer, 1994, p.233).

The call for exacting standards of maternal care were further strengthened by the growing professional interest in human development that formed the basis of the field of psychology. At the core of these standards, and critical to their achievement was an idealisation of motherhood that saw 'proper' maternal practice as an essential component in the healthy development of children, and thus, society. The promotion of total maternal responsibility for the socialization of children proved a pervasive and formidable force in ensuring women's submission to the task. The implicit message was that despite women's history, the knowledge and experience likely once passed down from grandmother to mother to daughter was largely obsolete in the age of modernity.

Affirmations of the power of a mother to 'make or break' the life of her child, to deeply mar their life chances as an adult, remained abundant. Amidst the twentieth-century emphasis on psychology, the Freudian notion that "the mother-infant relationship serves as the basic model for all later love relationships" (Amato, 1987, p.22), imbued the work of mothering babies with an omnipotent power that evidently stretched across the life-span.

Ensconced in a scientific framework, they provided vociferous argument for an intensive, child-centred approach to mothering that held women almost entirely responsible for the total physical, psychological and emotional development of their children (Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985). In effect, the ideals of 'good' maternal practice that emerged were based not on women's lived experiences but on "the ideologies and paradigms of those sciences and professions that happened to dominate at any one time in terms of dictating what is good for children" (Ambert, 1994, p.530).

Concern with declining birth rates in the latter stages of the nineteenth century continued into the

early twentieth century. There is substantial evidence to suggest that, amidst greater knowledge of contraceptive techniques, women were berated for their presumed unwillingness to submit to their 'natural' function as mothers (Kingston, 1975). A range of public policies, integral to both the ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy, reinforced the notion that "women's primary role is a domestic one and that this renders them marginal to the wage economy" (Jackson, 1998, p.16).

Chief amongst these were the introduction of the Public Service Act (1902), barring married women from public sector employment, and the 'Harvester Judgment' (1907), introducing the concept of a family wage for men. Both reinforced motherhood as women's primary function and duty, and while women continued to work in a variety of roles in the private sector, it was on the condition that their paid labour should constitute no more than 54 per cent of the base wage provided to men. (Ryan & Conlon, 1975).

The arrival of World War One was perhaps also instrumental in dividing women as mothers. Women's central valuing of family mores existed amidst notions of patriotic duty that saw motherhood revered within a context of martyrdom. "The mythology engendered by the Great War affirmed the dichotomy of the sexes…it was the lot of modern women, as it had been through history, to deliver up unconditionally to the 'Molloch of War' the fruit of their wombs" (Shute, 1975, p.7). While many women spoke out in opposition to the War, its arrival further imbued motherhood with the notion of self-sacrifice for the greater good.

Irrespective of women's integral involvement in non-traditional labour roles during the war period, female responsibility for both home and family was deeply entrenched. Amidst the post-war focus on rebuilding of the nation, the period following World War One saw an increased emphasis on the professionalisation of maternal practice. Along with the establishment of government-funded Maternal and Child Health centres, significant attention was paid to issues related to child endowment and family allowance (Cass, 1988).

While much of this attention was couched in the notion of maternal and child rights consistent with the perceived duties of motherhood, the post-war emphasis on motherhood was largely a functional one. The introduction of state-funded allowances emphasised motherhood as a duty of citizenship, ensuring "that the mother who rears children for the future of industry and the State has a right to receive the only wage she ever asks - enough to enable her as society's trustee for nurture and education to discharge the duties of her trust" (Piddington, 1921, pp.29-30).

This period also saw a proliferation of advertising emphasising women's maternal and home-making role. Along with the introduction of commercial radio in the 1920s, a number of films and magazines with a distinctly Australian flavour were launched, reiterating women's central responsibility for home and family (Pascoe, 1988). There was a heavy emphasis on consumerism and the mass-media provided a viable means of transmission. Women's central immersion in the home, within the context of modernisation, saw the purchase of (presumably) labour-saving devices consistent with the tasks of caring for children and family become increasingly commonplace (Kingston, 1975).

The early stages of the twentieth century also saw increasing professional attention paid to the latter years of childhood. Drawing heavily on Social Darwinism, the concept of 'adolescence' as a time requiring particular guidance was taken up with fervor. The 1920s, in particular, demonstrated growing concern with the highly-visible youth population. By 1929, post-primary education was made compulsory for all Australian children under 15 years of age (Holbrook, 1987). Heavily supported by psychological perspectives identifying the need for vocational guidance, the emphasis remained on a gender-divided approach. Given the social mores surrounding motherhood, domestic training for girls continued to promote the centrality of their presumed future role as mothers.

Consistent with the previous experience, World War Two also facilitated an increase of women into the non-traditional labour market. However, given the emphasis on women's responsibility for the home front, their involvement was heavily promoted as a temporary arrangement based on patriotic duty rather than economic need or individual desire (Baldock, 1998). Fuelled in no small way by a post-war desire for a resumption of 'normal' family life, the wake of the war saw a renewed emphasis on romanticised notions of women, children and families emerge.

The continuing emphasis on the 'good mother' was also reflected in the increased research and professional attention paid to concerns with inadequate mothering. The Freudian (psychoanalytic) perspective, underpinned by notions of biological determinism and essentialist gendered assumptions, was particularly favoured. In the post-war quest for a more wholesome society, considerable attention was paid to the need for a 'good mother' to avoid inflicting long-lasting damage upon her children (Eyer, 1992).

Much of the research emerging from the 1940s onwards, affirmed appropriate mother-child

attachment as a critical factor in the development of healthy citizens. A great deal of attention was paid to the effects of maternal deprivation, driving forward notions of maternal blame for developmental and psychological difficulties in children. Much of this research was based on children in institutions, and took little account of extenuating circumstances, or of the role fathers might play in the lives of children. Mothers were increasingly held responsible for all manner of intellectual and personality disorders. At the centre of these concerns, was the need for mothers to provide "continuous affectional care...otherwise the higher semantic and social development and the expansion of educational capacities does not take place" (Bender, 1946, p.76).

Irrespective of potential issues of bias related to the institutionalised subjects of much of the research, such notions supported the view that a mother's place was in the home. It was no longer enough for mothers to simply love and care for their children. The work of mothering was now imbued with a complex mix of baseline requirements. A 'good mother' must be able to "offer timely and proper doses of ordinary devotion, mirroring, empathy, psychological attunement" (Thurer, 1994, p.279). In effect, the 'good mother' that emerged was based on a perfectionist model that emphasised motherhood as women's primary function. Perceived failures to provide just the right balance of love and protection, resulted in mothers being held responsible for "schizophrenia, homosexuality, delinquency, alienated youth, and practically ever other psychological or social topic" (Miller, 1986, p.19).

The psychoanalytic perspective was particularly influential. Concerns with maternal deprivation were instrumental in the development of Attachment Theory, a perspective that saw 'good mothering' affirmed as a critical component of mental health (Bowlby, 1951). Granted, there was some professional acknowledgement that a 'good-enough-mother' may be adequate (Winnicott, 1965). That aside, however, the dichotomous good mother/bad mother image proved a pervasive one in twentieth-century culture. Notwithstanding the significant contributions to child welfare and human development arising as a result of such interest, the notion of maternal blame proved a cogent tool in promoting strong belief in the possibility of a perfect mother, "the Ideal Mother...the mythical figure who sees, understands and fulfils her children's every need" (Leira & Krips, 1993, p.81).

In setting such standards, there is little room for human errors of judgment. An intensive model of mothering was deemed a prerequisite in the production of a physically, psychologically and socially healthy human being (Hays, 1996), taking little account of women's humanity. In

elevating the 'good mother' to a goddess-like status, the value of a mother was determined not by who she was but by what she did or did not do.

Such standards required an enormous degree of self-sacrifice that, in many respects, constituted a submersion of self in the task. Irrespective of the fact that "we are born with every kind of human temperament – still there is only one image in this culture of the 'good' mother" (Lazarre, 1987, p.vi). While the impact of this upon the lived experience of mothering remains relatively unexamined, it seems reasonable to presume that for those duly inculcated into the prevailing ideological school of motherhood, "Am I doing the right thing? becomes an anguished mantra, rather than an academic question" (Gross, 1998, p.269).

It would indeed be comforting to think that modernity had brought about a new understanding of motherhood and the difficulties associated with ensuring a 'perfect' child through a process of 'perfect' mothering in an imperfect world. Broadly speaking, however, the good mother-bad mother dichotomy has remained alive and well in the professional arena in recent decades. An examination of 125 clinical journals, published between 1970 and 1982, affirmed that 'experts' have continued to hold mothers responsible for 'problem' behaviours such as enuresis, sleepwalking, colitis, poor language development, schizophrenia, aggression and learning difficulties (Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985).

More recently, it has been noted that the principles of Attachment Theory continue to be utilised as a qualitative measure of maternal effectiveness or inadequacy. Eyer (1992) notes that 90% of research based on Attachment Theory focuses on mothers. While the mainstream absence of paternal involvement in childcare is no doubt a factor in this, Hays (2001) suggests that this theory remains dominant because it supports dominant cultural beliefs about the role of a good mother. Indeed, she notes with some dismay that research continues to utilise measures of parental socio-emotional investment in children based on a model in which "the needs, desires and concerns of the mother should be completely subsumed to the needs, desires and concerns of the child" (Hays, 1996, p.86).

While it is clear that each historical age and stage has had some bearing on what constitutes 'good mothering', it appears that despite significant change in the lives of women in the postmodern world, women remain the primary carers of children throughout the life-span (Ruddick, 1994; Hays, 1996/1998; Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Betsy Wearing's (1984) study

reports that the twentieth-century model of motherhood continues unabated, affirming that:

- Motherhood is an integral part of womanhood
- Mothers are best-placed to provide the care and nuturing their children require
- Maternal love is unconditional
- A 'good mother' puts her children first

Certainly, there is some evidence to suggest that a 'new family style,' in which maternal activity outside the home is not uncommon, has emerged (Richards, 1985; Lupton & Barclay, 1997). However, it remains clear that irrespective of whether mothers endorse a traditional or more progressive ideology of motherhood, they continue to view their relationship with their children within a framework emphasising maternal self-sacrifice and a constant striving towards perfection (Wearing, 1984). In a landmark study of some 150 Australian mothers, albeit now twenty years old, Wearing identified that the three most frequently cited characteristics of a 'good mother' were, in order of frequency:

- Always being available, giving time, listening, guiding
- Love, affection and understanding
- Patience and self-control
  (Wearing, 1984, p.50)

Other Australian studies have shown a remarkable consistency with Wearing's findings (Harper & Richards 1979; Richards, 1985; Lupton, 2000). While the focus of these studies has been on mothers with pre-school children, it remains apparent that 'good mothers' in contemporary society continue to be deemed "selfless, able to give unstinting love and time to their children and as having the ability to regulate their emotions" (Lupton, 2000, p.55). To date, the extent to which such ideology remains valid in the context of mothering older children is largely unexplored.

Certainly, recent decades have seen the 'independent' mother, one who combines motherhood and career, emerge (Woodward, 1997). Despite this, there is significant indication that an inherent tension exists between juggling the demands of these often competing roles (Richards, 1994). For the most part, it appears that even if mothers are working full-time, the ideological expectation of the "always-there good mother" still exists (Phillips, 1991, p.192). While there are

undoubtedly dialectical variations, for the most part, "without question, mothers experience their own child-rearing beliefs and practices as a measure of love for their children" (Hays, 1996, p.155).

Rich (1986) suggests that under the terms of ideological motherhood, no recognition is given to the fact that "love and anger can exist concurrently" (p.35). Indeed, measured against the saint-like qualities of the good mother model, there seems no room for anything but the ability to love selflessly at all times. Amidst the considerable historic emphasis placed on aspirational ideals of mothering, there is indication that not all women cope well with meeting the doctrinal standards required in order to be a good mother.

Patricia Pearson (1997) notes that the assumption that women instinctually possess the emotional qualities that render them best-placed to ensure children's best interests may be a fallacy. In the context of the modern Western world, at least, the culturally-driven and invariable model of the good mother that has emerged potentially conceals a considerable problem. Pearson (1997) suggests that possibly 10-20% of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome cases, may in fact, be cases of infanticide. Amidst the ideology of the good mother, the alternative scenario is perhaps too confronting to warrant consideration that more sinister factors may be at play.

The dominant ideology of motherhood, and more particularly, the twentieth-century focus on "intensive mothering" (Hays, 1996) fails to consider the ways in which both the role and experience of motherhood change across the lifespan. The prevailing notion of the 'good mother' as the omnipotent mother "who is always there, ready to sacrifice herself" (Benjamin, 1994, p.142) appears to flow into later childhood/young adulthood without considering change as part of the equation. Women's individual capacities to meet the demands of babies, infants, children and adolescents is subject to variation predicated on child-mother temperament, circumstance and other factors (Kitzinger, 1992).

While the implications of the tenacity of the good mother model discussed by Pearson (1997) warrant further investigation, the impact idealised notions of motherhood hold in the adolescent context also remain obscured. Notwithstanding the powerful inferences this may hold for women as mothers, there is certainly a need to consider the model's validity in the context of adolescent ego-development. The question remains. Is there some point in the life-cycle in which the need for maternal self-sacrifice reduces, or indeed, loses its value to children in the postmodern world?

Before considering this further, some discussion of the concept of 'adolescence' is warranted. While adolescence has been designated a distinct period of the life cycle, many have argued that it is a social construct that did not exist prior to the industrial revolution (Mead, 1930; Anthony & Chiland, 1978; Pearl, 1981; Apter, 1990). As such, it is not intended here to debate the merits of this argument but rather to acknowledge its general acceptance as a normative life stage with a strong foothold in both the professional arena and popular culture. Within the context of postmodernity, and more particularly, the protracted period of dependence upon parents reinforced by notions of adolescence as a distinct life-stage, it may indeed be more useful to consider this as "an adaptation enforced upon contemporary children by the complexity of their society" (Mead, 1930, p.21).

In general terms, however, the onset of the biological process of puberty and its concomitant rapid physical growth provides an indicator that 'adolescence' has commenced. Signs of sexual maturation, along with increased capacity for abstract thinking (Piaget, 1952) symbolize "to the adolescent, to his or her parents, and to the immediate society, that the young person is becoming an adult" (Kidwell, Fischer, Dunham & Baranowski, 1983, p.76). Denoted a critical life-stage, in which the developmental task of identity formation becomes particularly salient, Erikson presents adolescence as a biologically-driven "psychosocial dilemma" in which a transitional crisis of identity is faced by the child (Erikson, 1963).

This process is purportedly characterized by the adolescent's gradual relinquishment of the childhood sense of self, characterised by personal inner confusion, mood swings and impulsive behaviour and the exploration of alternative identity models (Erikson, 1968). Research investigating Erikson's (1968) theory supports the view that those adolescents who are highly active in searching for a comfortable identity of their own, demonstrate a greater propensity towards conflictual feelings and increased inner confusion in which the relative 'splitting of self' results in feelings of vulnerability and a rise in ego defence mechanisms (Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino & Portes, 1995).

While there has been relative agreement that the adolescent process of identity formation is an interplay of societal, intrapsychic and interpersonal factors (Dunham, Kidwell & Wilson, 1986), several theorists support the view that the generic application of human development theories has been problematic for women (Miller, 1986; Apter, 1990; Nice, 1992; McMahon, 1995). Amidst

notions of gender-based difference, there has been considerable suggestion that females place greater emphasis on building a sense of self in relationship to others while males are predominantly influenced by notions of themselves as individual identities (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Matteson, 1993).

There is an increasing body of evidence asserting that while intrapersonal issues related to a separate sense of self-identity appear salient for adolescent males, young women resolve identity issues within a context that is both inter and intra-personal. Therein, it appears that affiliations and connections with significant others play a key role in the context of female identity formation (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986; Lytle, Bakken & Romig, 1997). The dichotomous tension between the needs of self and the needs of others, and its potential to complicate gender-based notions of self-identity, may well warrant further investigation.

Given the centrality accorded the maternal role in the lives of women, there is little doubt that as agents of socialisation mothers themselves are complicit in providing the foundations for "the reproduction of mothering" (Chodorow, 1978). Within this context, however, consideration must be given to the role that professional interest in motherhood, albeit from a child-centered perspective, has played in advocating a long-standing tradition of mother-blaming. Notwithstanding the role played by mothers in the socialisation of sons, it is perhaps the historic attention paid to the mother-daughter relationship that has most fervently reproduced and reinforced this culture.

The Mother-Daughter Relationship – Historic and Contemporary Paradigms

Psychoanalytic Perspectives

It is interesting to note that in a historical context which largely ignored issues related to women, Freud paid considerable attention to the mother-daughter relationship, albeit within a patriarchal framework. Freud's interest in motherhood was predominantly a clinical one in which he viewed the connection between mothers and daughters as a significant threat to institutionalised heterosexuality (Phillips, 1991).

Under Freudian terms, 'good mothering' required a balancing of affection that was no doubt profoundly difficult to achieve in practice. Insufficient demonstration of maternal love towards the daughter meant that "the unsatisfied content of the love relationship of early years" (Phillips,

1991, p.140) could not be effectively transferred to the male. Too much, and the foundation for conflict, arising from the need for psychic disconnection from the mother, was laid. Either way, mother was at fault.

Female development, and thus, the mother-daughter relationship in particular, was purportedly fraught with difficulties from an early age. By the age of four, Freud posited, the discovery of variations in sexual anatomy led to imaginings of mutilation that would invariably be blamed upon the mother (Freud, 1931). Whether Freud meant this literally or otherwise remains open to debate. However, such a view was clearly instrumental in characterizing the mother-daughter relationship as one of potential ambivalence and conflict.

Within the context of female pubescent and post-pubescent development, psychoanalytic theorists have generally concurred that psychic separation is far more likely to be difficult for daughters than sons precisely because they share the same gender (Hammer, 1975; Chodorow, 1978). Based on a predominantly masculine framework emphasising individuation as an outcome of separation, rather than a relational process involving others, the prevailing psychoanalytic view was that in order to establish an identity of their own, a severance of bonds within the mother-daughter relationship was necessary. This, it was argued, constituted the major life task of the adolescent girl (Blos, 1967).

In providing the foundations for expectations of chronic conflict within the mother-daughter relationship, traditional psychoanalysis has presented women's relational qualities, irrespective of their origins, as something of an inherent female defect requring careful management. Central concern with separation as a means of individuation has been emphasised not in terms of self-identity for young women, but in order to clear the way for transference of feelings of dependence to the male. Here again, we find a concept of women that promotes female identity as submergence of an autonomous self (Apter, 1990).

Whatever its original desires in shedding light on issues of human development, the traditional psychoanalytic framework has persistently emphasized women's identity as a function rather than a process of development. Whether viewed through the lens of classic Freudian theory, Bowlby's (1951) Attachment Theory or Winnicott's (1965) 'good-enough-mothering,' the conceptual basis of psychoanalytic theory has been instrumental in supporting a dominant culture of mother-blaming.

The traditional psychoanalytic emphasis on resolution of an 'oedipal complex' as a path to individuation, reflects an expectation of psychological disjuncture between mother and daughter. Purportedly beginning in early infancy, the re-emergence of separational issues during puberty and adolescence is deemed to act as a catalyst towards adulthood (Chodorow, 1978). Implicit within this context is the assumption that the mother, as 'object' of her daughter's affections, must be psychologically relinquished in order to clear the way for attachment to an (male) 'other'.

Such a view flagrantly disregards any notion that women's identity may be forged independent of a dominant other. Maternal resistance to 'letting go' of daughters is thought not only to exacerbate the difficulties of this process for daughters, but to be a prime cause impeding healthy self-development. "Excessive tenderness – since it allows for no discharge of hostile feelings – keeps the child in a perpetual emotional slavery to the mother, hemmed in by potential guilt" (Balint, 1954, p.90).

For the most part, traditional psychoanalytic accounts have failed to consider structural factors, presuming differences in male-female personality are biologically determined. Granted, recent decades have seen some redress of this oversight. Nancy Chodorow (1978), for example, suggests that the relational qualities attributed to women are more likely to originate from the "asymmetrical structure of parenting" and mother-daughter relationships than an inherently female developmental drive (p.133). While Chodorow's revision of drive theory acknowledges that biological factors play a part in stimulating developmental change, she continues to highlight the need for pre and post-pubescent daughters to psychologically separate from mothers. This task, she suggests, is fraught with internal contradiction because at the same time as individuation from mother becomes a salient task, puberty confronts girls "with all the psychological and social issues of being a woman" (Chodorow, 1978, p.136).

Chodorow cites the gender-divided structure of parenting as a prime factor impeding identity formation independent of mother, and suggests this is often made more complex when mothers are overly invested in the lives of their daughters. In the process of relinquishing earlier mother-child attachments, "mothers, especially in isolated nuclear family settings without other major occupations, are also invested in their daughters, feel ambivalence toward them, and have difficulty in separating from them" (Chodorow, 1978, p.140).

The work of Helene Deutsch (1944), while primarily supporting the notion of biological drives, identified a number of ways in which daughters attempt to resolve primary attachment to and dependence upon their mothers. Deutsch suggests that an increased capacity for abstract thinking leads daughters to a critical analysis of primary maternal and feminine models, resulting in a psychological transference of symbiotic feelings to female others external to the established family environment. Purportedly stimulating increased detachment from the mother, these external figures act as 'mirrors,' reflecting to daughters a self-in-process, rather than the childhood figure her mother has grown used to.

Within the context of puberty, daughters' attempts to de-identify and disattach from their mothers, are said to result in increased ambivalence between mothers and daughters. "A mother suddenly finds herself caring for an adolescent who is more withholding, more prone to negative moods, and who sometimes directs the brunt of (his or) her displeasure at her" (Larson & Richards, 1994, p.131). While ideas about mothering are undoubtedly shaped by a broad range of experiences, considered within an ideology emphasising unconditional love and devotion, it appears likely that adaptation to a young adult often starkly different from the child raised, may well be confronting for some mothers.

Abstracted within the psychoanalytic framework, where mothers are frequently deemed excessively invested in the maternal role, this can result in mutual expression, verbally and non-verbally, of ambivalent feelings towards one another by both mother and daughter (Thompson & Walker, 1989). Thus, in some respects, it appears that the relinquishment of symbiotic feelings can result in a mother reflecting her daughter's preoccupations (Chodorow, 1978).

Chodorow's analysis, while acknowledging the need for psychological separation between mother and daughter, at least recognizes that identification with the same gender parent will bind them in fundamental ways "not for biological reasons but because their mother is their primary caretaker" (Chodorow, 1978, p.40). Nevertheless, in deeming mother-daughter psychic disconnection a necessary precursor to identity formation, this analysis appears still plagued by the psychoanalytic tendency to overlook the important role a healthy and continuing connection between mothers and daughters may play in female development.

For the most part, psychoanalytic accounts have tended to minimise the difficulties pubescent and post-pubescent young women face in establishing an identity independent of men. Reinforced by powerful media imagery bombarding young women and their mothers with feminine ideals about how women 'should' be, it is not surprising if identity issues become a struggle. As mothers, the observable and sometimes seemingly inexplicable transformation in our adolescent daughters may be confronting. "Just as planes and ships disappear mysteriously into the Bermuda Triangle, so do the selves of [adolescent] girls go down in droves. They crash and burn in a social and developmental Bermuda Triangle" (Pipher, 1996, p.19).

Attachment within the mother-daughter relationship perhaps finds a safe place for expression of this confusion. There has been some suggestion that the pubescent and post-pubescent development of daughters "can remind the mother of her own unsatisfied sexuality, her own unfulfilled desire for autonomy, and her own problems with femininity" (Flaake, 1993, p.9). While this may well be an accurate assessment in some instances, it also seems reasonable to presume that both mothers and their daughters share the struggle of identity development. Consciously or otherwise, in a society based largely on an aspirational model of womanhood that involves "an inextricable fusion or melding of personally created (emotionally and through unconscious fantasy) and cultural meaning" (Chodorow, 1995, p.516) this is not surprising.

Furthermore, the psychoanalytic tendency to highlight mother-daughter connection as an impediment to individuation renders the relational qualities attributed to women "a weakness...rather than a human strength" (Gilligan, 1982, p.17). While there is substantial evidence to suggest that conflict is a common element in the individuation process, it is not necessarily detrimental to the formation of self-identity, and may, in fact, provide an important tool for the attainment of resolution skills. Irrespective of its strengths, the traditional psychoanalytic view is somewhat problematic in presenting the mother-daughter relationship as a potential impediment to healthy self-definition.

The long-standing historic tendency to point to the maternal capacity to 'let go' as a problem particular to women's development, much of it substantially focused on the 'empty nest syndrome'(Ryff & Seltzer 1996), reflects a maternal deficit perspective. Certainly, the relationship between mothers and their developing daughters is subject to change. Within this context, "mothers need to be capable of continual adaptation to the new challenges which come as their children pass from babyhood into childhood, and then grow up to become new adults"

(Kitzinger, 1992, p.30). The prevailing ideology of motherhood, however, suggests a constancy of approach that denies the likelihood of adjustment issues as a normative life transition. For the most part, with the exception of clinical psychoanalytic accounts, and deviancy discourse, the experience of mothers themselves has largely been neglected.

The conceptual frameworks of psychoanalysis have depicted mothers, for the most part, as central agents in their daughters' adolescent developmental difficulties. In similar fashion to mythological depictions that highlighted the maternal capacity to impose both greatness and suffering, psychoanalytic notions have been instrumental in deeming mothers potentially destructive agents in their daughters' lives. Under such terms, "the role of mother appears to be doomed in advance. Those who apotheosize the mother as well as those who revile her predict for her task nothing but failure" (Harding, 1970, p.158). Furthermore, in presenting mother-daughter conflict as inevitably negative, a seemingly innate sense of powerlessness over what is very likely 'normal' potentially "puts mothers and daughters in contempt of each other" (Phillips, 1991, p.148).

Clearly, masculine conceptions of both human development and female identity require review (Gilligan, 1982). The presumed struggles that arise between mothers and their daughters, may, in fact, point to a conceptual problem in identity construction theories rather than a developmental problem specific to women. "This distortion is not only a theoretical concern but affects the reality of mother-daughter relationships" (Nice, 1992, p.8).

The expectations inherent within good mothering in psychoanalytic terms, continue to invest the proffered maternal ideal with a degree of omniscient power reminiscent of its mythological beginnings. This expectation of maternal behaviour is internalized by both mothers and daughters alike, reinforcing a tendency towards maternal guilt and blame. Reproduced in the primary socialisation context, when our needs are not met, "we are unable to forgive our mothers; we cannot blame ourselves as daughters. At the same time, we cannot blame our children; we never absolve ourselves" (Arcana, 1979, p.207).

Historic and Contemporary Feminist Perspectives

Feminist interest in motherhood has also shown a historic tendency to perpetuate notions of mother-blaming. Notwithstanding the significant contributions made to women's lives by such

interest, feminist attention to motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship, in particular, has sometimes taken unfavourable turns, albeit with good intentions.

The first wave of feminism in Australia, although demonstrating interest in women's historic exclusion from educational and political structures, was not particularly concerned with the greater responsibility allocated to women for the care of children. While interest in women's right to an independent identity was fervently discussed, the submergence of women's lives in the maternal role was rarely questioned. "Australian feminists quite consciously wished to retain and strengthen the family" (Summers, 1975, p.368).

Underpinned by a genuine desire to ensure the welfare of children, they embraced the notion of a vocational approach to motherhood wholeheartedly. In effect, they supported the prevailing ideology of womanhood and motherhood that deemed women 'God's Police' (Summers, 1975), apparently failing to recognize that in doing so, they also supported many of the structural factors related to women's continuing oppression within the ideological confines of motherhood.

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that the tensions inherent in idealized images of women as victims of a tyranny were acknowledged by previous generations of feminists. The psychic shift from an era in which women were presumably mostly content with their lot, to one in which women's consciousness of their social position was increasingly raised, may itself have been responsible for some intergenerational division between mothers and daughters, as the following excerpt indicates:

> I know, Mother, you feel badly about the plans I have proposed to myself, and that you would prefer to have me take some other course…But, Mother, there are no trials so great as they suffer who neglect or refuse to do what they believe is their duty ESPECIALLY DO I MEAN TO LABOUR FOR THE ELEVATION OF MY SEX (Lucy Stone to her mother Hannah 1846, cited in Payne 1984, p.54, capital emphasis in original).

Reading between the lines, it appears Lucy's mother had a desire to protect her from what she perhaps saw as a difficult path ahead. However, in other instances, it is clear that the mother-daughter relationship provided a context in which to transmit maternal frustration at the lack of involvement in the broader organisational structure. Women of previous generations did not all necessarily totally accept the prevailing social and moral order. As the following passage suggests, discussion of such matters between mothers and daughters was often vehement although largely restricted to the private domain:

> The Darwin theory of evolution is done up well by E.P. Whiffle…Long life to him. I wish he would gobble all the men up, with their 'tails and vertebrates' – the women could then rule the world and bring some order out of chaos – some right out of this complicated mess of wrong. (Abigail Alcott to her daughter Louisa 1875, cited in Payne 1984. p.56).

For the most part, it appears that there was a general acceptance that motherhood was women's primary role. Indeed, much of the early feminist attention, while focused on facilitation of greater welfare rights for mothers and their children, substantially contributed to the elevation of the status of motherhood. As the following statement indicates, depictions of motherhood often reflected the 'goddess-like' status accorded motherhood in mythological society, emphasising the important role mothers played in the betterment of society. "The mother is the most precious possession of the nation, so precious that society advances its highest well-being when it protects the functions of the mother" (Key, 1911/1909, p.114). While such views were highly consistent with turn of the century Victorian attitudes, it is notable that, even in the twenty-first century, the above statement has been reproduced in popular literature (Key, cited in *Mothers and Daughters*, 2000).

That aside, given women's submersion in the dominant patriarchal structure, it is understandable that first-wave feminists played a significant role in reinforcing idealised notions of motherhood. While acknowledgment of the confines of patriarchal society was evident, initial feminist interest in motherhood appears to have wholeheartedly embraced the presumption that women possessed a greater capacity for care and nurturance (Apter, 1990, p.145). World Wars One and Two, in particular, saw depictions of motherhood revered within a context of martyrdom, further imbuing the practice of mothering with the notion of self-sacrifice for the greater good.

There was, however, substantial contradiction in this. On the one hand, mothers were trained to protect and nurture their children. On the other, as social and moral guardians of future generations, it was expected that they would willingly give up their sons to the nation. Furthermore, during this period mothers were highly involved, along with their daughters, in necessary aspects of capitalist production, returning to their 'proper' place of reproduction in the post-war years. It may well be that the presence of such contradiction was a contributing factor in ensuring women's concerns with motherhood remained somewhat divided.

The 1950s also contributed to a renewed emphasis on idealised motherhood, one that was firmly ensconced within a framework of both family and consumerism. The evolution of the 'modern Mum' was, in part, predicated on her relative submission to the post-war ideal of the 'great Australian dream.' Advertisements in this era frequently depicted domestic happiness in the form of smiling mothers and happy children. Therein, as prime consumers representing the modern family, mothers perhaps held some degree of power in the home.

Despite this, however, the 1950s mother was often "financially dependent, emotionally isolated, overworked but underutilised" (Maushart, 1997, p.5). While it is evident that many women who were mothers entered the workforce during this era, such work was largely viewed as peripheral to that of the (predominantly) male breadwinner. Little recognition was given to the fact that many such women were, in fact, sole parents. The ideal of the 'stay-at-home' mother was firmly entrenched and continued to be promoted in the press, often depicting women's participation in the paid workforce as neglectful of their maternal duties (Blackburn & Jackson, 1963).

This era also saw considerable feminist emphasis placed on notions of mothers and their daughters as victims of patriarchy. Simone de Beauvoir, for instance, despite strong interest in women's rights, depicted mothers as a kind of clinging vine, presuming a maternal tendency towards neuroticism and dependency upon daughters. Her views, like many other feminists of that era, were significantly influenced by psychoanalytic theory and highly consistent with a culture of mother-blaming. Describing this, de Beauvoir reported that maternal "remorse and the pity she feels through her daughter for herself are manifested in endless anxieties; she will hardly go a step away from her child; she will sleep in the same room with her for fifteen or twenty years; the little girl will be destroyed in the fire of that restless passion" (de Beauvoir, 1953, p.57).

The 1960s introduction of the contraceptive pill to Australia, along with the growth of the women's movement, was instrumental in building greater support for the notion of motherhood as a life choice. Despite this, there was still considerable division of opinion surrounding issues associated with motherhood, and feminist circles proved no exception. Some (liberal) feminists depicted institutionalised motherhood as a form of patriarchal oppression that contributed to its dominance (Nice, 1992). In radical circles, women who chose to marry and become mothers were sometimes seen as traitors to feminism itself, with heterosexual motherhood being seen as at "the root of male control of women's bodies" (Adamson, Briskin & McPhail, 1988, p.10). Inherent in

both perspectives, was the message that mothers of daughters, in particular, should guard against inculcating their daughters with the feminine model of adulthood that had emerged to date.

By the 1970s, women's consciousness-raising groups had challenged the segregation of motherhood and work, resulting in a substantial increase of women in the (paid) workforce. Single mothers, who had received little positive attention to date, were now supported by the numerous women's organisations that emerged. For many women, however, this resulted in assuming a double burden of responsibility. While their participation in the public sphere increased, despite some lip service to a more egalitarian style of parenting, it is clear that they remained largely responsible for the care of children and family.

The establishment of the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child in 1970, substantially contributed to raising the profile of single mothers, and was perhaps instrumental in facilitating a political move by government with the introduction of the Supporting Mothers Benefit in 1973. Prior to this period, single mothers had been seen as something of a social problem (Swain & Howe, 1995). In similar fashion to first woman Eve, they often proved useful to the press in providing a deviant contrast to 'wholesome' motherhood.

Feminist interest in the mother-daughter relationship remained salient throughout the coming decades, substantially reinforced by the growing interest in self-development and analysis promoted in much of the popular literature emerging in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite good intentions, such literature appears to have further entrenched the notion of mothers as potentially harmful agents of socialisation in the life of their daughters. Writers such as Dinnerstein (1976), Friday (1977) and Lazarre (1987), for example, whilst acknowledging the destructiveness of patriarchy, continued to emphasise the mother-daughter relationship as a potentially destructive agent in the daughters' quest for self-identity. More often than not, mothers were deemed at fault.

While it was clear that the fallacious expectations of ideological motherhood were recognised, both mothers and daughters were reminded of the maternal power to 'make or break' the mother-daughter relationship. Nancy Friday's (1977) book, while recognising the strong identity connections between mothers and daughters, warned that "if the child is encouraged to enter into collusion with the mother to pretend that the maternal instinct conquers all, both will be stuck ever after with the mechanisms of denial and defense [sic] which cut them off from the reality of

their mutual feelings; gone is any hope of true relationship between them" (p.63). Jane Lazarre (1987) described motherhood as "a knot" in which "the only thing…eternal and natural…is ambivalence and its manifestation in the every ongoing cycles of separation and unification with our children" (Lazarre, 1987, p.ix).

While such admonitions were likely designed to alert women to the realities of institutional motherhood, they presented a somewhat inevitable and dim view of both the processes and outcomes of mothering. Given the ideals of maternal instinct, selfless love and devotion that surrounded mainstream ideology and culture, such views were perhaps less than helpful for many women. While the deconstructionist intentions of feminists were clear, their efforts consistently portrayed the mother-daughter relationship "as a terrible, ambiguous thing, with bitterness masquerading as love and bondage masquerading as attachment" (Apter, 1990. p.7).

For the most part, feminist analyses appear to have accepted (masculine) theories of identity formation that emphasised separation and conflict as unavoidable factors in the mother-daughter relationship. The implicit message was, that amidst recognition of motherhood as an institution that was presumed to deny women full agency, closeness between mothers and daughters must be tempered against the desire to use daughters as "narcissistic extensions of themselves" (Phillips, 1991, p.152). The process of 'good mothering' therein, reflected a complicated balancing act upon which the future wellbeing of daughters depended. The common view seemed to be that, as mothers themselves, women should have been more responsible for alerting their daughters to the complexities submission to motherhood would likely bring to their lives.

As Adrienne Rich (1976) noted, there is an implicit tension between motherhood as experience and motherhood as institution. While both early and modern feminists recognized this to some degree, the emphasis on a developmental framework requiring the relative disconnection of mothers and daughters, persistently drove home the view that "…in a desperate attempt to know where mother ends and daughter begins, we (must) perform radical surgery" (Rich, 1976, p.238). Reproduced within the primary socialisation context, the internalisation of notions of ever-present, idealised mothering, by both mothers and daughters alike, is itself fraught with tension. Such practice has the potential to subject both mothers and daughters to feelings of victimisation.

While the deconstructionist efforts of early feminists are applauded for facilitating discussion of contradictions between maternal expectations and experience, much of the feminist debate has

continued to place mothers and daughters at odds. In the context of much of the self-analysis literature that remains a dominant influence in broader culture, mother-blaming appears to have remained prevalent. Taken to heart, when our needs as daughters are not met, "we are unable to forgive our mothers; we cannot blame ourselves as daughters. At the same time, we cannot blame our children; we never absolve ourselves" (Arcana, 1979, p.207).

Feminist interest in motherhood in recent decades, however, appears to be taking a more favourable turn, heralding increased interest in a more inherently human perspective of motherhood. While much of this focus has renewed interest in structural factors impacting upon motherhood, postmodern feminism has begun to recognise the diversity of maternal experience and mother-daughter relationships. Not disregarding the dangers of identifying specifically female gender-attributes, a new model of mother-daughter relationship has emerged. Inherent in the relational paradigm discussed below, lies the potential to contribute to a revision of the prevailing ideology of motherhood, one that is perhaps more consistent with the heterogeneity of the postmodern experience of mothering.

The Relational Paradigm

There has been increasing acknowledgement in feminist circles, that relational connections are integral to women's sense of self. "Intimacy goes along with identity, as the female comes to know herself as she is known through her relationship with others" (Gilligan, 1982, p.11). While this appears to fit nicely with psychoanalytic notions that the identity issues of girls remain largely unresolved "until they meet someone…whose identity will help them make sense and shape of their own" (Nice, 1992, p.61), the relational paradigm presented herein does not presuppose a substantive link between identity and heterosexuality.

As Davis points out, there is some danger in presuming this model applies specifically to women, reinforcing essentialist notions of a natural inclination towards caregiving (Davis, 1992). That said, there is no reason such a model precludes human relationships in general. The major difficulty lies in the transmission of this model in a context in which authenticity within the mother-daughter relationship has been distorted by a culture "in which mothers have been made to feel that they have no right to certain feelings" (Nice, 1992, p.70).

The relational paradigm emphasises self-differentiation for both mothers and their daughters "as a dynamic process of growth within the relationship" (La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990, p.596).

Considered within this context, the formation of identity involves an ongoing, intersubjective process that highlights the importance of connection with others in the emergent self. In contrast to historic mother-blaming perspectives, emotional connections between mother and daughter are not distorted by notions of domination but rather emphasised as a mutually-beneficial process, a way of "being-in-relationship" (Surrey, 1993, p.119).

While this in no way implies an absence of conflict, such a model allows the presence of conflict to be reframed as authentic differences of opinion that serve to stimulate positive growth in the relationship. While this may be aspirational in some circumstances, it does acknowledge that unresolvable conflicts are more likely to arise "where either the daughter's voice or the mother's voice is dominant or silenced" (Surrey, 1993, p.120).

The twentieth-century cultural ideals of 'good' mothering, continue to reflect romanticised notions of maternal love that, while perhaps desirable in the best-of-all worlds, fail to consider the complexities of postmodern society. Entwined with notions of feminine behaviour that disregard the likely human presence of emotions linked to frustration, annoyance, impatience and anger, mothers are often expected to be saint-like reflections of (moral) Mary. While morality in relationships is undoubtedly warranted, such expectations present an idealistic model of motherhood that places enormous pressure on mothers to submit. In effect, the prevailing ideology exists within a model of the good mother that presumes "love and anger cannot coexist. Female anger threatens the institution of motherhood" (Rich, 1976, p.29).

Judith Arcana (1979), suggests that the mother-daughter relationship that has emerged in modernity is based "upon assumptions and conclusions that are false to ourselves and for each other" (p.5). As mothers, we are socialised to strive to emulate this model, at whatever cost to ourselves. As daughters, we are taught to expect our mothers to unfailingly meet our needs. However, it seems unreasonable to presume that any relationship based on independent selves will not be subjected to conflict, and the growth this potentially facilitates in relationships.

Considered in a more positive light, historic immersion in the domestic world of children and family has perhaps provided women with greater personal space in which to refine the relational qualities more often attributed to women. In as much as we have ourselves internalised the perspective of women as inherently "more intuitive and emotional than men" (Waerness, 1987, p.37) it is not surprising that "women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able

to make and then to maintain affiliations and relationships" (Miller, 1976, p.83). The central position relationships occupy in women's formation of self-identity has been well-established (Gilligan, 1982; Hays, 1996; Martire, Stephens & Townsend 2000).

While it is clear that the meaning women attach to the maternal role will be subject to considerable class, cultural and personal variation, the symmetrical socialisation process of mothers and daughters holds particular implications for the subjective experience of mothering (Scarf, 1980; Zollinger-Giele, 1982). There is growing indication that the mother-adolescent daughter relationship is prone to substantial complexity (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1983; La Sorsa & Fodor 1990; Kenemore & Spira 1996). Considered within the ideological framework of motherhood discussed previously, the assumption of maternal role-identity requires a high degree of separation between the subjective and objective self.

There is some suggestion that in the adolescent context, maintaining the relative disregard of self attributed to being a good mother is highly dependent upon the continuity of a positive ongoing connection with daughters (Gilligan, 1982). The adolescent daughter's strivings for independence, and continuing need for connection exist simultaneously. Therein, the complexities of mothering become increasingly complicated as the developmental issues surrounding mothers and their daughters confront both mothers and daughters with the dual tasks of retaining, and letting go of, existing patterns of relational connection (Fischer, 1986). In many respects, substantial revision of the maternal role may well be necessary. Considered amidst the meaning culturally attributed to 'good mothering' it is not surprising if some experience difficulty relinquishing, or adapting, previously-established and expected maternal practices (Fischer, 1986; Allen & Hawkins, 1999).

Notwithstanding variation, adolescent daughters commonly seek disengagement from existing relationships with their mothers via a range of behavioural patterns. Lucy Fischer (1986) identifies three common strategies; (1) decreased intimacy via verbal censorship, (2) increased verbal argument and conflict, and (3) emotional withdrawal. While the application of such strategies undoubtedly varies in accordance with individual mother and daughter circumstances, "the most common pattern found for adolescent daughters and their mothers is a seesawing between intimate involvement and attempts at separation" (La Sorsa & Fodor 1990, p.601).

The relative process of psychological detachment that this ostensibly entails, constitutes a major transposition in previously-established relational conditions. Feelings of closeness and attachment between mothers and their adolescent daughters are often subject to a relative metamorphosis that is incongruent with the notion of a good mother as someone who is always there and always accessible. Being a good mother is often measured against the investment of time, energy and self-sacrifice involved (Wearing, 1984; Fischer, 1986; Lupton, 2000). While the process of adapting to developmental change in daughters is undoubtedly variable, some mothers find themselves face-to-face with a need to "disengage from their daughter's lives and to be born into their own" (Basoff, 1988, p.71).

There has been some suggestion that 'overly emotionally-invested' mothers heighten the degree of conflict in mother-adolescent daughter relationships (Chodorow, 1978; Montemayor 1986; Laursen & Collins, 1988). Compounded by the cultural ideals of the 'good' mother, it appears that many women also use their own experience of being mothered as a basis upon which to either repeat positive experiences or avoid perceived negative ones (Chodorow, 1978; Hays, 1996). As a result, the intricate bonds between maternal identity and self-identity can mean that negative perceptions of one's own childhood, render mothers particularly vulnerable to the developmental changes that transform mother-adolescent relationships (Lehr, 1984; Nice, 1992; Silverberg, 1996).

The adage, 'A son's a son 'till he takes a wife, a daughter's a daughter all her life' seems particularly salient here. Several studies indicate that many mothers attribute particular meaning to having a daughter (Fischer, 1986; Apter, 1990; Lawler, 2000). The mother-daughter relationship, in particular, provides a means through which to reenact, and perhaps improve upon, internalised, mother-daughter relationships (Chodorow, 1978). Continuing evidence of a positive relationship with daughters appears to substantiate a job well-done for mothers prone to idealisation of both motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship.

Such relationships are undoubtedly complicated by the need for validation on the part of both mothers and their daughters. While varying degrees of conflict appear developmentally inevitable to some extent, and purportedly necessary to the resolution of daughters identity-issues, (Chodorow, 1978; Apter, 1990; Pacquiao, 1994) such arguments can exacerbate feelings of failure in mothers prone to idealisation of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. The primary paradox is that while mothers focus on engaging the newly-formed teenage self, this

transitional self is often working steadily towards relative disengagement. (La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990; Silverberg, 1996). Some suggest this is most evident in pre-pubescent girls. In their attempts to effect individuation, they become increasingly critical of the known environment and increasingly idealistic of the world outside the family (Deutsch, 1944; Chodorow, 1978).

The desire, conscious or otherwise, for a transformation of the existing mother-daughter relational dynamics is cause for concern for some mothers. Many find themselves faced with a context of decreased intimacy that starkly contradicts the idealised relationship they hoped to build with their daughters (Gutman, 1981; Basoff, 1987; Silverberg, 1996). Apter (1990) suggests that in such instances, "the child the parent once knew seems usurped by a sexually mature, but infantile and irrational stranger bent on making life hell" (p.1).

Amidst the notion of the good mother that often drives maternal actions and reactions, such changes can result in mothers responding in a variety of ways. Some resort to normative explanations, presuming such changes are simply an adolescent phase that will pass. Others are subject to denial, and continue to negotiate the relationship using established patterns of interaction. Perhaps those who experience the relative emotional withdrawal of their daughters most intensely, are faced with feelings of rejection inconsistent with preconceived ideals of the mother-daughter relationship (Fischer, 1986).

In some instances, it appears that attempts by mothers and daughters to manage developmental changes, can reinforce mutual feelings of ambivalence (Chodorow, 1978). Mothers seek validation of their personal investment in the relationship, while daughters seek confirmation of a newly-emerging self-in-transition. Much of the complication appears to arise when "the mother feels her love is being rejected; [and] the daughter feels that her new personality is being devalued" (Apter, 1990, p.214).

That aside, however, and not withstanding exceptions, both mothers and their daughters generally desire a close, warm, loving relationship with one another. The caretaking tasks inherent in maternal practice in these latter years are perhaps most greatly in need of a consideration of mutual subjectivity by both mother and daughter. Within this context, and indeed, any relational context, the demonstration of an authentic model of identity is central to affirmation of a positive connection.

Implicit in the complexities of achieving this, is the prevailing ideological argument for substantial personal submersion in the mother role. While this may be somewhat necessary in the early childhood years, we perhaps do ourselves and our young adult daughters no great favours by shielding them from our frustrations as mothers and as human beings. Very often, such an approach results in a joint idealization of both motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship, which has little connection to reality. "This is the ultimate betrayal in that it breaks the kind of connection which girls want intensely with their mothers, and mothers want intensely with their daughters" (Gilligan & Rogers, 1993, p.131).

Granted, many have strived, and continue to strive, to present a model of authentic personhood to daughters, themselves and broader society. Certainly, the life-stage deemed 'adolescence' presents all manner of challenges requiring adaptation to the newly-emerging identities of our young adult children. However, in the desire to shield our children from emotions inconsistent with notions of selfless, maternal love, in the latter years, there is considerable indication that there is a risk in reinforcing an inherently unattainable cultural ideal.

Depictions of motherhood as an identity rather than a process of evolution for both mothers and daughters, suggests an end point in the formation of personhood. This denies the existence of personal growth and individuation across the life-span, and indeed, the existence of agency amongst mothers "actively engaged in producing and reproducing, shaping and reshaping the ideology of appropriate motherhood" (Hays, 1996, p.95). Given the complexities of postmodern society, maternal, and indeed, female identity, is surely "better understood as product(s) of experience rather than of gender-role conformity" (McMahon, 1995, p.265).

This means taking into account a likely diverse range of personal truths and circumstances. While this postmodern approach has been criticised by some as going 'too far' (Walby, 1990; Mann & Kelley, 1997), it seems clear that by failing to render our views audible, we may, in fact, unwittingly contribute to the perpetuation of an unrealistic model of motherhood and mother-daughter relationships. "If we assume that children do have the capacity to recognize the mother's subjectivity, to perceive her as human rather than as omnipotent, the question is, why don't they?"(Benjamin,1994, p.132).

Within the ideological framework of motherhood, women are most often depicted in saint-like fashion, as passive, caring, patient, loving human beings. In many respects, this presents an

unrealistic view of womanhood in which there is little place for human feelings of anger, frustration, annoyance and impatience. It is perhaps this broad range of emotions that is at the core of our humanity. Instead, for the most part, as mothers ourselves, our own needs are set aside and we forget that "all our mothers teach us is what they have learned in the crucible of sexism"(Arcana, 1979, p.70).

There is certainly merit in considering that the verbal expression of potentially conflictual issues in relationships can be of significant value to the growth of individuals and of relationships. Such an approach need not exclude the complex map of cultural and subjective experience that underpins women's active engagement in mothering. Indeed, it may well provide a more authentic pathway to individuation for both mothers and their daughters. Therein lie opportunities to model resolution of relational issues to daughters within a mutually supportive context, (Jordan, 1993) and to harness conflict as a means by which to encourage each of our daughters to "become an autonomous subject" (van Mens-Verhulst, 1993, p.160). In considering this, women's relationships with their developing daughters may have much to teach us about embracing change. It is perhaps a legacy owed to mothers and daughters that is long overdue.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Overview: Parameters of this Study

The primary objective of this study was to gain an understanding of the extent to which the lived experience of mothering daughters in contemporary Western society changes during the transitional life-cycle period commonly known as 'adolescence'. The methodology described herein recognises the considerable lack of attention given to the maternal subjective experience of both motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. Underpinned by a case study approach based on semi-structured interviews with twelve Melbourne mothers, explicit emphasis on the maternal perspective has been maintained.

The subjective experience of mothering remains a largely unexplored phenomenon. While factors such as class, culture, age and family structure are acknowledged as influential, the methodological framework of this study has not incorporated specific attention to these factors. As a relatively new area of study, limited to a small sample of mothers, the central emphasis is on identifying and presenting participants' perceptions and understandings of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. As such, this study is perhaps best described as a 'snapshot in time' that honours the sometimes divergent realities of women from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances.

The following chapter details the conceptual, theoretical and practice principles employed in this study, providing a rationale for the qualitative approach adopted. Considerable attention has been paid to detailing the design of this study including issues related to sample selection and the implementation process. Fundamental to the investigation of the lived experience of mothering daughters that underpins this thesis, the following exploratory research questions delineated the broad parameters of this study.

Key Questions

1.   To what extent are contemporary mothers influenced by ideological notions of the good mother emerging from nineteenth-century ideals and the twentieth-century model of "intensive mothering" (Hays, 1996).

2.   Given the emphasis in the literature on separation and individuation as a particularly difficult task for young women (Rich, 1976; Chodorow, 1978; Pipher, 1996), what impact might this have on the contemporary experience of mothering?

Conceptual Structure: Experiential Origins

Like many researchers in the area of mother-daughter relationships, my own experiences as both mother and daughter have been instrumental in motivating this study and the methodology employed. As Adrienne Rich (1986) noted in her groundbreaking study acknowledging motherhood as both *institution* and *experience*, motherhood is "a crucial, still relatively unexplored, area for feminist theory. But I did not choose this subject; it had long ago chosen me" (p.15).

In breaking with the tradition of an objective, scientific basis for this research, I have been highly aware of the issues inherent in the objectivity/subjectivity debate. On the one hand, my role and experience as both mother and daughter potentially provides valuable insights. On the other, the exploratory nature of this study necessitates an open mind capable of conveying my willingness "to learn from the informants" (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1995, p.80).

While this point is central to the methodological principles employed, use of the term 'informants' has been purposefully avoided. Terms such as 'informant' imply a one-way approach that renders those participating 'objects' of research rather than participants actively engaged in the process of this study. Bearing this in mind, in detailing the methodological process and presenting the data, relevant aspects are presented in the first person.

Methodological Principles

Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative approach that respected the personal truths of participants was essential. This study therefore takes as its starting point, a qualitative, discovery-focused method capable of honouring the experiences of participants. Critical to 'fleshing out' the differential and common realities of the women in this study, is an approach driven by a central principle of inclusiveness. It is on this basis that the following feminist principles guide the methodology employed.

- An emphasis on qualitative methodology as a valid research approach (Oakley, 1981);

- Ensuring the study is firmly situated in the context of women's lives (Harding, 1986; Lippert, 1997);

- Recognizing the inadequacies of existing theories of development and maintaining an explicit focus on the experience of women (Gilligan, 1982; Klein, 1983);

- Acknowledgement that postmodern feminism embraces and validates personal constructions of reality as dynamic factors in women's development (Viney, L. 1992; Lupton, D. 2000);

- Ensuring that every aspect of the research process is clearly documented and articulated (Klein, 1983);

- Being open to the emergence of new theories and knowledge that may challenge traditional theoretical and/or methodological frameworks (Hekman, 1997; Waugh, 1998).

Methodological Framework

It has been suggested that the qualitative approach risks an overemphasis on the subjective, thereby failing to consider patterns of potentially universal relevance (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). However, in view of the historic absence of similarly-focused research, and the small number of participants in this study, the qualitative approach adopted herein offers "a workable rationale for performing significant research in human settings" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p.9). With this in mind, a *grounded theory* approach provides a framework both viable and complementary to postmodern feminism.

"A grounded theory is one inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin,1990, p.23). While various structural models of grounded theory have emerged in recent years, there has been some criticism of this model as "overly accommodationist" (Maher, 1990). The major concern is that predictions regarding a particular phenomenon, as the central basis of analysis, often tend towards their own justification (Miller & Fredericks, 1999).

While there may well be some merit in this argument, the emphasis adopted in this study is on grounded theory as a *process of discovery* rather than justification. Given the relative paucity of literature specifically related to the maternal perspective of mother-daughter relationships, the emphasis herein, as with most other theories, is on provisional theory development and plausible

explanation. Its strength lies within its capacity to consider "both macro and micro level issues" (Miller & Fredericks, 1999, p.551).

Complementary to the methodological principles adopted, grounded theory provides a useful conceptual framework for case-based studies based on two fundamental stages: theoretical discovery and theoretical testing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Recent attention to grounded theory has extended this to three distinct phases in the research process involving (a) a *descriptive phase* in which careful observation and rigorous descriptive documentation of the phenomenon under study occurs; (b) *a theory development phase* in which descriptive data provides a basis for the identification of patterns and generation of categories that contribute to formation of propositions and hypotheses and (c) *theory testing stage* in which cases are scrutinized to determine the validity of propositional evidence (Edwards, 1998).

Design of the Study:

In keeping with the grounded theory approach, the literature review, question/hypothesis formulation, data collection and analysis are concurrent tasks in the research process (Bowers, 1987). However, a preliminary review of the literature was critical to understanding some of the central issues surrounding motherhood and enabling preliminary, exploratory questions to be identified.

The most appropriate research method was one that ensured the experiences, feelings and thoughts that formed the realities of the daily lives of participants were captured *in their own words* (Reinharz, 1992). With this in mind, the need to preserve the meanings intended by participants underpinned the decision to employ a semi-structured interview schedule, predominantly comprised of open-ended questions.

Development of Interview Schedule

While a structured schedule would undoubtedly have contributed to the exploration of the propositions identified, it may also have unduly influenced the content of discussion. Given the lack of attention historically paid to women's voices as mothers, there was a need to ensure that considerable allowance was made for the full participation of the women in this study as they saw fit.

A semi-structured interview schedule enabled the process to be guided to meet the broad parameters of the study in addition to ensuring that the emphasis remained on enabling divergence of discussion. This more informal, and at times, conversational style of interviewing was critical to ensuring that the process itself was not explicitly driven by the researcher.

This model of interviewing, despite its emphasis on a uni-directional process, provided a useful guide to preliminary development of the schedule. "Original or primary questions are used to begin the interview or introduce new topics…Probing or secondary questions are used…when the informant's statements seem incomplete, and vague, or when the informant gives no answers" (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1995, p.90).

Such an approach, whilst largely based on the subjective introspection of participants, was important to enabling recollection of issues. While it is acknowledged that "retrospective reports are subject to distortion because of the role of intervening events and problem of memory" (Lachman, 1984), it must also be acknowledged that any variation from fact, was in itself, a part of the reality of participant's lives.

A further line of questioning, used toward the end of each interview, was posing the ideal (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). Participants were encouraged to identify factors they might change, given the capability, in their existing relationship with their adolescent/young adult daughters. This was viewed as an essential element in discovering the extent to which expectations of the mother-daughter relationship were satisfied.

The initial interview schedule was drafted and piloted with two participants (Refer Table 1 – Participants 1 and 2). While the original schedule proved effective in stimulating discussion, clarification of the *meaning* of some questions was sought in both instances. The process of testing the schedule was useful in two respects. Firstly, it identified amendments needed in relation to the phrasing of some questions. Secondly, it enabled preliminary analysis of the first two interviews and facilitated the preliminary but tentative identification of concepts and themes that might emerge as relevant in later interviews.

Sample Selection

The research problem reflected the broad requirements of the sample selection. Participants needed to be women with at least one daughter in the adolescent stage of life. With this in mind,

and notwithstanding potential variation, recruitment predominantly focused on mothers with daughters aged between 13 and 21 years. This enabled some comparison of experience across the life-cycle but proved complex in instances where mothers had more than one daughter in the relevant age range. This issue was addressed by requesting, where appropriate, confirmation of which of their daughters discussion was relevant to.

A total of twelve mothers, with an age range between 32 and 62 years, were recruited through the personal and professional networks of the researcher via a snowballing or chain-sampling approach. Of these, four participants were either direct colleagues or known to the researcher. While no particular decision was made to focus on biological mothers as part of the design, all those participating fell into this category. In all but two instances (Participants 6 and 8) the daughters referred to were living at home at the time of the interview.

While no attempt was made to predetermine the social, economic and cultural mix of this study, the group shared a largely homogeneous background. All but one participant described their family backgrounds as working-class in origin (Participant 12). Nine women in the sample were in (heterosexual) marital relationships. Of these, four were second marriages involving an additional biological child (Participants 2, 3, 7 and 10). In only one instance was this child the daughter discussed in the study (Participant 3). The remainder of the participants were currently parenting in the absence of a partner. Participant 1 had been separated more than 10 years, Participant 6 had separated approximately 18 months prior to the interview, and Participant 8 was divorced and living alone.

Interestingly, of those who had either participated in, or were currently completing post-graduate studies, two identified working-class origins and in both instances, reported having experienced childhoods characterized by neglect and violence (Participants 5 and 10). Half of the sample group worked in the human services field. With the exception of Participants 2 and 3, all participated in some form of paid employment (refer Table 1, below).

While participants' age at the time of transition to motherhood is presented, the emphasis on maternal experience has given no consideration to the positioning of daughters in the family structure. In all instances referring directly to participants and their daughters, pseudonyms have been used to preserve confidentiality.

Table 1: Participant Profiles

Informant	Age	Children	Daughter Ages	Occupation	Marital Status	Education Level	Age @ birth of first child
1. *Sandra*	35	3	14, 16	Youth worker	Sep.	Post-Secondary	19
2. *Leigh*	43	3	15	Home Duties	Marr.	Undergrad.	23
3. *Jackie*	62	4	21, 37, 42, 44	Retired Admin Manager	Marr	Secondary	18
4. *Anna*	47	2	16	Secretary	Marr	Secondary	31
5.*Cynthia*	32	2	15	Social Worker	Marr	Postgrad.	17
6. *Deb*	35	2	16	Librarian	Sep	Undergrad.	19
7. *Karla*	37	3	16, 5	Personal care attendant	Marr	Secondary	20
8.*Deanna*	42	2	21	Case Manager	Div	Post-Secondary	20
9. *Alicia*	42	3	15, 1	Social Worker	Marr	Undergrad.	25
10.*Crystal*	40	5	17, 15, 15, 3	Social Worker	Marr	Postgrad.	18
11. *Jean*	42	2	15	Personal Care Attendant	Marr	Secondary	25
12. *Lynda*	56	2	18	Counselor	Marr	Postgrad.	37

NB: Due to the focus of this study, sons are not indicated.

Implementation Process

Following initial telephone contact to confirm prospective interest in participating, an Information Letter was forwarded to each participant (Appendix 1). This provided a basic outline of the study aims, process and ethical considerations. This enabled those who had expressed interest in participating to gain a preliminary understanding of what was involved and to consider any queries requiring clarification. Further contact was made by telephone within two weeks, to finalise interview arrangements.

All interviews took place between December 2000 – August 2001 in the private homes of participants. While no emphasis was placed on the need for daughters not to be present by the researcher, in most instances, daughters of participants were noticeably absent. The following factors were discussed with each participant prior to commencement of the interview.

(a)   Ethical Issues

The research project commenced following substantiation of an ethics clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Australian Catholic University, St. Patrick's Campus, Melbourne. All participants were informed of this both verbally and in writing before signing consent forms agreeing to participation in the study. Each participants was also advised that:

- pseudonyms would be used in any published research to protect the anonymity of themselves and their daughters

- they were free to withdraw their involvement at any point in time prior to publication of the thesis

(b)   General Information

The origins of my interest in the mother-daughter relationship were presented prior to the commencement of each interview. The interview process was explained and participants were provided with an opportunity to raise questions. Written permission to record the interviews, and to use non-identifying data arising from the study in the production of this thesis was also sought at this time. Each of the women involved were also informed that following transcription, a summary of the interview would be provided to them to enable them to assess the accuracy of preliminary analysis. This aspect was deemed critical to ensuring analysis was consistent with the meaning intended by participants. All participants acknowledged their willingness to participate in further contact, as required.

(c)   Interviews

All participants elected for the interview to be held in their own homes. Utilising the semi-structured interview schedule previously discussed (refer Appendix 2), the schedule provided a guide only, enabling the broad parameters of the study to be addressed. Following the 'lead' of participants proved effective in enabling a more conversational style of interviewing. While this made the task of data analysis more complex, it also added to the richness of the data.

The duration of each interview varied from 90 minutes to 3 hours, in accordance with the availability and responsiveness of participants. A number of women, but particularly those who described complex relational conflicts with their daughters, occasionally sought reassurance from the researcher regarding the extent to which personal disclosure was warranted. All participants agreed to audio-taping of the interview. While some observational notes were taken throughout the course of each interview, these were minimal. This was deemed critical to ensuring participants felt their contributions were valued and acknowledged rather than simply documented.

(d) Interview closure

Formal closure of each interview was dependent on participants' contributions and was substantially based on the verbal and non-verbal cues exhibited by those involved. Each participant was invited to make additional comment and on occasion, this took the form of 'advice' to other mothers of adolescent daughters (Refer Chapter 3 – Case Study Results). Several women acknowledged enjoying the opportunity to discuss their experiences, with Participants 2 and 9 noting that the process had provided them with a welcome opportunity to reflect more deeply upon their experiences as a mother. Many wanted to know if some of the experiences they had discussed were mirrored by other participants.

An important and final aspect of interview closure was my acknowledgement of the time, energy and trust shown towards me by those involved in this study. In some instances, conversation continued following the interview. Where appropriate, participants were assured that this conversation would not form part of the study data.

(e) Formal Recognition

A 'thank -you' card was posted to each participant following the interview. This provided a means of maintaining a sense of mutuality and enhancing the possibility of later access to participants, should additional information be required.

Interview Log

The involvement of the researcher in each interview generated a high degree of personal cognitive stimulus which, in most instances, continued for some hours following each of the individual interviews. Documentation of my own thoughts and impressions enabled greater organisation of the tentative links that began to form immediately following each interview. This process, while predominantly one of reflective introspection, provided a useful tool in enabling a continuing focus on the data and substantially contributed to later preliminary analysis.

Preliminary Analysis:

Each of audio tapes was transcribed *verbatim* as soon as possible following each interview, generating some 10-18 pages of data. This process was at times arduous, it significantly enhanced capacity for continuing immersion in emerging themes and categories central to data analysis. Throughout the transcription process, additional notes were made in preparation for more in-depth analysis following complete transcription of all interviews. While this substantially amplified the time invested, it was critical to reducing the data into manageable components and formed the basis for preliminary identification of central themes and categories.

This process was also central in highlighting relevant aspects of the literature that had not previously been explored. A further consideration was the need to identify commonalities and differences in experience. I was conscious that the origins of my decision to undertake this study could influence my interpretation of the data. However, I was also aware that my experiential knowledge potentially held the capacity to facilitate interpretation (Reinharz, 1992). The central focus in both data collection and preliminary analysis was to organise emergent themes and categories systematically to enable identification and retrieval of significant points for more in-depth analysis.

Conscious of the need to honour the actual words of participants, the coding process involved many hours of highlighting words and phrases and structuring them thematically. This proved complex in instances where dualities existed within and between categories. For ease of

reference, each of the central themes that initially emerged was recorded in the transcript margins. A code was allocated to each of the key themes before cross-referencing them, as appropriate, where similarities and differences were observed. A significant amount of time was spent defining the parameters of meaning surrounding each theme. This proved highly useful in minimising the complexities of the data analysis process.

In summary, the preliminary data analysis process involved:

- Highlighting key words and phrases
- Identifying themes and central categories of analysis
- Classifying themes in relation to each transcript and the collective body of transcripts
- Selecting key quotes and ordering them in accordance with key categories and sub-categories
- Reviewing previous, and identifying additional literature, of relevance to emergent themes and categories

Credibility and Reliability of Data

The question of my objectivity as researcher is a valid one. In presenting participants with knowledge of the influences behind my choice of study, there was a need to determine the extent to which personal disclosure was appropriate in the establishment of a sense of mutuality. "One problem with using talk lies in its familiarity. To penetrate beyond the 'ordinariness' of talk, to attribute social categories, value judgements and other cultural features requires the researcher to separate out his [sic] own knowledge as a member of the culture from the talk being used by a fellow member of the culture" (Adelman,1981, p.24)

While I felt it was important that informants were aware that my area of study was influenced by my own experiences as mother and as daughter, I felt no need to provide details beyond this. I did, however, acknowledge my concern regarding the lack of research focused on women's subjective mothering experiences. Notwithstanding the fact that some informants had some knowledge of the substance of my experiences as mother and daughter, the focus of interviews remained on the experience of participants. No further information or discussion related to my personal experiences was requested during interviews.

While it is possible that some participants may have been influenced by prior knowledge of my own experiences and interest in the historic neglect of the maternal perspective, such potential

bias is possible in any research project conducted in a human setting. While every effort has been made to ensure the meanings of participants have been preserved, I recognise that the findings herein are not reflective of the experience of all women. Notwithstanding the likelihood of commonalities of experience and process, this study represents the accounts of those involved. In keeping with the postmodern tradition, no claims of universal truth are made.

Triangulation

Triangulation provides an essential tool in qualitative analysis and refers to the deployment of strategies aimed at cross-checking the validity of data. "It is particularly valuable in the analysis of qualitative data where the trustworthiness of data is always a worry" (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p.383) Given the subjectivity of my own experiences in the area, this was particularly important. Considerable emphasis was therefore placed on affirming that the interpretations of the researcher reflected the intended meanings of participants.

Each participant was offered a copy of the completed transcript and advised of their right to request any aspect of discussion be withdrawn from the findings. In two instances, the offer of the transcript was declined without further explanation. In a third instance, Participant 1 advised that her daughter "has a habit of rifling through my stuff. I'd be too worried she'd find it." None of the participants requested omission of any aspects of the interview.

Further contact was made some three weeks later, asking participants to review individual interview summaries based on initial analysis of transcripts. In addition to providing a memory 'jog' for the researcher, the provision of a summary also gave informants the opportunity to address any issues they felt appeared inaccurate or incomplete. This is particularly important to the generation of grounded theory, given the need to ensure my interpretations were consistent with the meanings intended by participants. Participant 1 agreed to do so on the understanding that this document was forwarded to her place of employment rather than her home. Each participant was contacted within the next two weeks and accurate interpretation was affirmed in all cases.

Design Recommendations

Interviews were recorded using a micro-cassette notetaker. I was highly conscious that a technical fault could result in loss of important data. Accordingly, a sound check was conducted

prior to each interview and key words and phrases were noted to help guard against loss of data. Details of interview settings and the body language of informants at various times throughout the interview were also noted, providing some basis for cross-referencing.

Transcription of data later revealed that a small amount of data was inaudible in two instances (Participant 6 and Participant 9) due to problems with vocal volume and background noise. A further problem encountered during the transcription process, involved dislodgment of the cassette tape itself at the end of side A. Fortunately, this was able to be repaired, however, a small amount of data was irretrievable. I would recommend that researchers employing such methodology in the future, ensure that high quality tapes are used, and a copy of each interview is made prior to transcription.

The following chapter presents the data arising from this study. The results provide a foundation for later discussion of its implications. While every effort has been made to depict the accounts provided as accurately as possible, it is regrettable that space does not allow for additional *verbatim* reports. Consistent with the feminist principles employed, considerable attention has been paid to 'capturing' participants' experiences.

Chapter 4

Case Study Results

Overview

This chapter presents and examines the data arising from the case study. Substantial attention has been given to identifying participants' prenatal expectations of motherhood. While this involved a high degree of retrospection, the accounts given were central to understanding the meaning participants attached to motherhood, and indicative of the hopes and desires that underpinned their beliefs about the ways in which motherhood would shape their lives. Many reported vast disparity between the expectations they had held and the realities of their experience.

In presenting these results, it has been presumed that each mother who participated in this study sought to achieve the standards they identified as central to 'good mothering'. Most held firm views about the role of a good mother. Many affirmed that while there is some reduction in the practical requirements of mothering in later years, there is also considerable need for a good mother to adapt to the increasingly complex needs of their young adult children. Furthermore, there was significant indication that personal circumstances, both within and external to the family, play a central role in compounding the intricacies of changing relational dynamics between mothers and their daughters.

Developmental changes observed in daughters often proved difficult to adapt to. In many cases, this appeared to lead to a fundamental review of the expectations they had held of both their daughters and the mother-daughter relationship. Several women reported that this led to personal adjustment of their expectations of motherhood, and the mother-daughter relationship, quite considerably.

Notwithstanding the variable factors that contribute to shaping maternal expectations, a high proportion of participants affirmed being substantially influenced by their own experiences of being mothered. Indeed, several women acknowledged that as their daughters grew older, they gave considerable thought to their own experiences as a teenage daughter. Notably, more than half accentuated strong dissatisfaction with the relationships they had experienced with their mothers. While others described perceptions of their mothers and the relationship experienced with them in positive terms, it appeared that in most instances, as daughters themselves,

subjective perspectives of the mother-daughter relationship they had encountered as teenagers, constituted a negative experience for the women in this study.

Consistent with a postmodern, feminist emphasis that seeks to honor the contribution made by the women involved in this study, considerable emphasis has been placed on presentation of verbatim accounts that demonstrate issues of both commonality and difference. While some attention has been given to exploring the disjunctive impact, disparities between the expectations and realities participants bring to bear upon the experience of mothering their daughters, more detailed analysis has been left for discussion in Chapter 4. Accordingly, this chapter is guided by the following structure.

- Expectations of Motherhood – Prenatal Considerations
- Role of a Good Mother – Early Childhood Years
- Realities of Motherhood – Early Childhood Years
- Role of a Good Mother – Adolescent Years
- Maternal Experience and the Mother-Daughter Relationship
- Factors Influencing the Mother-Adolescent Daughter Relationship

Expectations of Motherhood: Prenatal Considerations

All of the women involved in this study recalled that prior to their transition to motherhood, they had expected to become mothers at some point in time. There was strong indication that, irrespective of whether or not their first pregnancies had been planned, becoming a mother was perceived as a somewhat inevitable, natural progression in their lives as women. Several participants depicted motherhood as a cultural norm, a progressive transition linked to love and marriage.

Jackie, a first-time mother in the late 1950s, recollected that she was "just the ordinary kid that wanted to get married, wanted to be madly in love and have children and never thought any further than that" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01)*. Deanna acknowledged a similar view in which having children with her "high school sweetheart" was always a given, synonymous with the formation of a female adult identity in which "you grow up, you fall in love, you get married, you have kids" adding, "it's just part of life, I suppose" *(Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01)*.

Like Jackie and Deanna, most participants appeared to view motherhood as a natural transition linked to adult womanhood. Despite this, a high proportion indicated that little preemptive consideration had been given to life choices that might otherwise have been available to them. Sandra reported, "I couldn't have ever seen me not have [sic] kids". Explaining this in greater detail, she suggested that having come from a large family, she made this assumption early in life "because I've always had kids around me" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00).* This notion of motherhood as 'the norm' was evident in the accounts of many of the women in this study. Jackie described it as "an accepted instinct" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01)* while Karla recalled that she "didn't really have any other ambitions for myself except to have kids" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).*

For some participants, the expectations of others appeared to play a major role in the transition to motherhood. Jean, reported that while she had "always expected to be a mother" *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01)* she had felt no need or desire to pursue this in the early years of her marriage. However, after five years of marriage, and at the suggestion of her husband, she reported "going off the pill, and bang. It all just sort of happened and I was in it". Jean's account suggests some sense of powerlessness in the process once the decision had been made.

Two participants, in particular, highlighted some of the ways in which unplanned motherhood substantially impacted on their lives. Both Cynthia and Crystal acknowledged that while had expected to become mothers at some point in time, they were surprised when they became pregnant at the ages of 16 and 17 respectively. Despite highly negative reactions from their parents, in both instances, each reported that termination of their pregnancies or adoption were never considered. Cynthia recalled having no sense of an alternative, attributing her young age as a major factor in giving little thought to the ways in which motherhood might impact on her life. "I didn't think about what a mother is…didn't think oh my god, what am I doing…as a teenager, you can't see your life past 25" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).* Crystal's account also suggested that the need to "focus on the day to day" because "I was thrown out for being a slut" was instrumental in her not having "time to think about what I expected as a young Mum" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

Most of the women in this study were in their late teens or early twenties when they had children. Few had considered purposefully postponing the arrival of children. Highlighting the fact that she had not made a conscious decision to delay motherhood, Jackie attributed this to a lack of

knowledge, reporting "I could have gone a lot longer without having children…but I didn't know any better" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01).*

Amongst the group of twelve participants, only two reported consciously delaying motherhood. Anna recalled that following her marriage at age 23, she was constantly asked, "when are you going to have kids?" Explaining that neither she nor her husband had envisaged having any children at that stage, Anna stated that her reluctance to become a mother was in part influenced by her paid employment in school-based settings in which she had seen "many mothers having problems" adding, "it absolutely frightened the hell out of me to have children" *(Anna, Participant 4, 23/2/01).*

A further factor in Anna's initial reluctance to have children was her recognition that doing so would substantially change the way of life she had become accustomed to. Despite this, there was some indication that she saw the eventual arrival of children as inevitable. "I'd bought myself a brand new car, anything I wanted in clothes I just bought and at the time kept thinking to myself, this won't last forever, you should appreciate this time". The significant turning point for Anna came when she "turned 29 and almost overnight I got clucky". She recalls experiencing concern that "my biological clock was ticking," and remembers wondering, "what happens when I'm 40 or 50 and I'm suddenly lonely and wanted [sic] a child?" *(Anna, Participant 4, 23/2/01).*

In the case of Lynda, while she acknowledged that she had "always wanted to have children" motherhood was deliberately delayed until her late thirties. While she had worked extensively with young parents over the course of her career as a counselor, she recalls viewing her pregnancy as "an exciting journey" in which in which she gave little thought to the actual demands of motherhood. *(Lynda, Participant 12, 27/7/01)*

While most of the women in this study acknowledged some prior understanding that motherhood would change their lives considerably, many reported that the extent of such change was vastly underestimated prior to the actual experience of motherhood. Irrespective of the variable circumstances surrounding their lives at the time of conception, the degree of demand placed on their time and energy, and the extent to which this entailed substantial personal adjustment, had not been envisaged. Several recalled that prior to becoming a mother, their perspectives of what motherhood would be like were based on somewhat romanticised ideals that were substantially challenged in the early months of motherhood (*Sandra, Anna, Deanna, Alicia, Lynda).*

Role of a Good Mother – Early Childhood Years

Most of the women in this study experienced some difficulty, in the early childhood years, consistently maintaining the standards they had reported as central to the role of a 'good mother.' Participants' descriptions of the maternal qualities and attributes deemed central to being a 'good mother' in the early childhood years showed noteworthy consistency. Much of this was focused on intangible characteristics that highlighted maternal responsibility for unconditional demonstration of love and sensitivity towards children's needs. Many indicated that in order to achieve this, a high degree of self-submersion was required. There was strong suggestion that the ability to put aside the needs of self was critical to being a 'good mother.' Amidst this emphasis, it appeared that the day-to-day practical requirements of mothering involved in the early childhood years were largely taken for granted.

Most respondents placed significant emphasis on the role a 'good mother' plays in ensuring children's emotional needs are met. Leigh asserted that this took precedence above all else, describing maternal fulfillment of these needs as "the bottom line…from day one through till you know, the day you die…" *(Leigh, Participant 2, 28/12/00).* Some placed considerable importance upon the need for mothers to understand both the spoken and unspoken needs of their children. Cynthia, despite regular reference to having no preconceived ideas about mothering, described a 'good mother' as "…someone who's just connected to their kids by the heart in the sense like if they're hurting, you should be able to feel that hurt" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).*

Alicia's view was similar. In addition to the need for a 'good mother' "to be open and sort of empathic" she reiterated the importance of being "affectionate…able to show love to your children and to be there for them" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).* Crystal's perspective demonstrated a romanticised view that affirmed the need for a 'good mother' to be "able to be in love with your kids". Indeed, she continued to specify a list of requirements in which the maternal capacity for variable human emotions was noticeably absent. "You've got to be able to accept who they are on all levels and you've got to be understanding" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

Several women affirmed the need for a 'good mother' to take major responsibility for socialisation in the early years of mothering, emphasising the central importance of maternal transmission of morals and values as a component of this task. Jackie stressed the need "to teach them trust and respect" acknowledging that in order to earn that respect" the process needs to

commence "when they're little" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01).* In similar vein, Jean affirmed the need for a 'good mother' to be "a teacher, to set them on the path of living in society…showing by example how to respect themselves, respect other people and have goals for themselves" *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01).*

Others showed considerable concern with the need for a 'good mother' to imbue children with the ability to commit to acceptable standards of behaviour and character. Deanna reinforced the importance of transmitting personally-acceptable principles and ideals. "It's important to teach them right and wrong, giving them your values and beliefs is important" *(Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01).* Deb's response, while similar, appeared to acknowledge that while some differences may arise, "a good Mum is someone who from the word go establishes some sort of moral standard" *(Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).*

Both Sandra and Karla appeared to find it difficult to identify the qualities required of a 'good mother' in the early childhood years. Sandra's response suggested a high degree of uncertainty, and some indication that, at the present time, and in the context of current difficulties in her relationship with her eldest daughter, she felt ill-equipped to answer. "I think you're asking the wrong person. I don't know, you just do it. I couldn't tell you what they are. Just be yourself I think" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00).*

Karla's statement demonstrated similar difficulty. **"**I don't know. I'm not going to be very good at this. You've got to be there for your kids…open when they ask you questions, someone who is loving and wants to spend lots of time with their kids" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).* In both instances, maintaining positive relationships with their daughters had been problematic in the previous few months and a degree of negative self-judgement was often evident throughout the course of discussion.

Lynda sought clarification when asked to describe the role of a 'good mother' in the early childhood years, replying, "so you're not asking me to describe myself, you're asking me to describe…?" Reassured of the generality of the question, there was some intimation that the demands of motherhood in the early childhood years, sometimes requiring a high degree of repression of maternal emotion. "With the younger kids, it's about the listening, being there for them and not getting angry. I think the feelings when they're really little are very intense" *(Lynda, Participant 12, 27/7/01).*

Realities of Motherhood - Early Childhood years

Most participants acknowledged that their prenatal perceptions of having children had little connection to the actual experience. While it was clear that, retrospectively at least, many viewed the early childhood years as a time in which the process of mothering was relatively uncomplicated, difficulty coming to terms with a sense of feeling almost entirely responsible for the welfare of their children appeared to be a common experience. Irrespective of variable circumstances in the early childhood years, a high proportion of participants reported substantial disparity between their perceptions of motherhood and the actual experience of mothering.

Sandra reported that despite being one of six siblings in her family of origin, she had no real sense of the demands motherhood would place upon her life. She suggested that "because my Mum had painted this picture that it would be easy" her conceptualisation of motherhood was unrealistic. "She didn't seem to get in the mess I got in with one…I can honestly say it was an eye opener*" (Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00).*

Deanna expressed a similar view. While she had "expected motherhood to be lots of hard work" adjusting to the demands of a young child was something she found quite difficult at times. She recalled feeling concerned about being unable to comfort her infant daughter on numerous occasions, reporting that there were "days she'd just cry and cry". She recalled feeling "helpless and inept" reporting that there were many times she thought, "I've just got to get away 'cause I'm going to throw this kid through the window" *(Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01).*

Many of the women recalled that prior to the birth of their children, they had believed they had a clear understanding of the changes motherhood would bring to their lives. Despite this, most affirmed having vastly underestimated the degree of demand caring for children necessitated. Alicia stated that she "knew it would be hard" but despite this, "it was really quite a rude shock" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).* Jean gave a similar account, adding that it was only after bringing her first child home from hospital, that she "realized it's one of the biggest jobs that you'll ever take on in your life…it does not stop" *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01).*

Two women who had consciously delayed parenthood until their thirties, pointed out that despite an intentional decision to have children, adjustment to the responsibilities this entailed was unforeseen. Anna stated, "you thought you would be aware of it and prepared but when it

actually happened it really hit you" *(Anna, Participant 4, 23/2/01).* Lynda recalled finding "it quite hard being a parent," suggesting that her lack of "any natural genes" may have been a precipitating factor in this. Despite delaying motherhood "until I really felt ready" she said, "I don't think I was one of those people that thought about it carefully beforehand, I had a bit of a void in terms of knowing what to do *(Lynda, Participant 12, 27/7/01).*

Only one participant, Jackie, reported that motherhood was as she had expected, "a lot of hard work". She described the early years as "everything I wanted it to be" however, there was considerable suggestion that this perspective was in some respect shaped by both a strong sense of obligation and the views of her (then) husband. Noting that the effective management of the demands of motherhood in the early years "gave me a lot of personal satisfaction", she also acknowledged having held "a deep sense of, it's your lot, it's your load" adding, "when you had the children it was your job to do it…if you didn't, well, there was arguments as to why you didn't, like you were lazy" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01).*

In stark contrast to most other participants, Cynthia and Crystal both reported minimal difficulty adjusting to the early years of motherhood, suggesting that the need to focus on immediate practical matters gave them little time to think about what was ahead. Cynthia remarked, "It was more about day-to-day survival financially…I loved being a Mum but didn't have a lot of thought about motherhood" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).* Crystal gave a similar account. She remembered "enjoying the early years despite the ups and downs and having no real support" and also credited her ability to cope to a consistent "focus on the day-to-day" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

Several women reported feeling overwhelmed by the immense responsibility motherhood entailed. Anna recalled times she had felt she "would never adjust" to the demands of the early years. Indeed, she found it difficult to understand why she felt so unhappy and described feeling "very confused about myself". This confusion was exacerbated by the fact that when her husband was home, she felt quite positive and capable. Left alone with her child, however, she experienced "a strong sense of panic". While she recognised that, if she had asked for support, her mother and numerous friends "would have been there at the drop of a hat" she felt unable to do so.

Explaining the reasons for this, Anna said:

> I couldn't ask for help because everybody expects you to manage. I remember feeling incompetent…I'd never known anybody to admit they felt a failure being a mother – a mother was just natural instinct, it was what you did, so you can't, can't admit this part *(Anna, Participant 4, 23/2/01).*

Deanna, reiterating her consistent frustration coping with a child "who cried constantly" recalled often feeling powerless as a mother, despite trying to quell the feelings of frustration this involved. "As a baby, and as a toddler, [daughter] Deirdre would sometimes just push me and push me and …you know, I had to tread slowly so I didn't be terrible" *(Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01).*

Crystal, who reported minimal difficulty adjusting to first-time motherhood, acknowledged that following the birth of subsequent children, there were many times she felt overwhelmed by intense feelings of responsibility for ensuring positive life outcomes for her children. While adamant that she enjoyed the early years immensely, she acknowledged holding strong feelings of concern regarding "the power of the mother to make or break a house, like a home, you know?" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

While it is evident that a high proportion of participants experienced some difficulties adjusting to their role as mothers, most acknowledged that the early years of motherhood also held many joys. Leigh reported feelings of fascination towards her children. Discussing her only daughter Penny, she recalled being "quite besotted with her…for the first several years of her life I used to just sit and watch her and just drink her in…" *(Leigh, Participant 2, 28/12/00).* Anna, despite the significant difficulties reported earlier, described a sense of "wonderment" that "it was because of me that this little life was growing" *(Anna, Participant 4, 23/2/01).*

Many found that as the emphasis on managing their children's basic care needs reduced, they gained considerable pleasure watching their children develop in various ways. There was strong indication that the personal achievements and qualities identified in their children, provided some justification for the significant investment of time and energy in motherhood required of them. Sandra reported great joy "watching them become independent, bit by bit…and knowing that the grounding that you've given them" means "they can actually make decisions on their own" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00).*

Deb cited her daughter's capacity for "initiative" as a major source of satisfaction in the early years. Acknowledging that, as a mother, she had "always tried to give her the message that she could do anything she wanted to" Deb admired the fact that as a child, her daughter Kristine, saw what "she started…right through to the end" (Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01). Karla's account demonstrated a strong sense of pride towards a number of aspects of her daughter's development, including physical, intellectual and practical capabilities. "She's achieved a lot. She's beautiful; she's intelligent…I am proud of her in a lot of ways…she achieved a lot in Taekwondo and horseriding" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).*

Some participants noted immense satisfaction when their children demonstrated a sense of empathy and care towards others. Alicia reported feeling "so proud when they showed care and consideration to others" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).* Crystal, while acknowledging that her children "often fight mercilessly" reported that observing them being "considerate to each other…puts a warm glow in your heart" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

Substantial credence was given to the inherent satisfaction that abstract, relational factors brought to motherhood. Evidence of a strong sense of connection with their children, albeit often in non-tangible form, appeared to provide some participants with a way of making sense of their continuing commitment to motherhood. Jackie reported that "to know that you love them and they love you unconditionally too makes it all worth it" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01).*

Cynthia reported that feelings of "intimacy and closeness with the kids" meant "everything else would come second to that" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).* For Jean, it appeared that this sense of connection filled something of a void in her life. Explaining the personal gratification she experienced through motherhood, she reported that "the best thing is…just the intense love that you feel for them and the connection of family" adding "I've only got my brother and my sister and the children so it's important and they do give it back" *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01).*

While it is apparent that many participants found the inherent demands of motherhood in the infant stage particularly challenging, the early childhood years, retrospectively at least, seemed to provide great satisfaction for many of the women in this study. These years were often described as a time in which they felt strong emotional connections with their children that reflected their

central importance, as mothers. Sandra depicted these years as a time "when it's like, you're the number one person in their life" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00).*

The notion of themselves as *confidantes* to their children also appeared to hold significant meaning for many of the women in this study. Several participants described experiencing great satisfaction when their children confided in them. "When they come and talk to you about kids at school, boys they like, things like that, it makes you feel good" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).* Deb reported feeling "incredibly happy that she [daughter Kristine] always wanted to tell me how she was feeling and wanted to know what I thought" *(Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).* Lynda acknowledged that "most of her [daughter Emily's] life, she's come to me to help her sort out little problems when she's had them" *(Lynda, Participant 12, 27/7/01).*

Role of a Good Mother - Adolescent Years

Maternal perceptions of the relationships with their children in the early childhood years provided a backdrop for consideration of later changes in role and experience. Many described the work of mothering older children as substantially more demanding and complex. While there was general consensus that the physical work of caring required of a good mother was reduced, the importance of consistently demonstrating love towards children remained a high priority. Several participants emphasised the need to either extend, or add to, existing skills and qualities.

Leigh, who consistently emphasised the need for a good mother "to be physically affectionate, verbally affectionate and let them know that they're loved and wanted" noted that achieving this in the context of adolescence, often proved difficult. Highlighting the need for a mother to adapt her approach to accommodate children's changing developmental needs, she suggested it was important for mothers to find a less direct way of demonstrating love and affection. Explaining this, she reported that "as they get older…they don't want your physical affection except perhaps on their terms". Leigh affirmed that, in order to be a good mother in the adolescent stage, it was important to adapt the maternal approach to this to "a minimal sort of thing that they find acceptable" *(Leigh, Participant 2, 28/12/00).*

Many participants presented the adolescent years of mothering as a highly complex phase that significantly compounded the requirements of being a good mother. Several women affirmed the need for a great deal more patience and understanding. Discussing the difficulties this often presented, Jackie noted the importance of finding a balance between being a good mother and

building a friendship with your child. Acknowledging the difficulties in this, she added, "there's a very fine line there…that's one of the hardest things to do and I don't think you even recognise it until much later on" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01).*

Deanna described this as a need to counterbalance the capacity to " be supportive" with a "non-intrusive approach" *(Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01).* Crystal suggested that being a good mother during the adolescent years, requires a degree of equilibrium between being "a friendly mother" and maintaining "a bit of status there as a mother all the time" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).* Deanna clarified that "when they're older, you have to have a lot of patience…because it's a time when they're testing boundaries and pushing limits and trying things" *(Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01).*

Several women concurred with this view, affirming the importance of becoming increasingly tolerant towards children's changing personalities and behaviours. Often discussed in terms of a need for increased empathy and understanding, many respondents acknowledged that achieving this consistently often proved very difficult in reality. While most participants cited the importance of developing a relationship akin to friendship with their adolescent children as an important aspect of good mothering, a number described substantial difficulty maintaining an appropriate balance between maternal protection and guidance amidst their children's increased strivings towards independence.

Again, there was considerable indication that this often entailed considerable suppression of one's own viewpoint. Amidst a continued emphasis on the need for a good mother to demonstrate unfailing empathy and sensitivity towards children's developmental evolution, several women reported that increased exposure to the world outside the home substantially influenced children's views, ideas and emerging identities. A number of mothers reported feeling confused by these changes. Deb's account, in particular, highlights the complexities of ensuring protection and guidance of children whilst still allowing appropriate levels of independence. This was an experience affirmed by a high proportion of the mothers in this study.

> When they were small I knew how to be nurturing…there comes a time where they stop listening and I think that's the time it starts to change because you've got to be allowing them to make decisions for themselves, allowing them to make mistakes and that's the hardest time" *(Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).*

Karla noted similar difficulties being a good mother in the adolescent years. While she acknowledged that developmental changes are attributable to a normative process, she reported considerable frustration adjusting to this. "I know some of it is probably normal but as they get older, you just get all confused. I'm not sure which way to go sometimes" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).* Jean described this more bluntly, stressing the need for a good mother to "know when to put your bit in, to know when to keep your mouth shut and let them think things out for themselves a bit" *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01).*

There was considerable agreement amongst all participants that, irrespective of the ages of children, a consistent approach is a central component of being a good mother. While most expressed difficulty adapting their maternal approach to the variable demands and sometimes inconsistent needs of their developing children, it was the relative metamorphosis in many previously close mother-daughter relationships that appeared most difficult for mothers to accept. Amidst the commonly-expressed view that a good mother exhibits a high degree of empathy and patience, there was significant suggestion that this was immensely difficult to consistently achieve in practice.

Most participants expressed surprise at the degree to which their relationships with their children were affected by some of the issues arising during the adolescent years. Describing relational dynamics, in many cases vastly different than those consistently perceived in the early childhood years, several women acknowledged a strong sense of loss. In a context of good mothering substantially dominated by notions of unconditional love and understanding, it was clear that many participants initially made sense of these changes through a reflective process related to their own perceived maternal inadequacies.

While developmental changes may have represented an extension of the subjective world for their children, all but one participant (Cynthia) experienced this as a contraction of the previously very strong sense of intimacy they had forged with their daughters. Granted, some acknowledged facing similar issues with sons but a substantial number described the perceived diminishment of emotional connection with daughters as particularly confronting.

Maternal Experience and the Mother-Daughter Relationship

Most of the women involved in this study reported that the mother-daughter relationship held special significance for them. Making sense of changing relationships with their adolescent daughters brought many face-to-face with preconceived ideas about the type of relationship they had hoped to develop with them. Several women acknowledged having expected a continuing feeling of intrinsic connection, and a consistent level of intimacy would arise from a shared female, and often, somewhat symbiotic notion of female identity.

Leigh, who appeared somewhat resigned to a significantly less close relationship with her daughter than she had hoped for, stated "I'd hoped she'd be a little clone of me…she's anything but" *(Leigh, Participant 2, 28/12/00).* Alicia recalled that she had always wanted a daughter because "I thought I would perhaps have some intuition, or some understanding about how I'd raise a daughter, perhaps because I'm a girl". *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).* Crystal reported feeling quite affronted when eldest daughter "Lia turned around the other day and said oh God, I'll never be you". She recalls thinking, " what do you mean you'll never be me? You are half me" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

More than half of the participants expressed surprise at the extent to which their daughter's personalities appeared to change over the course of time. A number cited the first two years following puberty, as a time in which their daughters' characters and temperaments seemed highly inconsistent with both their previous perceptions of their daughters, and the mother-daughter relationship they had grown used to. While a wide variety of experiences and circumstances were reported as contributing factors, most reported their daughters exhibiting strong signs of emotional withdrawal. Many reported a relative censorship of intimacy by daughters that was often experienced as a significant and confusing loss of relationship.

Leigh reported that "what I really, really wanted most from having a daughter" was the opportunity to "have with my daughter what I didn't have with my Mum" *(Leigh, Participant 2, 28/12/00).* Recalling that prior to only-daughter Penny becoming a teenager "there was more connection between us…I was more important to her" there is considerable indication that Leigh has struggled to identify why the relationship she had anticipated would continue to grow between herself and Penny has not been realised. Initially, Leigh suggests, personality differences have played a strong role. "If she had been very much like me in character and temperament then…I might have found it satisfying". In the end, however, she proposes that it was her own

idealised view of the mother-daughter relationship and "my false expectations" that predominantly compounded the relational difficulties between herself and Penny.

Despite some recognition that her daughter is also aware that their relationship has changed considerably, Leigh is adamant that that it is not appropriate to discuss such issues with Penny because "it would be like saying well, I'm really disappointed that you're not the person I wanted you to be". While it is clear that she is trying to protect her daughter in some way, it also appears that in conspiring to do so, relational resolution between Leigh and Penny is somewhat hampered by this.

While Leigh reports strong desire to improve the relationship between herself and her daughter, there is significant indication that her faith regarding this is kept in check. Despite her resignation and proffered belief that "I don't think we'll ever have a close relationship" it is clear she holds herself primarily responsible for maintaining a positive relationship with Penny. "I need to consolidate what little is there and build on that so that I don't end up losing her altogether" *(Leigh, Participant 2, 28/12/00).*

Numerous participants reported changes in their daughters' temperaments. This appeared to be particularly common in daughters during the early to middle teenage years. In some instances, participants connected observed changes to their daughter's respective transitions to secondary school. Several remarked that the dissimilarity between the child they had raised, and the young woman now presenting, was akin to a major personality change. Anna reported feeling "extremely close" to daughter Emma in the childhood years. She recalls feeling "stunned" when Emma became increasingly moody, defiant and emotionally distant, suggesting that Emma's transition from a small primary school to a much larger, secondary school was a prime factor in this. While this circumstance only lasted a few months, she recalls "thinking this is not my daughter" and wondering "is this the way it's going to be forever?"

Anna remarked that at the time, she felt like she was "losing Emma". She recalls that, as a mother, she felt responsible for finding a way to "get through and help her [Emma] out of it". As part of this process, Anna increased her efforts increasing her efforts to "find out what was going on with her [Emma]". This, however, only seemed to exacerbate her daughter's emotional withdrawal. Anna's central concern was that "I'd lost touch with her. It didn't matter what I did or said" *(Anna, Participant 4, 23/2/01).*

Two women, Sandra and Deb, found themselves facing circumstances with their daughters that were extremely personally challenging. Both participants identified substantial change in their daughters' personalities in the first two years of commencing secondary school. Sandra, a sole parent, appeared unsure about the extent to which she could rightfully discuss her individual circumstances in detail, asking, "Am I allowed to talk about that?" Reassured that the anonymity of both herself and her daughter would be maintained, she became more articulate, describing how, in an apparent attempt to "impress her so-called friends" daughter Brianna ran up an interest-bearing credit card debt of some $6,000 on Sandra's account.

Three years on since the incident, Sandra acknowledges that she continues to hold resentment towards Brianna because of "the situation she's put me in and the work I've had to do to get us out of it" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00)*. She continues to find it difficult coming to terms with her daughter's actions, stating, "I didn't ever expect one of my kids to treat me like that". Despite acknowledgement of her daughter's wrongdoing, however, she suggests that her own actions may have contributed to the situation. "Oh look, maybe if I had seen who she was hanging around with I could have put a stop to that earlier so you know, we wouldn't have ended up where we ended up" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00)*.

Sandra appears despondent about her chances of building a more positive relationship with Brianna in the future. She expresses considerable cynicism about this, that is applied to the relational context she has with each of her children. Normalising this to some extent, Sandra describes the ideal she once held in dream-like fashion:

> Look, I think everybody thinks they're gonna have a little princess that is gonna be such a good little girl and then you wake up…I don't think it matters how much of yourself that you give to any one of them, they'll never be satisfied and you'll never be satisfied. Always someone loses" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00)*.

Deb recalled that the changes in her daughter's personality that occurred "after she turned fourteen" were totally unexpected. While she recognised that formal separation from her daughter's father a year prior played some part, Deb has struggled to come to terms with living with a daughter so starkly different from the one she had known. Sounding apologetic, as though her views were somehow inappropriate, she says:

I know this might sound terrible but with my friends at work I nicknamed her Sibyl [reference to film based on woman with diagnosis of multiple personality disorder] because I was never quite sure which one was going to be home…the nice caring Kristine who would cook a meal or the one who would just attack you as soon as you walked through the door *(Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).*

Some four months prior to the interview, following one particularly challenging incident in which her daughter became physically abusive towards her, Deb came to the realisation that her daughter was "not even meeting me part way so I had to let go". This proved to be the catalyst for Deb's re-evaluation of long-held perceptions of motherhood and family. Recalling that for the whole of Kristine's childhood she had done "everything physically possible to be what I thought was a good mother" she reported feeling as though "it was being thrown in my face". In some respects, it appears that for Deb, the process of 'letting go" was as much about relinquishing the dream of a close mother-daughter relationship as it was about releasing herself from total responsibility for "fixing it".

While the circumstances experienced by both Sandra and Deb may well be outside the 'norm' there was substantial indication that many of the women participating in this study experienced difficulty coming to terms with mother-daughter relationships vastly different from those they hoped to achieve. Many reported that the relational change between themselves and their daughters was totally unexpected and often experienced as a significant loss.

Karla says she has become increasingly disappointed with the relationship between herself and daughter Claire over the last twelve months. Prior to that time, she says, "we were a lot more like friends". While she is concerned about relational changes, she has also been surprised by some of the general changes she has observed in her daughter's behaviour. "I didn't think Claire would ever become quite so rebellious…and she's done a lot of really stupid things like trying to run away from home and she's got a really rotten boyfriend at the moment". She reports constantly worrying about Claire and suggests that because she has always tried her "best to be a good mother…I've been shocked by some of the things she's done. I always thought bad mothers had kids who were bad not good mothers" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).*

She finds it particularly difficult to deal with the constant conflict that has surrounded their relationship because "I feel like we're losing the relationship we had". Hardest of all for Karla, has been "the hurtfulness, the things they say to you, yeah, that's got to be the hardest". While

she reports that she has tried to constructively discuss issues with her daughter, it has tended to cause more conflict. She avoids this now, and appears to have resigned herself to the current state of affairs, stating, "I'd rather stay out of her way, that way we don't fight" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).*

Alicia reported that her daughter Celia, previously a very physically affectionate and open person, has shown increasing reluctance to confide in her and become "really hidden about things". She has struggled to deal with Celia's changing moods, and suggests that her own tendency to "always try and fix things so everyone's happy" often appears to exacerbate issues. Alicia acknowledges having come to expect that her daughter no longer confides in her and reports feeling "quite shocked" when Celia does "actually reluctantly acknowledge things". However, there is also strong indication that it is not Celia's acknowledgement that 'shocks' her but the fact that as a mother, she "didn't realise she felt so sad and I can't believe I didn't notice" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).*

Like Leigh, (Participant 2), Alicia has found it difficult to accept that her daughter is "different to me and I can't make her be the way I want her to be". She continues to hold herself primarily responsible for building a more positive relationship with Celia, and credits this as "a part of what kept me going". Alicia's account demonstrated substantial reflection on her own actions as likely causal factors inhibiting a more deeply connected mother-daughter relationship. She wonders if perhaps Celia has "rebelled more because of me trying to force my own beliefs" adding, "I shouldn't be imposing heavy kind of values on her but I think I do, unintentionally" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).*

Crystal reported that prior to eldest daughter Lia becoming a teenager, "we were closer…now she keeps a lot to herself". Reporting difficulty adjusting to this, she describes it as "a real wrench". She identifies a similar pattern emerging with twin daughters Karen and Julia, and acknowledges often struggling to maintain open patterns of communication with them. While this is due in part to "the way they exclude me…because they all know what's going on" she suggests that, as a mother of five children, this is also compounded by the difficulty of finding "one-on-one time with them when we can really talk". Over time, Crystal says, she has developed strategies to address the fact that they "confide in me less and less as they get older…you know, I do the divide and conquer thing, I'll say, oh your sister seems upset, do you know what's wrong with her?" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

Jean also reported that her daughter Marla has become "increasingly closed towards me". She describes this as "a change in her personality that has been a total change". It is evident that Jean has difficulty finding the words to make sense of this. She recalls "she was just so easygoing and happy and everyone was lovely, you know, and then she changed into this, oh you know". Jean finds it difficult to understand Marla's reluctance to share her feelings. She says that as a mother, she "can feel it inside" when "there's things going on" and reports times when her daughter's reluctance to tell "me stuff like she used to…was sending me crazy".

Like Crystal, Jean has responded to this by developing strategies to "find out what's going on". She reports using time spent driving her daughter to and from places as a useful way to "have deep talks with them about their life and their feelings" because "in the car there is no eye contact and it comes across very casual". For Jean, one of the greatest adjustments she has face in her relationship with her daughter came shortly after Marla entered puberty. Coping with "the change in her personality" because "she was such a pleasant, such a beautiful girl from birth" has often proved a formidable task and Jean recalls numerous occasions "where I just wanted to wring her neck *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01).*

Lynda has also experienced difficulty "adjusting to the change in [daughter] Emily". Reporting that Emily was "sixteen before she got her period" she found the two years prior to that extremely challenging because "she was so moody and horrible". Reflecting on Emily's childhood, Lynda says she sometimes feels "a lot of sadness about it, a lot of sort of losing that little kid you had and you look back at the pictures and you think, ohhh". Highly conscious of the fact that as her children have grown older, she wonders if the significant hours she has invested in her career have "taken their toll". She suggests that perhaps if she had "worked fewer hours and put a lot more time and energy into them" [daughter and son] a closer relationship might have resulted. While she acknowledges that Emily seems to have "moved past all that adolescent angst stuff now" she recalls significant difficulty coping with a mother-daughter relationship substantially different from the one established in the early childhood years. "It was so hard…you've become their friend and then you seem to become the enemy" *(Lynda, Participant 12, 27/7/01).*

Deanna has not lived with her daughter Deirdre, since she was twelve years old. Explaining the reasons for this arrangement, she explains that following the sudden death of her partner, "I wasn't really well enough to have the children…I wanted to protect my daughter from seeing her

mother fall in a heap" *(Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01).* While this was viewed as a temporary arrangement at the time, she still has trouble coming to terms with the situation. She recalls numerous occasions when she felt she had "lost every reason I ever had to live…the children that I'd devoted my life to".

While she acknowledges that the current relationship between herself and Deirdre is "quite comfortable, relaxed and pleasant," she suggests that it is the absence of conflict that has most impacted on their relationship. Being removed "from the day-to-day battles" Deanna explains, means her children "don't really know me and they don't open up much to me". While she is pleased that confrontation has not been a primary factor in their relationship, she feels certain it has made some contribution to us having "no real sense of who each other is".

While the personal circumstances surrounding Deanna's life are considerably different to those of other participants, she reports that despite spending regular time together, her daughter has "kept a bit of a distance in some ways" and describes frustrations similar to those reported by other participants. Deanna describes a huge sense of loss because "there's a whole part of her life that I don't know anything about" and wonders if "not living with Deirdre" has been a causal factor. Despite her concerns, she suggests that both she and Deirdre have acted, and continue to act, as silent co-conspirators in degree of emotional distance maintained between them. "I don't ask questions and she doesn't volunteer information…it's a way of protecting each other's space".

Deanna acknowledges a strong desire to become "more real" to Deirdre and hopes that in time, this will result in the development of a "relationship on a less superficial level". Her relative exclusion from her Deirdre's life, both residentially and emotionally, Deanna suggests, has sometimes made "it difficult to be a good Mum". Her major concern now, is to build a more genuine relationship, one in which her daughter knows that "it's human to have feelings of disappointment and anger and everything else". *Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01).*

While each of the mothers described in this section reported difficulty adjusting to the often very different behavioural patterns that manifested in the adolescent years, two women (Jackie and Cynthia) showed some exception. Jackie reported that she had "never had any problems with daughter Kym, describing her as "my best friend" and "more of a soulmate" and referring to Kym's teenage years as "perfect". Although she acknowledges experiencing occasional

frustration because "Kym doesn't always want to tell me what's going on in her life" she does not view this as problematic.

Jackie credits raising Kym in an era in which women have greater choice about relationships and sexuality has helped her to "be more open-minded than I was with my other daughters". Reporting that her relationship with her two eldest daughters (Barbara, 44 and Jennifer, 42) has deteriorated in recent years and suggests the relationships she shares with her two youngest daughters Kym and Caroline have "helped me realise the difference". Describing them as "my life" she suggests that, perhaps unwittingly, they have been instrumental in helping her to make sense of her relationships with Barbara and Julia. "I only heard from them when they wanted something…I'm not going to be used".

It seems likely that this may have amplified the significant emotional investment she has made in her younger daughters. At the time of the interview, Jackie was making plans to move to another state. Despite Kym being 21, and having a life of her own, which included work and a large social network, Jackie said "I expect Kym will be moving with me". In the context of a largely "non-existent" relationship with Barbara and Jennifer, and a pending, geographically distant one from Caroline, she reported that with Kym she thinks "Hey, this kid might be here to stay" adding, "it's a good feeling" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01).*

Cynthia, while acknowledging that her daughter Carly (15) demonstrates increasing desire for "a fair bit more freedom" to spend time with school peers, she is reluctant to allow this much of the time. As a product of what Cynthia describes as a "very dysfunctional" family of origin, she is ever mindful that "you reap what you sow" and demonstrates a high level of personal emotional investment in mothering. She recalls being "devastated" when both her children commenced primary school and openly acknowledges that "they are what makes my life full". Pondering the time when her children will become young adults and build their own lives, she says "that's a bit sad for me, them growing up…I don't know if I'm gonna handle that too well" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).*

Cynthia's intense subjective investment in building a strong relationship with her children appears to have made her hesitant to accept relational changes between herself and her daughter as somewhat inevitable. She acknowledges consciously working to ensure her children stay connected within the family unit. Perhaps influenced by her professional training in social work,

she facilitates regular family meetings which the children "hate". Despite this, Cynthia is adamant they continue.

Cynthia acknowledges striving to maintain the *status quo*. She reports using various methods to counteract her daughter's increasing attempts to "push me away " and "spend more and more time with her peers". She acknowledges consciously choosing a secondary school a considerable distance away from their home suburb, so that if Carly wants to spend time with friends "it's up to me when I drive her or not". When Carly "doesn't want to talk about things" and attempts to emotionally withdraw from Cynthia, Cynthia sometimes responds by "jumping on her and tickling her to death". This, she says, is often very effective in "getting through the barriers" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).*

The thought of Carly having a life independent of her own, appears to greatly trouble Cynthia. She reported that in recent months, when Carly showed no desire "to go shopping with me…I absolutely hated it". Again, Cynthia approached the situation strategically, keen for a resolution on her own terms. "I don't say no, you've got to come. I try and say, oh but we can go and get something to eat while we're there". While Cynthia has an extremely busy life outside of motherhood that includes full-time work, part-time study and volunteer work, she appears to place significant emphasis on motherhood as her primary role. She likes to think her daughter does the same. "I'd actually be chuffed if she thought of me just as her Mum 'cause then that would say to me, I'm giving so much that they [daughter and son] don't even notice there's more to me" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).*

Factors Influencing Maternal Experience of Mothering Daughters

Each of the women in this study indicated that their own experience of being mothered, significantly influenced the way they approached motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. Perceptions of the extent to which they had viewed this as satisfactory, appeared to act as a stimulus for the mother-daughter relationship they strived to achieve. Amongst the group of twelve participants, less than half acknowledged their own experience of being mothered as satisfactory. In many instances, this appeared to substantially impact on the maternal capacity to accept relational change as part of a normative process. Many reported considerable personal struggle adjusting to a relationship with their daughters perceived as less intimate than the one they felt they had formed with their daughters in the childhood years.

Sandra, describing the relationship between herself and her mother as "not a very good one", recalled that her mother "has always just been this stern, strong woman". She reported that as a strong influence in her reluctance to confide in her mother in her own teenage years. "I would never talk to my Mum about anything. I still don't". Despite Sandra's perceptions of their relationship in predominantly negative terms, and her desire to take a different approach, she acknowledges finding this difficult to achieve in reality. Expressing her frustration with this, she says, "I think it's ingrained and the more you try to get away from it the more you fall back into it… something would happen and I would react the same way my mother would and that would just blow it all out of proportion" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00)*.

Referring to youngest daughter Ella as "someone who likes me for what I've done and who I am," Sandra appears to use this relationship as a 'measure' of her lack of closeness with eldest daughter Brianna. While Brianna's actions (as discussed previously) have played some part in this, Sandra also suggests that her perceived lack of positive relationship with her can be attributed to Brianna's expectations of "what a mother should be" adding, somewhat cynically, "I don't live up to that then …I'm not very good at it, am I?"

She appears to feel despondent about the future prospect of building a more satisfying relationship with Brianna and at times, despite reporting a good relationship with her other children, relates this more broadly to the relationship she has with each of them. "I always thought that my relationship with my kids would never be the same as my Mum's and mine was". Furthermore, there was strong indication that Sandra feels ill-equipped to adopt an approach different to that of her mother. She is regretful that no "matter how much I tried to change, the imprint was still there".

While Sandra made some acknowledgement that her mother had contributed positively to her life, it was clear that she had mixed feelings about this. "She taught me to be independent, she taught me to stand up for myself…but then again…as soon as I did it I got a whack in the head". Considered against Sandra's earlier comment on her own approach to mothering, it was evident that a similar pattern with her own children continued to dominate. "I taught them to stand up for themselves but when they do it with adults I get pissed" *(Sandra, Participant 1, 9/12/00)*.

Four women, in particular, were highly critical of their mothers' perceived lack of mothering skills. While all acknowledged the influence of their mothers, this was largely in terms of their perceptions of the qualities their mothers lacked. In recognising their own mother-daughter relationships as emotionally lacking, they appeared highly driven to ensure a more connected relationship with their own daughters. Leigh reported trying "to do the opposite of what she [her mother] did for me, basically". Qualifying this somewhat apologetically, she added, "not necessarily Mum herself but my perceptions of, you know, the relationship I had with her as a young child". While she says she is gradually coming to terms with her mother's "emotional limitations," Leigh is aware that the lack of closeness between them has significantly impacted on her desire for a more closely connected relationship with daughter Penny. "There's an awkwardness there a lot of the time and that almost feels at home…not having had the model there, well, how do you have a good relationship with your daughter?" *(Leigh, Participant 2, 28/12/00).*

Her hopes of achieving a satisfactory relationship with Penny appear to have dwindled over time. "I don't think we'll ever have a close relationship". Despite acknowledging that numerous factors may have influenced this, including Penny's "very different character and temperament" and "me remarrying and having another child", Leigh appears to hold herself predominantly responsible for the situation. "If I could raise her again from scratch knowing what I know now, I would try really, really hard to put that aside [her own expectations] and to focus on what she [Penny] needed".

Deb's perceptions of a good mother were also directly connected to her own experience of being mothered. She reported entering motherhood with a promise to herself that "I wasn't going to do what my Mum did". Based on the belief that if she was "always there for my children" the relationship that emerged would be "the kind of relationship that if she [daughter Kristine] had an issue or a problem she'd be able to come to me". Deb found that in reality, this did not prove viable *(Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).*

Describing her own mother as a woman who showed her little affection or interest, Deb placed strong emphasis on ensuring "strong lines of communication and a loving, personally supportive environment" for her children. She recalled making a point of telling "my kids I'm proud of them because I waited till I was 24 before my mother actually said those words to me". Amidst strong recollections of a lack of physical and emotional intimacy between herself and her mother, she

appears uncertain about the extent to which this is justified, adding, "I don't know if that was true or not but in my memory, I'd have to go to her for affection…it never just came" *(Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).*

Deb noted that achieving a "close, intimate relationship" with Kristine has been hampered by a multitude of personal circumstances over the past two years. Her decision to end her marriage, Deb believes, was instrumental in the significant divergence between her own views of a good mother and those of her daughter. She recalls experiencing a high degree of guilt about this and "feeling that I had to make up for the breakup and stuff". Suggesting that her daughter "picked up on that," she wonders if her own emotional vulnerability at the time allowed Kristine to "monopolise on the situation". She regrets not being "tougher and strong in my decisions" adding, "they need to see that and I didn't do it".

She now believes that the "perfect mother, happy family" she strived towards "is just not reality" and reports struggling to come to terms with "the loss of a dream". Having been subjected to significant emotional and, on occasion, physical abuse by Kristine, Deb acknowledges that relinquishment of the ideal mother-daughter relationship she hoped for involved "a sort of grieving period". She is saddened because she "couldn't fix it," but finds some consolation in the views of others. "I've been told by lots of people that I've done a lot more than any other person would have done in that situation".

Describing her current relationship with Kristine as "non-existent" she reports a "mixture of relief and regret about it all". Reflecting on her increased wellbeing since Kristine left to live with her father some months prior to the interview, she reports "I've put on 4 kilos [Deb now weighs 45 kilos]. I've stopped having anxiety attacks…I haven't got someone constantly telling me I'm no good. It was strange, it was like she was trying to take her father's place". She remains open to renewing the relationship and it is perhaps this, more than anything, that gives testimony to Deb's continuing desire to be "always there for my children".

This desire, however, is now more guarded, given the anguish she experienced at her daughter's treatment of her. It is clear that the ideals Deb reported having held, have received considerable modification. Having relinquished the likelihood of a mutually-caring connection with her daughter, Deb's view now appears more consistent with her circumstances. Discussing this, she acknowledges the current distance between herself and Kristine but is clear about personal

boundaries. "She's got her life and I've got mine. I'd like her to be a part of it but if she chooses not to be a positive part of it, no…never, not now" *(Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).*

Alicia, who also reported significant difficulty accepting a less than ideal mother-daughter relationship, spoke at length about the ways her mother had influenced her own approach to motherhood. While often affirming her mother's "good intentions" Alicia appeared regretful at the degree to which this had influenced her parenting style towards her adolescent children. Describing it as a constant struggle to avoid the "emotional kind of parenting style my mother had" she expressed frustration towards her personal tendency to replicate her mother's "very harsh" parenting style. Explaining that this was, in part, based on the fact that her mother "had schizophrenia" she reported finding it extremely difficult to do things differently a lot of the time" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).*

Citing the need for increased attention to disciplinary issues during the adolescent years, she reported finding this "a strain" and responding in a reactive manner, similar to her mother's. "I've actually been very physically hard on the kids at times which I didn't think I ever would be…I hit out a lot and that's something I feel really ashamed of". Often expressing a high degree of negativity towards her own mothering style, she reported difficulty providing a consistent approach to setting limits. While she was aware of this tendency, she suggested that this awareness sometimes further exacerbated inconsistency because "I can see myself doing it and I feel I have to counteract it…I don't want to be the baddy" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).*

While she acknowledged her partner as an active and consistent parent, she suggested that as a result of her mother's regular inability to "function properly [due to schizophrenia] when I was a child…I became very parentified from an early age". She believes that in taking on many of the day-to-day tasks of running a household from an early age, she has an overly-developed sense of responsibility to "always try and fix things so everyone's happy". Identifying this in terms of both a strength and a weakness, she says, "Part of it is the stuff in you that's from your parents that you feel is positive, that you want to continue and then there's the stuff that you try not to be like but you are like" *(Alicia, Participant 9, 16/6/01).* Despite her obvious awareness of some of the circumstantial factors that led to this tendency, it is clear that Alicia often experiences difficulty adopting an approach different to the one she has sought to avoid.

Karla described a similar disparity between intention and action. Reporting high hopes of developing a closer relationship with daughter Claire, than the one she had developed with her own mother, she stressed that she was "different to my mother…completely". Describing her mother as "old-fashioned…paranoid and embarrassed about everything", Karla reported that this had caused her to become "embarrassed about myself, to be so shy, to be worried about my own sexuality and to be ashamed of being me". As a result, Karla says, she has purposely striven to maintain an open approach to communication with daughter Claire. Amidst this, however, there was substantial indication that Karla uses perceptions of her adolescent relationship with her own mother as a reference point for her relationship with Claire.

Despite her intentions, she appears at a loss to explain the degree of recent change in her relationship with Claire (16). "Last year, it wasn't always perfect but it was a bit easier…we used to do a lot of stuff together". While she reports "a better relationship with my daughter than what I had with my Mum", it is clear that she is not satisfied with the current situation. Relating this to the difficulties she experienced with her own mother, she says, "I didn't think things were gonna be the same". Explaining this in more detail, Karla appears to feel a sense of helplessness as though the current relationship between herself and Claire is somehow inexplicable. "You don't ever think that's gonna happen to you" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).*

Recalling the lack of intimate disclosure that characterised Karla's relationship with her mother during adolescence, the issue of Claire confiding in her appears to hold complex implications for Karla. She worries because "she's [Claire] not telling me a lot of stuff now". Despite this, she appears unsure about whether she wants to hear what Claire has to say. On the one hand, Karla says she would "like her [Claire] to tell me all the things that are troubling her" at the same time, however, she acknowledges uncertainty about "whether you want to hear everything". Much of this seemed to be compounded by the expectations of Karla's second husband. Prior to Claire's reported recent rebellion, Karla "used to be the one to make all the decisions with the kids". Recently, however, Karla says that her husband has "sort of not been happy with some of the decisions [she has made] with Claire". Subsequently, she says, "now I have to check with him" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).*

Reporting that she feels like "meat in the sandwich" it is clear that Karla feels divided in her loyalties. While she credits Claire with "causing problems between my husband and I" she feels a sense of responsibility for this. Reflecting on the early years of their relationship, she recalls that

Claire "was really, really loud, high-pitched and very noisy. He used to tell her to shut up a lot which wasn't really nice". Despite recognising this, Karla reported feeling responsible to shelter her husband in an apparent effort to reduce potential conflict. She reported, in a somewhat reticent manner, that, "I probably started to say shut up to her a lot as well and try to keep her quiet and push her away a bit… just trying to keep him happy, I suppose". She regrets this now, she says, and wonders whether this has some link to Claire's apparently increasing reluctance to confide in her.

It is not surprising that Karla appears to feel disempowered. Her husband thinks she is "too soft" while daughter Claire "thinks that at the moment I only do what my husband says because I have to". She hopes, albeit a little uncertainly, that in time, "things will sort themselves out". While Karla's desire for a better relationship with Claire than she had with her own mother is clearly important to her, it is evident that, in the context of trying to meet the needs of all those around her, she struggles to achieve this. She has never discussed her own experience as a teenager with Claire but says, "I probably should at some stage". Clearly, however, there is significant risk of confrontation in opening up the lines of communication with her daughter.

While she acknowledges feelings of strong loss characterise her present relationship with Claire, it is not surprising that she prefers to avoid potentially conflictual issues. Despite taking some comfort in the relative peace that the increasing distance between herself and Claire brings to the present scenario, Karla reports not looking forward to the likely future time when Claire leaves home. Considered within the context of the current circumstances, she says, "I'll feel like I've lost a part of me. I'll hate it. As much as I think life will be easier I'll feel really quite upset" *(Karla, Participant 7, 9/4/01).*

As indicated by the accounts of many of the women involved in this study, past experience of feeling disconnected from one's own mother appears to hold significant implications for the present mother-daughter relationship. The accounts of Cynthia and Crystal suggest that the experience of being a mother can highlight the extent to which personal experience of feeling inadequately mothered is realised. Cynthia made regular reference to her mother leaving her, without prior discussion "when we were thirteen or something". She has difficulty coming to terms with this, and it clear that this fact continues to elicit strong emotion. "I think about that now and I think, fuck, she just left us with another guy" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).*

She remains highly driven to ensure that she maintains strong connections with her children and acknowledges that this has been a strong factor in her desire to invest significant time and energy meeting her children's needs. Referring to her approach to mothering, Cynthia acknowledges that if she does "everything opposite to her [mother]…I know I'm doing okay". While she chooses not to maintain contact with her own mother, it is clear that her mother's influence remains a dominant force. "One thing that informs me a fair bit, and again, that's because of the relationship I had with my Mum, is you have to put in the time. My Mum would never go out of her way where you know, many a time, you just bust your ass to go out of your way" *(Cynthia, Participant 5, 4/3/01).*

Crystal described her own mother's approach to mothering as "really harsh and judgmental". She believes this has had a huge impact on the way she has chosen to raise her children. Crystal reports that her sense of emotional disconnection from her own mother, has permeated her adult life constantly. While she has retained contact with her mother, she cites the fact that her mother "refused to talk to me for 4 years because I put my children in childcare" as a prompt that "really made me question where she was coming from as a mother". Crystal suggests that having experienced the impact of "the way she put me down all my life" has substantially influenced her desire not to become "estranged from my kids".

She struggles to come to terms with "less closeness in my relationship with them than there seemed to be when they were little". Appearing optimistic about the future, she reports a "firm belief," adding "I hope it's true" that in future years "that little person that I've guided so much…will be there again". Her significant emotional investment in mothering, makes her hesitant to think about the future too much. She recalls that when her son was leaving home "it nearly broke my heart". Knowing that her four daughters will likely follow suit at some point, she says, "I don't want to go there, I'm sort of in denial" *(Crystal, Participant 10, 23/6/01).*

Amongst the group of twelve participants, five women acknowledged that their mothers had been a positive influence in their lives. However, in all instances it was clear that, similar to those who felt inadequately mothered, their own experiences as a daughter provided a reflective stimulus. This appeared to result in substantial maternal efforts to avoid issues perceived as problematic in their own adolescent years. Jackie, while acknowledging that modelling "a lot of my own life on my mother" with her eldest three daughters "worked for me" reported reviewing this approach with youngest daughter Kym. While adamant that her mother provided a "good model of

motherhood" she reported that in more recent years, "I'm seeing how she did manipulate a lot of things" and has advised Kym "if I sound like my mother tell me" *(Jackie, Participant 3, 26/1/01).*

With hindsight, she suggests that the approach she modelled on her own mother "was too overprotective" adding, "I don't agree with it now". Indicating that raising Kym in an era with very different attitudes towards women has required her to adapt her approach considerably, she reported that this has been quite confronting at times. Recalling an instance in which she agreed with Kym's request to "have her boyfriend sleep the night" she acknowledged not feeling entirely comfortable with her decision, and needing to "block that out" *(Jackie, Participant 3,26/1/01).*

Anna identified her own mother as "my best friend" and "the be-all and end-all". While she cites her mother as a major influence in her life, she suggests that her mother's constant praise, "always telling me I was a good mother" made it difficult for her disclose problems to her mother. She is adamant that "I won't do that to my daughter so you're never that perfect mother". Reflecting on her own adolescence, she also recalled feeling smothered by her mother's tendency to "keep me wrapped up". While she is grateful for the sense of security and stability this brought to her life, she believes it has also had a negative impact on her development. "There are a lot of things that I'm just not game enough to do and I think it's because of the way, in all kindness, my Mum brought me up very sheltered and not used to going out and fighting for myself".

Anna clearly cherishes the relationship between herself and her mother – "she's my best friend and that's how I want it to be with Emma". However she is conscious that a somewhat co-dependent relationship between herself and her mother led to her mother having difficulties adapting to Anna leaving home. Recognising this as a problem for both her mother and herself, she remarks, "I don't want that and I don't want them [her own children] to be so dependent" *(Anna, Participant 4, 23/2/01).*

Deanna and her mother have a "very close relationship" and she reports both similarities and differences in the style of mothering adopted. Acknowledging that "it seems like it's flowed down from one generation to the next" she identifies that "we're both fairly quiet in our mothering. We're not the sort of mothers that jump up and down and say you should do this and you shouldn't do that". Describing herself as "much more broad minded than my mother…you weren't even allowed to say bum…you couldn't talk about sex or anything like that".

Deanna suggests that as a teenager, this led to her feeling unable to confide in her mother about intimate issues. She wonders if this has influenced her strong desire to encourage her children to feel free to discuss "everything with me". She regrets that this has not eventuated and while she acknowledges the role of circumstantial factors in this, she continues to try to alter "the pattern I had with my mother" (*Deanna, Participant 8, 19/5/01*).

Jean, who described her mother as "a very kind, caring person and quite rational about her mothering" shared an experience similar to Anna. While she acknowledged her mother's protectiveness towards her as a positive factor, she believes being "too sheltered" also made it difficult for her to "adjust to the realities of life". In Jean's case, she suggested that her mother had influenced her to be "too trusting" of the world, a situation that she attributes to her [Jean] being "raped as a teenager". *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01).* While she holds no malice towards her mother in this, she has consciously worked towards ensuring her children are aware of life, "warts and all," making a point of ensuring her children are not "naïve to what the world can be like".

Discussing the future, Jean reports that she looks forward to a time in which her children are less dependent. While she acknowledges that she hopes to travel then, she has a strong desire to maintain a role in their lives. She hopes that when they eventually do leave home, they will remember that "I'm completely dependent on their voice every few days, at least" *(Jean, Participant 11, 1/7/01).*

Lynda reported that becoming a mother has caused her to "look at bits of what I had and then maybe think, oh I want to do it differently". Acknowledging her own mother as "basically a good Mum" she is conscious that "the parenting my mother could offer was very limited". She suggests this led to a lack of confidence "when I was younger" and consequently, "I've really encouraged Emily to be independent…there's a whole lot of things I've wanted for her that I know weren't an opportunity for me".

Lynda suggests that she has achieved this, adding "I've really loved the fact that she's so much more confident than I ever was". Acknowledging that, in many respects, her own desires are fulfilled through her daughter's life, she is clear that her approach to mothering Emma is "like a second bite on the cherry…it's about self". Lynda is also mindful of her strong desire to build a better relationship with her own children "than I've ever had with my mother". She regrets that

her mother "was not very good at encouraging me" and consequently, has remained highly conscious of her daughter's perceived need to "have what she's done framed as being positive and rubber stamped by me" *(Lynda, Informant 12: 27/7/01).*

There is strong indication that Lynda's approach to mothering has also been significantly influenced by the professional arena in which she works. She acknowledges having "a lot of ideas and theories about parenting" but adds that in contrast to her views in the early years of mothering, she now believes that "the whole concept of maternal instinct is a load of crap". She believes that the most important element of being a good parent is to be "real and genuine". Conscious that she does not always manage to be "the kind of good mother I'd always like to be" she adds, "I haven't succeeded so well in Emily having a sense that her mother listens to her". Displaying some degree of self-judgement and a recognition of the tensions inherent in balancing family and career, she remarks, "I tend to think too much of my clients and I should have been thinking more about the needs of my family, particularly the kids".

She sees her maternal role as a continuing one in which Emily will "always need encouragement and acknowledgement and stuff from me". However, she displays mixed feelings about her children, acknowledging that there are times when "I want them to be gone but I also want to be able to see them and not like with my parents". Citing geographic distance as a factor impeding stronger connections with her own mother, she jokes that if her daughter "wants to move overseas, I'll burn the ticket". Central to this, is Lynda's desire for a relationship with Emily that "will keep getting stronger" *(Lynda, Informant 12, 27/7/01).*

 Clearly, each of the women in this study shared a strong desire to protect their daughters from experiences they perceived as negative. It is clear that most aspired to a model of relationship based on high ideals, many appeared to hold themselves entirely responsible for this, often neglecting to consider their daughters as equal partners in this process. While evident that numerous factors contributed to the complexities of their relationships, amidst the desire to be a 'good mother', there was significant indication that the need for unconditional love most of the women in this study sought to fulfil may sometimes have amplified the difficulties arising within the mother-adolescent daughter relationship. A more detailed discussion of the implications this presents is provided in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion of Results

Overview

The following chapter appraises the findings of this case study in the light of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Particular consideration is given to the primary research question and aims detailed in the introductory chapter. While it is acknowledged that this study is a small one, and in no way attributable to the broader population, the discussion presented herein supports the contention that despite widely divergent experiences, traditional ideals of the 'good mother' continue to dominate and influence contemporary maternal practice.

Maternal observations of some of the developmental and relational changes reported in participants' accounts of the mother-daughter relationship are also discussed in relation to the prevailing ideology of motherhood. This is followed by consideration of the likely implications the prevailing ideology of motherhood holds for the contemporary maternal experience of mothering adolescent daughters.

While it is acknowledged that developmental and relational change is also experienced in relation to sons, it is the maternal experience of mothering adolescent daughters that is the focus of this thesis. Notwithstanding the predominantly retrospective nature of the data arising from this case study, this discussion is by no means suggestive of an end point in the relational transition between respondents and their daughters.

As outlined in Chapter 3, Methodology, my experiences as both mother and daughter have been central in motivating this study. Where appropriate, my own recollections as a daughter and as a mother have been included. While this ostensibly breaks with the scientific tradition of objectivity, as the primary genesis for this thesis, due consideration is warranted. Furthermore, in keeping with the postmodern feminist emphasis on personal constructions of reality as a valid research domain (Rich, 1986; Viney, 1992; Lupton, 2000), such attention provides a further means of reflection and potential triangulation.

The Ideology of Motherhood

Despite significant socio-cultural change in recent decades, the assumption that women will become mothers, based on their biological capacity to do so, appears to have remained dominant. While the essentialist model of motherhood is not necessarily problematic in itself, ideological denial of alternative life options is potentially deleterious to women's personal growth and development. More particularly, it is the notion of motherhood as the primary function of women that is of concern here.

Certainly, there has been greater recognition in recent years that women have an inherent right to act as independent and autonomous beings. Integral to this is an understanding of the importance of choice in the realm of motherhood. Each of the twelve participants in this case study was born between 1939 and 1969. Accordingly, acknowledgement is made of the substantial cultural difference, and more particularly, variations in mainstream attitudes towards women that likely underpinned their lives. Despite this, all but one of the women in this study (Anna) acknowledged having made a presumption that they would become mothers.

As the results of this case study demonstrated, most participants reported that their respective transitions to motherhood did not result from a conscious consideration of alternative life choices. Amongst the group of twelve participants, only two indicated having made an intentional decision based on their respective desires for financial security (Anna) and career advancement (Lynda). Several described motherhood as something that had "happened" to them (Cynthia; Crystal; Jean). Others depicted motherhood as a natural state that followed falling in love and getting married (Jackie; Deanna). In effect, consistent with the findings of Wearing (1984), most of the women involved in this study expected to become mothers because they viewed motherhood as an inherent aspect of womanhood.

The accounts given reflect the prevalence of an idealised version of womanhood based predominantly on patriarchal tradition. Granted, several participants acknowledged that becoming a mother was something they had chosen to do, irrespective of whether pregnancy had been planned. However, in most instances where this was reported, there was also considerable indication that alternative life choices had not been considered. As Chodorow (1978) notes, despite increased control over matters related to childbearing, "women's mothering role has gained psychological and ideological significance, and has come increasingly to define women's lives" (p.4).

The unanticipated pregnancies of both Cynthia and Crystal demonstrate that despite vehement family arguments against their respective early entries into motherhood, the available alternatives of abortion and/or adoption were not explored. There is thus some indication that the historic practice of adoption that permeated the world of single mothers in earlier decades (Swain & Howe, 1995) has lost its influence. Indeed, while the arguments against the legitimisation of contraception and abortion that prevailed in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries appear largely silenced in the modern world, traditional aspects of the religious morality surrounding motherhood retain some influence in contemporary society.

I have vivid memories of attending a Victorian, Catholic, maternity hospital in 1978, as an unmarried (but partnered) pregnant, nineteen-year-old. My attendance at their pre-natal clinic resulted in questions being asked, on more than one occasion, as to whether adoption had been considered. While I had not consciously made a decision to have a child, I looked forward to the experience of motherhood. Such suggestions, however well-meaning, were not welcomed and appear to have been based on my presentation as an unmarried mother. While some years have elapsed since this experience, the religious ideals of traditional Catholicism continue to negate abortion, contraception and unmarried motherhood as valid life choices.

Notwithstanding acknowledgement of women's agency in the process of becoming a mother, some consideration of the continuing, largely universal, association between womanhood and motherhood is indicated. The results of this case study support the contention that motherhood continues to be commonly viewed as a "structured rite of passage in the transformation of female identity" (McMahon, 1995, p.274). Furthermore, there is considerable suggestion that internalised notions of gender-role conformity remain ideologically dominant.

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that a new ideological model of motherhood has emerged in recent decades. As Lupton (2000) points out, "women with children have been encouraged to construct their subjectivities increasingly through activities in the 'public' domain" (p.50). Implicit in this model is a woman who is successfully able to combine motherhood and professional career demands, irrespective of marital status. While this may well be true, in the context of the primacy that continues to be accorded to the maternal role, this model holds substantive implications for women's wellbeing. Several of the women in this case study spoke

of the difficulties involved in balancing the often competing roles of mother, employee and tertiary student (Sandra; Cynthia: Crystal).

Others reported that, despite a desire to return to study, they had decided to wait until their children had left home (Leigh; Alicia; Jean). In two instances, (Leigh and Alicia), younger children were a contributing factor in this decision. Several other mothers noted that their work commitments were often disrupted by telephone calls from their daughters related to minor matters (Sandra; Anna; Cynthia; Crystal). This highlights the potential extent to which women may curtail career advancement in favour of their commitment to motherhood. In all instances, primary emphasis appeared to be placed on the maternal role.

Certainly, the independent model of motherhood that has emerged (Richards, 1985; Lupton & Barclay, 1997) is more consistent with the diversity of the postmodern context. While this is acknowledged, there is strong suggestion that this model involves women taking on a dual burden of responsibility. Under such terms, mothers are faced with the demands of securing success in the workplace through a substantial investment of time, attention and energy before returning home to a similar routine (Richards, 1994). While this may well hold significant reward in terms of personal self-fulfillment, it has been argued that such a model simply reflects a revised configuration of "essential motherhood" (Woodward, 1997, p.271).

Much of the feminist literature cited highlights women's capacity for, and right to, an independent and autonomous identity. However, the findings of this case study support the contention that despite significant socio-cultural change in recent decades, women remain the primary carers of children (Richards, 1994; Lupton, 2000). Irrespective of other roles in their lives, the notion of mothers being able to set aside these presumably secondary roles when their children need them, remains prevalent (Phillips, 1991).

Certainly, integral paternal involvement in the lives of children is now more commonplace (White, 1994; Lupton & Barclay, 1997). However, this appears to be in the minority. Women remain positioned, physically and emotionally, as the centrally-important figure in their children's lives (Larson & Richards, 1994; Hays, 1998; Allen & Hawkins 1999; Arendell, 2000).

Some aspects of this may be related to the lack of family-friendly policies in public and private sector employment. That aside, it is perhaps the ideology surrounding motherhood that is most

influential in reproducing such conditions. Numerous studies have indicated that, irrespective of the individual childcare practices adopted in private domiciles, women feel more responsible for managing the demands of children (Wearing, 1984; Everingham, 1994; McMahon, 1995; Allen & Hawkins, 1999). The accounts given by the women involved in this case study support the view that, as primary carers of their children, mothers feel a sense of "constant responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of another" that potentially undermines autonomous existence (Lupton, 2000; p.60).

The assumption that because mothers are women, they possess a genetic predisposition for the nurturance and emotional bonding deemed necessary to children's welfare (Tiger & Fox, 1972; Haralambos, van Krieken, Smith & Holborn, 1996), is essentially based on a socially-constructed, idealised version of womanhood. More likely, any monopoly we might have in this regard, is a direct result of the historic immersion in domesticity that has encouraged this. Rich (1976) and others (Ruddick, 1994; Hays, 1996) suggest that as women, "we learn, often through painful self-discipline and self-cauterization, those qualities which are supposed to be 'innate' in us: patience, self-sacrifice, the willingness to repeat endlessly the small, routine chores of socializing a human being" (p.19).

Wearing (1984) and Lupton (2000) observed that first-time mothers, in particular, experience significant difficulties adjusting to the responsibilities attributed to being a good mother. The narratives of the women involved in this case study demonstrated a high degree of uniformity with this contention. Significant emphasis was placed on the need for a good mother to be wholly-committed to her offspring. In effect, most accounts supported the prevailing twentieth-century, child-centred approach deemed a critical component of good mothering (Wearing, 1984; Bassin, 1994; Hays, 1996; Lupton, 2000).

Subjective assimilation of this ideology results in a strongly internalised philosophy of mothering that accentuates and affirms the need for a good mother to set aside her own needs and desires. As Chodorow (1978) and others note (Maushart, 1997; Lupton, 2000), this model is reproduced via the social conditions of mothering and is instrumental in reinforcing idealised motherhood as a natural state.

As demonstrated in the preceding literature review, substantial historic emphasis has been placed on the self-sacrificial qualities required of women in order to be a good mother. The presumed

maternal capacity for nurturance has often denoted mothers as somewhat omniscient beings in the realms of childcare (Miles, 1989; Leira & Krips, 1993; Benjamin, 1994). Much of this is based on the presumption of a biologically-driven maternal instinct (Haralambos, van Krieken, Smith & Holborn, 1996). Indeed, several of the mothers in this study referred to the notion of maternal instinct and indicated having made some presumption that this would assist them to be a good mother (Jackie; Anna; Lynda).

Participants' conceptualisations of a good mother demonstrated central concern with intangible characteristics that emphasised maternal empathy, unswerving love and devotion and often, the regulation of their own emotions in deference to the needs of children. Over the course of participants' interviews, there was considerable suggestion that, at some time or another, maintaining these standards proved complex. Amidst perceived notions of a good mother as something of a saint-like figure, several reported feelings of guilt and self-blame occurred after they experienced difficulty coping with the demands of the early childhood years (Anna; Deanna; Alicia).

This feeling of being unable to cope supports Pearson's (1997) contention that the ideology of the good mother is potentially deleterious to both mothers and children. As Anna (Participant 4) noted, even when support is readily available, there is a disinclination to access this because a good mother is supposed to be able to cope. Deanna (Participant 8) also indicated personal difficulties coping with the seemingly unsatiable demands of a crying baby sometimes required her to leave her (then infant) child unattended.

The depiction of the good mother discussed herein has predominantly been forged, and reinforced, in the context of early childhood. While not disputing the validity of a child-centred approach in the early years, there is considerable indication that this unitary model of maternal excellence leaves no room for error. Therein, it is difficult for mothers to acknowledge that post-birth adjustment difficulties. Measured against the proffered ideals of good mothering, there appears to be only one alternative model.

Karla (Participant 7) gave significant suggestion that the good mother/bad mother dichotomy is alive and well. While the 'good-enough-mother' has received some consideration (Winnicott, 1965), there is considerable indication that the doctrine of dualism inherent in historical

paradigms surrounding motherhood remains a significant force (Wearing, 1984; Bassin, Honey & Kaplan, 1994; Hays, 1996; Lupton, 2000).

Given the lack of attention paid to the maternal experience of mothering in later years (Ryff & Seltzer, 1996), precedents specifically related to maternal perspectives of good mothering in the adolescent years have not, to the author's knowledge, been established. However, in the context of this case study, there was substantial accord that while the qualities required of a good mother remained static in the adolescent years, the need for maternal patience and understanding expanded considerably. Indeed, in the context of adolescence, and more particularly, mother-adolescent daughter relationships, idealised notions often proved problematic. Given the emphasis placed on qualitative measures of self-sacrifice in the early childhood years, it appears that both mothers and their daughters struggle with identity issues in a context largely demanding maternal excellence.

Amongst the group of twelve women interviewed, it was evident that the traditional ideals of motherhood discussed in the literature review, maintained their influence in later years. While most participants acknowledged that some of the practical, domestic tasks associated with being a good mother in the early childhood years became less important, the intangible attributes of unswerving maternal devotion, attention and affection appeared subject to considerable pressure in the adolescent years. In the absence of an alternative, perhaps more appropriate, model of motherhood, a high proportion of the women in this study found themselves face-to-face with a reality considerably divergent from the one they had anticipated.

In the context of an ideology requiring substantial maternal submission, it is not surprising that many participants struggled to come to terms with this. Given the implications of the numerous admonitions targeting mothers over the past century, it is unlikely any mother would want to be responsible for inflicting the long-lasting damage to children that appears to be a strong feature of the twentieth-century version of good mothering (Eyer, 1992; Malamud-Smith, 2003). This undoubtedly provides a powerful deterrent against non-submission. Karla's account perhaps best demonstrates the feelings of attachment to idealised motherhood demonstrated by many of the mothers in this study. "I felt that bad mothers had kids who were bad…not good mothers".

The Mother-Adolescent Daughter Relationship

Participants' accounts often described observed developmental changes in their daughters as a gradual progression. Most reported that while the personal characteristics of sons appeared to remain relatively constant, adolescent daughters often presented with character traits highly inconsistent with the child-daughter of yesteryear (Sandra; Leigh; Anna; Alicia, Karla, Crystal; Jean; Lynda). My own experience, as mother of both a daughter and a son, has also been consistent with this. While such change was often attributed to normative adolescent development, several participants recounted intense personal struggle coming to terms with relational change. Indeed, several mothers equated perceived changes in their daughters' personalities with the experience of living with a different person (Anna; Deb; Jean).

Much of the psychoanalytic discourse discussed suggests that the adolescent development of daughters is inherently complex, because mothers, subconsciously or otherwise, attempt to deter their daughters' biological drives towards independence (Freud, 1958; Balint, 1954; Flaake, 1993). Indeed, some have argued that disconnection of mother-daughter bonds is fundamental to the establishment of female adult identity (Blos, 1967). Overly-attached mothers, in particular, have been deemed a major instigator of developmental difficulties in daughters' procurement of an autonomous sense of self (de Beauvoir, 1953/1982; Friday, 1977; Chodorow, 1978; Phillips, 1991).

While there are no doubt some instances where this dynamic is evident, much of this research is underpinned by clinical findings (Deutsch, 1944) or Attachment Theory (Eyer, 1992; Hays, 1998). Both appear to give little credence to maternal experience or individual circumstances. In the context of this study, with perhaps one exception (Cynthia), participants gave no indication of particular theoretical opposition to their daughters' increasing desire for autonomy and independence. Indeed, several reported looking forward to the decreased responsibility and increased personal freedom they envisaged this may bring.

The primary concern, for most of the women involved in this study, was the degree to which their relationships with their daughters appeared to change. Consistent with Larson & Richards's (1994) study, many reported that, to varying degrees, their daughters exhibited a high degree of emotional withdrawal from the previously-established, mother-child relationship. This often manifested in the form of decreased intimacy resulting from an increase in conflict and a

reduction of intimate disclosure. Amidst adolescent daughters' changing, and sometimes, apparently contradictory emotional needs, maternal demonstration of unconditional and unambivalent love deemed central to children's welfare (Hays, 1996), proved difficult.

Strong views about the importance of a good mother being understanding of her children's needs appeared to provide ideological substantiation for a self-sacrificial approach requiring considerable adjustment of previously-established maternal practice. Many mothers reported that, in the context of the decreased importance daughters appeared to place on the mother-daughter relationship, they felt almost entirely responsible for maintaining a closely connected relationship with their daughters.

The sometimes stark contradiction between the daughter they had grown used to, and the daughter presenting in adolescence, appeared to stimulate a period of reflection for many participants. While often acknowledged as normative adolescent patterns of behaviour, there was substantial indication that most had, at some time, felt compelled to wonder if perhaps they were in some way to blame for what was often perceived as a significantly-deteriorated relationship (Sandra; Leigh; Anna; Deb; Karla; Alicia; Jean; Lynda). This appeared to be the case, even in instances where emotional disengagement by daughters was not prolonged (Anna; Jean; Lynda).

Many women indicated substantial difficulty comprehending the circumstances of their daughters' perceived emotional withdrawal from the established mother-daughter relationship. In many instances, the mothers in this study described as a somewhat overwhelming sense of loss. Several of the studies reviewed, reported that adolescent girls, in particular, possess a biological drive towards conflict that is designed to facilitate the process of identity development (Apter, 1990; La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990; Kenemore & Spira, 1996). Fischer (1986) described this as a common adolescent-daughter strategy aimed at disengagement of established bonds. Considered in the context of the present study, and the reports by several participants that attempts to re-engage their daughters often led to increased conflict, this contention appears to be supported.

The extent to which previously-established relationships with daughters changed in the adolescent period proved confronting for many participants. Internalised understandings of both existing and potential future relationships between themselves and their daughters, often appeared in stark contradiction to the anticipated realities of maternal experience. To the writer's knowledge, while some attention has been given to the meaning mothers attach to motherhood,

minimal consideration has been given to the potential 'pay-off' mothers envisage may come through consistent commitment to the ideals of being a good mother.

This is perhaps because the practice of doing so is inherently inconsistent with the prevailing ideology of motherhood. The common depiction is that the considerable investment being a good mother entails is made meaningful by the knowledge that maternal efforts are in the best interests of children. Further, the relative disregard of self demanded of a good mother, appears to receive substantial reinforcement from the ideal of an ongoing, consistently positive, mother-daughter relationship (Gilligan, 1982).

The results of this case study suggest that, in instances where the mother-daughter relationship has been subject to consistently high degrees of negative interaction, Gilligan's account may well merit further examination. Within a context of motherhood demanding unconditional love and acceptance, most participants reported feeling largely responsible to adapt themselves to daughters' changing needs. While these needs were sometimes unexpected, and at times difficult to validate, the primary concern expressed by the mothers in this study related to the perceived loss of positive relationship. Consistent with Apter's (1990) observation, it was the conflict with daughters, "not the increasing individuation" (p.110) that appeared greatest cause for concern.

It seems salient at this point to share some of my own observations, as both a daughter and mother. I have strong recollections of my teenage years being characterised by extreme relational difficulties between myself and my mother. While a range of somewhat sad, personal circumstances contributed to this, it is my retrospective belief that as my adolescent propensity to disengage myself from my mother expanded, so too did my perception of her increasing powerlessness over, and personal indifference towards me. Without the context of evidence to the contrary, I had no understanding that perhaps this was her way of coping with the loss of my father. The end result was that I believed myself to be unwelcome in the family home. Consequently, amidst a high degree of ambivalence between my mother and myself I was largely left to my own devices from the age of fourteen years.

This experience made me adamant that when I had children of my own, they would always feel loved and wanted. It was therefore with considerable shock and surprise, that following a period of three years in which my own (then teenage) daughter appeared to have chosen a life-path that starkly contradicted with the one I hoped she would have, I found myself advising her that I

could no longer tolerate her presence in my home. While we now have a close and intimate relationship, in which she openly acknowledges her own contribution to this situation, I continue to feel a high degree of guilt about these circumstances.

As someone who always strived to be a good mother, while I logically understand that numerous factors were out of my control, emotionally I have continued to berate myself for being unable to address the situation in a more constructive manner. Indeed, as I write this, despite the academic need to maintain some degree of objectivity, it seems greatly significant that, as a mother, I feel teary and overwhelmed with emotion. In effect, like many of the women involved in this study, my idealised view of a good mother, and indeed, the mother-daughter relationship I desired and anticipated, was substantially challenged by real-life circumstances.

A high proportion of participants demonstrated a similar propensity for guilt, self-blame and feelings of loss. Several acknowledged that amidst consistently high levels of conflict with their daughters, they felt unable to be a good mother. Many recalled spending inordinate amounts of time wondering how they could 'fix it', convinced that a different approach would either prevent further relational deterioration or improve the existing relationship. As Gross (1998) suggested, the question of doing the right thing potentially becomes "an anguished mantra, rather than an academic question" (p.269).

The process of adjusting to a mother-daughter relationship often considerably different to the one envisaged to be a by-product of being a good mother is clearly variable. That said, consistent with my own circumstances, there is substantial indication that the experience of being mothered is strongly internalised and is often highly influential in the maternal experience of the mothering daughters (Chodorow, 1978; Arcana, 1979; Basoff, 1988). Each of the participants in this study acknowledged their own mothers as a significant influence in shaping their approach towards their daughters. While several expressed this in positive terms (Jackie; Anna; Jean), the vast majority reported major dissatisfactions with the ways they had been mothered.

Much of this related to the maternal capacity to ensure daughters felt loved, wanted and acknowledged. In this context, the desire to build a better relationship with their own daughters, than they themselves had experienced with their mothers, appears to have been a contributing factor in the degree of idealisation to which the mother-daughter relationship was subjected. Many reported considerable divergence between what they had envisaged was possible and the

realities as they now saw them. Several women reported feeling confronted by the fact that, in the context of ongoing conflict with their adolescent daughters, their investment in good mothering appeared to have been to no avail.

Many women noted that the greatest difficulty they encountered in the process of mothering their daughters, was relinquishing subjectively idealised perspectives of motherhood and the relationship they envisaged was possible with their daughters. Several participants noted that, after so many years of intense personal investment to ensure their daughters felt loved and validated, it was difficult to accept relational change. Amidst the desire to create the ideal mother-daughter relationship they wanted, several women reported feeling overwhelmed (Leigh; Anna; Deb; Alicia). Like Deb, it was difficult for them to accept the feeling that "everything I'd worked towards had gone" (Deb, Participant 6, 12/3/01).

While Deb's account of the mother-daughter relationship is, perhaps, more extreme than others, it does serve to highlight the dangers of a unitary model of maternal excellence. The expectations associated with this model undoubtedly contribute to reproducing aspirational ideals of both motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship and may play a key role in the degree of disparity between the desires and the realities of maternal experience (Chodorow, 1978; Thurer, 1994). Without a doubt, these beliefs contribute to an internalised formulation of both present and future circumstances. Reinforced by the media and popular culture (Kaplan, 1992), such idealisations are assimilated by both mothers and their daughters.

The ideology of the good mother discussed herein demonstrates that maternal responsibility for all aspects of children's development – physical, social, emotional, psychological and cultural - is a social and cultural expectation (Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985). Nice (1992) and Silverberg (1996) submit that where strong associations between motherhood and self-identity are internalised, subjective feelings of maternal are often encountered. A good mother is expected to be infinitely giving, even if it is not on their own terms. Indeed, the very notion of giving implies the freedom to do so. Therein, lies some contradiction. Insofar as the prevailing ideology of motherhood has been culturally absorbed, it is not surprising if some mothers experience difficulties in the mother-daughter relationship as personal failure (Basoff, 1988; Maushart 1997).

Theoretical Implications:

Towards a New Model of Mother-Adolescent Daughter Relationships

The normative theories of adolescent identity formation discussed earlier in this thesis, emphasise separation from maternal bonds as a critical life task for adolescent girls. Both historic and contemporary paradigms of the mother-daughter relationship have depicted this task as inherently more complicated for girls, because their primary model of gender-identification is, in most instances, their mother (Hammer, 1975; Chodorow, 1978). The rupturing of established mother-daughter attachments is purportedly instrumental in enabling young women to form an identity of their own (Blos, 1967; Chodorow, 1978; Phillips, 1991).

The applicability of the model of maternal excellence inherent in the prevailing ideology, holds significant implications in the context of the mother-adolescent daughter relationship. Such a model requires mothers to possess predominantly static characteristics that may, in fact, prove increasingly difficult to maintain within the challenging, and often progressively changing context, of the contemporary mother-adolescent daughter relationship (La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990; Kenemore & Spira, 1996). There is a certain irony in this, as the expectation of a consistent approach to mothering comes into direct contact with the need to let go of established patterns of relationship (Basoff, 1988; Apter, 1990).

Several studies affirm that parenthood involves a continuing process of accommodation (Amato, 1987; Kitzinger, 1992; Ryff & Seltzer, 1996). It is not uncommon, in the context of contemporary society at least, for adolescents to challenge established parental rules as arbitrary (Kidwell, Fischer, Dunham & Baranowski, 1983; La Sorsa & Fodor 1990; Gilligan & Rogers 1993). Several women in this study reported that conflict became more frequent amidst daughters increased demands for greater freedom, material possessions and access to financial resources (Sandra; Deb; Alicia, Jean).

Apter (1990) purports that adolescent girls seeking validation of their newly emerging selves from their mothers, often misinterpret advice or a negative response as interference. In the context of a tentative, and often, vulnerable self-in-transition (Erikson, 1968) this can contribute to a daughter's relative rejection of a mother figure, albeit most often transiently, because she perceives her mother as something of a threat to her growing sense of young adulthood (Larson & Richards, 1994). Indeed, there is some suggestion that along with the adolescents' enhanced

capacity for abstract thinking, "mothers lose their halo of omnipotence and privileged power: they become just ordinary people with faults of their own" (Larson & Richards, 1994, p.140).

While this may well be the case, participants' accounts suggest that amidst an ideology that affirms the possibility of the perfect mother, notions of the ideal mother remain a strong feature in the respective psyches of both mothers and daughters. Reports of adolescent daughters using idealised perceptions of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship as a point of intersection in which to manipulate maternal responses support the findings of this study (Nice, 1992; Pipher, 1996).

Several of the mothers in this study indicated that their daughters used idealised perceptions of the mothers of their peers, in an attempt to manipulate the desired response from their own mothers. Phrases such as 'so-and so's mother lets her' and 'why can't you be like so-and so's mother?' were commonly reported (Sandra; Leigh; Deb; Jean). A further indication of this was evident in Anna's account. She reported feeling immensely satisfied when her daughter's friends confided in her "because they felt they couldn't talk to their own mothers".

While the capacity to challenge parental rules is considered centrally important to individuation (Nice, 1992; van Mens-Verhulst, 1993; Pipher, 1996), there is some suggestion that, in the context of the mother-adolescent daughter relationship, this results in a triangular rather than a dual relational context. Flaake (1993) suggests that as subjectivity is increasingly negotiated by daughters, they often find themselves confronted by "the power of the mother as opposed to the powerlessness of the 'woman' in the mother (p.33). While this is, perhaps, a necessary confrontation, it may also come as something of a surprise to daughters. The realisation that mothers are indeed human does not necessarily sit well with preconceived perfectionist ideals.

As previously discussed, traditional theories of identity formation have emphasised separation from maternal bonds as the primary task of adolescent girls (Blos, 1967; Erikson, 1968). While there may be some merit in this, several feminist theorists suggest that this masculine framework is not necessarily applicable. Gilligan (1982) has challenged this view of womanhood. She suggests that much of the literature that portrays women's development as problematic is essentially flawed. Indeed, she reports that "the failure of women to fit existing models of human growth may point to…an omission of certain truths about life" (Gilligan, 1982, pp.1-2)

Most of the models of identity formation that have emerged emphasise individuation and independence as primary facets of adult identity. In the context of the mother-adolescent daughter relationship, such theories have provided substantiation for the wariness, and indeed, blame, directed towards 'overly-invested' mothers. While such connection has long been valued in the context of early childhood discussed earlier in the literature review, concerns with the strong bonds of the mother-older daughter relationship have been present since the mythological age. Women's capacity for emotional connection has been both valued and denigrated.

Miller (1986) notes that, irrespective of their origins, the qualities of caring and affiliation most often exhibited in women's relationships have become integrally linked to women's internal sense of identity. While these are undoubtedly valuable human traits, they appear problematic when placed in the context of prevalent theories of adolescent, and indeed, human development. The historic practice of ignoring, or indeed, devaluing, women's life experience in theoretical constructs of personhood, Nice (1992) suggests, can result in "feelings of abnormality or an alteration in the perception of their experience" (p.8).

The primacy given to separation as a pathway to independent autonomy, has tended to vilify mother and daughter connections as potentially threatening. Considerable emphasis has been placed on notions of conflict and ambivalence as a somewhat normative and necessary pathway to daughters' self-definition (La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990). This may well merit consideration, given the adolescent's growing need for a sense of autonomy. However, what appears to have been overlooked in much of the psychological literature discussed, is that connections with significant others are critical components in identity, and certainly, centrally important in the context of intimate relationships.

What is, and has been problematic for women, and their daughters, is the extent to which womanhood and motherhood has been subjected to idealisation. Behind the ideological cloak of the good mother, it is difficult for mothers to be authentically present. This is perhaps made more complex by a culture that encourages maternal submergence of needs and feelings. Certainly we value a sense of interconnection with others, and often gain a degree of satisfaction in feeling needed. When our children are thriving and happy, we feel affirmed as mothers. However, when conflict arises, as it often does in the context of adolescence, we experience a gulf between ourselves and our daughters that does not sit comfortably.

There has been considerable indication, in both the literature reviewed, and in the accounts given in this case study, that notions of the ideal mother are a powerful and influential force in the lives of both mothers and daughters. In fact, the internalisation of the prevailing ideology of motherhood, with its inherent emphasis on self-sacrifice, was often described as a well-entrenched personal philosophy by the women in this study. Often disregarded, historically at least, is that presentation of an authentic self, complete with flaws, may be a preferable model in the context of a daughter's adolescence. Amidst the idealised objectification of women's lives that has emerged, reinforced in no small way by the presence of modernised cultural images (Kaplan, 1992), it is clear that alternative positive models of womanhood have remained difficult to find. For the most part, where such variations have been evident, a discourse of deviancy has dominated (Arendell, 2000).

While positive alternative models undoubtedly exist in the postmodern context, these remain in the minority. Popular culture targeting adolescents, and particularly those depicted in the media, continue to reflect a model of young womanhood predominantly concerned with image and (hetero)sexuality. As noted by many of the participants in this study, our adolescent daughters often appear considerably different to the child-daughter preceding them. While this experience may be a fleeting one for some, it is notable that the narratives of the women in this study support the findings of Pipher (1996), who suggests that the "selves" of girls all but disappear at some stage during the adolescent period (p.19).

On the surface, it appears that issues of conflict arise most frequently when the model of self presented by daughters contradicts established maternal perceptions of offspring. Apter (1990) supports this view, noting that "the more accurately the mother views her daughter…the less she is able to validate her" (p.106). The findings of this study suggest that it is not uncommon for adolescent girls to present versions of their transitional 'selves' to their mothers in search of self-confirmation. In effect, it would appear, they are asking, is this me? Perhaps, in the process of challenging their mothers, albeit sometimes unwittingly, they are also asking, who are you? In effect, it may well be that daughters both want and need to see the individual woman behind the good mother.

The views of Erikson (1968) appear significant here. While acknowledging that relationships are integrally connected to female identity formation, he suggests that this task remains "unresolved until they meet someone – a prospective husband – whose identity will help them make sense and

shape of their own" (Erikson, as cited in Apter, 1990, p.61). In the context of postmodernity, and expanded options for women, this view is superseded. However, if we fail to render our own views audible as mothers, irrespective of our personal partnerships, we present a model of adult womanhood that continues to sublimate women's thoughts, feelings and needs.

In the context of this study, many women attached importance to being openly communicative with daughters. The desire to achieve this, however, was often thwarted by the presence of variable mother-daughter realities. There was considerable indication that the presence of conflict discouraged mothers from addressing issues of concern. In their desire to maintain, or indeed, regain good relations with their daughters, many simply suppressed their own views in deference to their daughters (Leigh; Karla; Alicia).

Amidst an ideology of motherhood that leaves little room for expression of feelings inconsistent with the perfectionist maternal model (Rich, 1976), there was considerable indication in this study that a strong sense of powerlessness was experienced by many participants. In the end, several simply accepted, though not without regret, a continuing state of ambivalence between themselves and their daughters (Sandra; Leigh; Deb). Over time, the mother-daughter relationship aspired to by these participants was relinquished as something of an impossible dream.

As previously discussed, Apter (1990) suggests that it is the presence of conflict, not the individuation of daughters, that is most troublesome to mothers. While perhaps warranted to some extent, many of the women in this study appeared most concerned with conflict that remained unaddressed. It was this, rather than the presence of conflict itself, that appeared to act as a precursor to ambivalent feelings. Notions of conflict as a negative by-product of the mother-daughter relationship have a long history. Acknowledging that unresolved conflict has been at the centre of most historical disasters, Miller (1986) contends that, it is perhaps our conceptualisation of conflict that lies at the core of relational difficulties between mothers and daughters.

As human beings, with our own idiosyncrasies, there is no denying that the potential for conflict exists. Certainly, Miller (1986) is not advocating that women create conflict with their daughters in a desire to model constructive resolution. Rather, she suggests, there is a need to acknowledge "that conflict exists" (p.126). In the context of personal relationships, effective management of conflict can provide a pathway towards mutual growth and understanding. While this may

involve intense, and sometimes difficult feelings, it also has the potential to provide a catalyst for greater intimacy. It is possible to address conflict with respect for differing opinions and realities. That said, in the context of broader society, few models are available.

Psychoanalytic interpretations of mother-daughter conflict have greatly contributed to a culture of mother-blaming. It is perhaps the ability to work through conflict in a context which recognises that despite its presence, mutual respect and support will continue to be provided, that has been overlooked. While this may require mothers and their daughters to acknowledge a need for 'time-out' it at least encourages authenticity. Considered in the context of the reproduction of mothering discussed earlier (Chodorow, 1978), the mother-adolescent daughter relationship may well be the best place to duplicate this practice.

Granted, young women are attempting to construct their personhood under conditions perhaps markedly different to those experienced by their mothers. Conflict with our mothers, with our daughters, with our own consciousness, is undoubtedly a risky business. It requires courage, willingness to grow and change and a capacity for respectful discussion.

While our collective rationale for emulating a perfectionist model of motherhood may well be substantiated in the early childhood context, it fails to provide a model of womanhood that validates our own worth in the adolescent, and indeed, adult female context. Considered amidst the findings reported in this study, there is significant indication that both mothers and their daughters might benefit from acknowledgement of a shared, and often, imperfect humanity. An understanding "that one's mother is a separate and imperfect individual who is not always available and who cannot satisfy all one's needs and expectations" (Apter, 1990, p.215) brings to light the inherent flaws in the prevailing ideology of motherhood. Indeed, if we fail to do so, we risk contributing to a continuing cycle of intergenerational conflict between mothers and daughters.

Conclusion:

Broader Implications

The objective of this study was to explore the lived experience of mothering adolescent daughters in the context of contemporary society. Central to this was an exploration of two primary contentions. Firstly, this thesis sought to assess the extent to which the traditional ideals of the good mother shape and influence the maternal experience of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. Secondly, consideration was given to the implications the experience of being mothered may hold for the mother-daughter relationship. At the centre of this debate, lies the meaning women attach to motherhood, to being a good mother, and to their relationships with their daughters.

Both the literature reviewed, and the findings of this case study, highlight the continuing prevalence of the traditional ideology of the good mother. Reinforced in no small way by a dichotomised model of motherhood in which women have historically been confronted with an either/or (good/bad) paradigm, the findings of this study suggest that the prescribed ideals of good mothering have had considerable impact on participants' lives.

Both this, and similar studies (Wearing, 1984; Lupton, 2000), reflect some of the difficulties women experience consistently meeting the self-sacrificial standards deemed critical to being a good mother. Furthermore, many of the accounts given in this study indicate that despite diligently striving to maintain the selflessness deemed critical to being a good mother, the adolescent period of daughters brings many challenges to the lived experience of motherhood. Indeed, most of the women involved acknowledged experiencing feelings of helplessness and ineptness at some time.

As Hays (1996) noted, the common cultural depiction of a good mother encompasses a model in which maternal subjectivity is subjugated. Consistent with this view, most participants in this study indicated that the altruistic qualities they sought to emulate, were subjectively perceived as a measure of their love for their children. Such ideology often appeared to provide a basis for self-appraisal, based on the extent to which these mothers felt they met or failed to meet the requirements of a good mother.

While this is not, in and of itself, problematic, several women demonstrated considerable tendency towards self-blame and guilt. While this was retrospectively reported in the context of early childhood in several instances, discussion of the adolescent years indicated that many participants felt highly responsible for their daughters' happiness. Indeed, in several instances it was evident that cultural notions of the good mother formed such an integral part of their personal belief systems, they felt unable to ask for help when they most needed it. Considered against the powerful model of the good mother that remains culturally dominant, such an admission appears to be viewed as tantamount to being a 'bad' or at least, inadequate mother.

The notion of mother love that prevails encompasses no room for concurrent or conflicting emotions. Under such terms, being a good mother involves suppression of any negative emotions towards children that might be experienced. As Rich (1986) notes, "women – above all, mothers – have been supposed to love that way" (p.3). Given the historic lack of recognition given to the humanness of ambivalent emotions that appears to be common to the lived experience of mothering (Lupton, 2000), it is not surprising that, as this study affirms, such feelings are sometimes internalised in a context of self-blame that is, to say the least, unhelpful to mothers.

Conversely, as Pearson (1997) points out, the cultural unwillingness to consider the realities of the difficulties that can be experienced in the quest to be a good mother, are also potentially detrimental to children. The truth is, as human beings, women are equipped with a full range of human emotions, including feelings of anger that can, and sometimes do result in violence or harm to children. In the context of the good mother, however, and indeed, the idealised construct of womanhood that remains largely unchallenged, there is little room for consideration of anomaly except in terms of deviancy discourse.

As the literature reviewed highlights, the historical factors underpinning the rise of the good mother have predominantly been based on issues related to early childhood. Despite this, to the best of the writer's knowledge, no alternative model is offered in the context of adolescence. Indeed, there is considerable indication in this, and other studies, that the prevailing ideology remains a child-centred one (Wearing, 1984; Hays, 1996; Lupton, 2000). Little consideration has been given to the prolonged period of parental dependence that has emerged over the last century and the implications this may hold for mothering.

Several reports demonstrate consistency with this study, noting that developmental and relational change often calls for a considerably different approach to mothering than the one established in earlier years (Laursen & Collins, 1988; La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990; Kenemore & Spira, 1996). While this has often been discussed in the literature surrounding motherhood, for the most part, the maternal experience of this has been overlooked and sometimes, significantly denigrated. Such omission is consistent with the historical de-emphasis on women's shared knowledge. While this particular study is a small one, and therefore makes no claim to pre-emptive conclusions, acknowledgement is made that collectively, participants share some two hundred and forty one years of maternal experience.

In an ideological context that holds women predominantly responsible for achieving the aspirational standards of parenting deemed essential to children's present and future wellbeing, many of the women in this study highlighted that in the adolescent period of mothering their daughters, substantial divergence between expectations and reality was experienced. Most reported that they had simply presumed that the close relationship they had established with their daughters in earlier years, would be sustained, and indeed, grow deeper in later years. The common assumption was that consistent attention to the ideals and standards of good mothering would assure this. However, as this study notes, in many instances, this was not the case.

Several women reported feelings of bewilderment, personal confusion and loss pervaded their lives as a direct result of considerable variation between personally-held expectations and real-life experience. This appears to hold particular implications for the mother-daughter relationship. As discussed, many participants noted that because they felt their own mothers had failed to consistently provide them with a sense of feeling loved and acknowledged, their desire to ensure this did not happen with their own daughters was particularly intense. Amidst a somewhat romanticised view of the mother-daughter relationship, several women appeared to use their own experience as a way in which to try to recreate, and make sense of, the mother-daughter relationship they felt they had lacked.

Notwithstanding the normality of desiring a close mother-daughter relationship, a high proportion of those who perceived a distant, or ambivalent relationship with their own mothers, reported intense preoccupation with the desire to achieve the opposite relationship with their daughters. Amidst often considerably idealised views of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship,

there were strong indications that these were significantly challenged in the context of their daughters' adolescence.

The view that this can contribute to a continuing intergenerational cycle of unsatisfactory mother-daughter relationships remains open to debate, and in need of further exploration. In the context of this study, however, it is clear that the primacy given to the maternal role remained dominant in the mother-adolescent daughter relationship. Reinforced by the continuing presence of representations of the traditional good mother in modern culture (Thurer, 1994; Kaplan, 1994), and in the absence of an alternative model, or ideology, this may well be counter-productive in the adolescent years of parenting. Certainly, the notion of a good mother as a subject without her own needs and interests requires substantial revision within the context of adolescence.

Given the idealisation to which the mother-child relationship has historically been subjected, this is not surprising. Women aspire to meet idealised standards of the good mother because they experience a sense of meaning in the work of motherhood. Such meaning, is in no small way, shaped and influenced by the prevailing ideology of motherhood. Amidst the strong emphasis placed on selflessness, however, discussion of a personal sense of reward for this investment, rarely moves beyond the scope of children's best interests.

The extent to which this is true of the early childhood years is not the concern of this thesis. Notwithstanding this, the findings of this study suggest that mothers do indeed hold some expectation of remuneration in the later years of childhood. While this appears to be most pervasive in those cases where participants' own experience of being mothered was reportedly unsatisfactory, there is indication that amidst consistent idealisation of motherhood, developmental and relational change potentially places mothers and their adolescent daughters at odds.

As Miller (1986) suggests, the notion of conflict as a negative rather than a processual path in which differential perspectives may be challenged, and potentially, lead to relational growth, appears to be at play here. Indeed, there is considerable indication that because women have historically been idealised and presented as passive, caring and nurturing, the idea of women in conflict has perhaps been too radical to consider. Instead, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, where conflict has arisen in the mother-daughter relationship, mothers have often been subjected to

blame. Minimal consideration has been given to the equal capacity of both parties to effect the equation.

In many respects, a revision of conflict itself is warranted. Certainly, it appears to be characteristic of human beings and by no means, a gendered phenomenon (Pearson, 1997). Considered within the mother-daughter context, this perhaps suggests an important and normative aspect of the developmental process that has historically been overlooked. As a relationship connected by history, mothers may well be best placed to demonstrate to a constructive approach to conflict resolution with daughters; one that demonstrates that, irrespective of differences of opinion, love and respect do not dissipate.

That said, it is certainly not surprising that identity formation can be a formidable issue for adolescent girls (Erikson, 1980; Gilligan, 1982; Chodorow, 1984; Pipher, 1996). For the most part, cultural representations continue to promote an idealised view of young women, a view that is remarkably similar to the homogeneous construct of womanhood that has historically dominated. In both instances, central emphasis is placed upon external appearances rather than realistic understandings of individuality. The prevalence of a largely universal association between womanhood and motherhood, leaves young women with few accessible alternative models. It is perhaps the mother-daughter relationship that is best-placed to provide a realistic model of authentic womanhood. As Apter (1990) notes, "it isn't calm, unobtrusive relations between mother and daughter that give the daughter the strength she needs. It is a good fighting relationship, a relationship through which the daughter can define her differences" (p.97).

Fundamental to the development of a more realistic perspective of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship is substantial revision of the ideology of motherhood. Granted, in the absence of a comprehensive research body examining the lived experience of mothering in more detail, no presumption can be made regarding the conceptual structure this might take. Furthermore, in the context of postmodern society, and the extended period of childhood that has arisen, it is perhaps unwise to suggest that any one model is warranted. More important perhaps, is renewed attention to the deconstruction of idealised womanhood and greater acknowledgement that mothers are human beings, with faults, flaws, needs and desires of their own.

The findings of this study also serve to highlight the potentially destructive impact that unresolved conflict may have on the mother-daughter relationship. Much of the literature

discussed affirms that it is not uncommon for the relative emotional withdrawal of adolescent daughters to stimulate a similar process in mothers (Fischer, 1986; La Sorsa & Fodor, 1990). There is some suggestion that maternal attempts to 'fix' the relationship are met with considerable resistance by daughters, often leading to an exacerbation of conflict that remains unresolved as feelings of ambivalence between mothers and their daughters increase (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1983; La Sorsa & Fodor 1990; Kenemore & Spira 1996). This is perhaps also somewhat aggravated by maternal attempts to relinquish previously held ideals of the mother-daughter relationship in an effort to make sense of changing relational dynamics.

More important, perhaps, is to highlight, "that conflict exists" (Miller, 1986, p.126). While this may, at first glance, appear rudimentary and transparent in the context of humanity, the reality is that the prevailing ideology of motherhood makes little acknowledgement of this. In the absence of a preferable ideology, and indeed, one that gives due credit to the inherent humanness of mothers, the required cultural change is unlikely to be facilitated readily within the private, domestic domain in the near future. What is required is a considerable change of culture and a broader social commitment to constructive human relations.

Indeed, there is considerable indication that the resolution of conflict is both necessary and valuable to intimate relationships. This thesis argues that much of the problem lies in the false premises attached to motherhood. The mother-adolescent daughter relationship is perhaps instrumental in highlighting the considerable disparity between expectations and realities. "What is unwritten is the positive side to these problems, the way in which mothers and daughters fight in order to grow, the way in which their arguments aim, and often succeed, at self-confirmation and self-validation" (Apter, 1990, p.1).

Not disregarding that many parents do provide a constructive model of resolution to their children, in the world outside the home, exposure to such a model appears limited. At the broader level, global terrorism and political campaigns appear to deny, or at least, denigrate the possibility of a constructive approach to conflict. Moreover, in our desire to protect children from what are perceived as predominantly adult issues, parental debate is often confined to private spaces. Considered in the context of the current world climate, the merits of including conflict resolution as a compulsory subject given value in the education of all children warrants further investigation. For the present time, however, it seems likely that if we continue to neglect the realties of motherhood in favour of aspirational ideals, we risk transmitting considerably less than

ideal experiences of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship to this and future generations.

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APPENDIX I

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Renegotiating Motherhood: A Case Study of the Experience of Mothering Adolescent Daughters in Contemporary Society

NAMES OF INVESTIGATOR: Cathy Deacey (BA) Youth Affairs

Purpose of the Study

I am conducting this study as part of the requirements of a Master of Social Science (Research). The purpose of this study is to interview mothers who have at least one daughter in 13-15, 16-19, or 20-23 year age bracket, to identify how the changes and processes experienced by mothers with daughters in these age groups, may impact upon their lives. A further focus of the study is to explore whether the increasing independence of daughter's results in a greater focus on independence by mothers. In addition, consideration will be given to how the experience of raising daughters through the transition from adolescence to adulthood may have changed in comparison with previous generations.

The study aims to contribute to broader discussion of the experience of motherhood in the mother-daughter relationship during the transition through adolescence to young adulthood, and to explore whether some aspects of this experience may be linked to broader changes in society in recent decades.

Your decision to participate in this study will involve two interviews of approximately 1 - 2 hours duration each. The first interview, will involve discussion of your experiences as a mother during your daughter's transition through adolescence to young adulthood. The second interview, which will occur approximately, 6 months later, aims to clarify any outstanding matters, and will also provide you with an opportunity to point out any details or issues which appear incorrect, or which you would prefer are not referred to in the final study.

Your name will not be available to any other person at any point in time with the exception of the researcher. All identifying details and data will be removed from written and audio-taped documentation following completion of the study.

In choosing to participate in this study, please note that you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation in the study at any time, without explanation. In the unlikely event that you feel upset or distressed as you recall your experiences, you may request that the researcher cease the interview process. The researcher will provide you with the names of appropriate counsellors and/or counselling services, upon request.

This study has been developed, subject to the approval of the University Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University, St. Patrick's Campus, Fitzroy.

If you have any questions about the research project at any point in time during the course of the study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Cathy Deacey on 9460-1791(ah) or 9302-2700 (bh).

Any concerns you have regarding the process of the study which you feel unable to ask of the researcher, may be directed to the Research Supervisor, Associate Professor Ruth Webber, in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Australian Catholic University, Telephone 9953-3221

This study has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint about the way you have been treated during the study, or a query that the Investigator(s) has (have) not been able to satisfy, you may write care of the nearest branch of the Office of Research.

> Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee
> C/o Office of Research
> Australian Catholic University
> Locked Bag 4115 MDC
> Fitzroy 3065
>
> Telephone no:99533151   Fax no:9953295

Any complaint made will be treated in confidence, investigated fully and the participant informed of the outcome.

Please indicate your agreement to participate in this study, by signing both copies of the attached Statement of Consent form. One copy should be retained for your records and the other copy returned to the Researcher.

Cathy Deacey   Assoc Prof Ruth Webber
MSS (research) student   Supervisor

APPENDIX 2

Renegotiating Motherhood:
A Case Study of the Maternal Experience of Raising
Adolescent Daughters in Contemporary Australian Society

Interview Date:_____ Informant No:_____

Initials:_____ Interview No:_____

Place of interview:_____

....

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. General Information

a) Explain own interest in mother-daughter relationship

b) Explain interview process

c) Permission to record interview   YES/NO

d) No. of children:_____

e) No. of Daughter(s)____   Age of Daughter(s)___ ___ ___ ___

                                                             ___ ___ ___ ___

f) Age of informant_____

g) Ethnic background_____

h) Marital status_____

i) Employment status_____

j) Type of employment_____

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2.   **Cultural Transmission of Motherhood**

a)   Where/how did you learn how to mother?

b)   Do you mother like your mother?

c)   Has your own experience of being mothered, influenced the way you
      mother? (where applicable)

d)   In what way(s)?

3.   **Motherhood**

a)   At what age, did you become a mother?

b)   What has motherhood been like for you?

c)   What has been the most pleasurable aspect?

d)   What has been the most difficult aspect?

e)   What is your most memorable experience as a mother?

f)   When you think back to when your children were small, has the experience
      of raising them been as you thought it might be?

g)   What's been different about it?

h)   What's been the same?

i)   Does the nature of the mother role change during daughter's
      adolescence?

j)   If yes, in what way(s)?

k)   What aspects have most challenged you, as a mother?

3. Relationship with daughter/s

a) Has it been different raising your daughter(s), as opposed to your son(s)? (where applicable) In what way(s)?

b) If you could have the experience over again, would you do anything differently?

c) What would you do differently? (where applicable)

d) Tell me about your relationship with your daughter(s) prior to her (their) teenage years?

e) What was it like when she became a teenager?

f) Did your parenting style change?

g) In what way(s)/why?

h) How would you describe your current relationship with your daughter?

i) Have you noticed any changes in your relationship with her as she has grown older?

j) How would you describe those changes? (where applicable)

k) How did you/do you feel about the changes in your relationship? (where applicable)

l) How much time do you and your daughter spend together each week?

k) What kinds of things do you do together?

m) What kinds of things do you talk about?

n) Do you think your daughter sees you as a person, or just as a mother?

o) How do you think your daughter would describe your mothering to others?

p) When you look back, is there anything you would change now, if you could?

APPENDIX 3

Participant Background Information
*All names have been changed for confidentiality purposes

Participant 1 – 'Sandra'
Sandra (35) is a youth worker and sole parent of three children, two daughters, Ella. aged 14 and Brianna. 16 years, and a son, Adrian. aged 12 years. She has been caring for her children without the financial or emotional support of their father for 11 years. Sandra was very much a 'stay-at-home' mother for much of this time, however, following completion of a Certificate in Community Services six years ago, resumed paid work.

Participant 2 – 'Leigh'
Leigh is a 43 year old mother of 3: a son Drew. (19) and only daughter Penny. (15) are from her first marriage . Leigh's son Nathan. (4) is the child of her current marriage of five years. Prior to the birth of N. Leigh was a primary school teacher but wanted the opportunity to stay home in the early years of N's childhood. The father of Leigh's two older children has no contact with Leigh or her son D. and only intermittent contact with P, at her own discretion.

Participant 3 – 'Jackie'
Jackie (62) has 4 daughters. Caroline. (44)., Julia. (42)., Barbara. (37) are the children of her first marriage. Kym. (21) from her second marriage is her youngest daughter. She raised her three eldest children with little assistance from her first husband, who she described as an "alcoholic." A retired Patient Services Manager, she describes having a very positive relationship with her second husband Jackie's decision to have an additional child, at age 41, was largely due to the fact that second husband Roger. wanted a child of his own.

Participant 4 – 'Anna'
Anna is 47 and mother of a daughter, Emma. (16) and a son, Brian. (13) currently works in an administrative role . Married since theage of 24, her daughter was born when she was 31. Anna and her husband Dan. quite consciously chose to delay parenthood, preferring to become more financially secure prior to having children. Anna recalls no particular interest in having children until she turned 29 and "felt the biological clock ticking."

Participant 5 – 'Cynthia'
Cynthia was 17 years old when she had her daughter, Carly. now 15. She also has a son, Adrian. (13). Cynthia and her husband W., the father of the children, married 4 years ago. Cynthia's mother was also a teenage parent and she has no recollection of ever meeting her father. Aged 32 at the time of interview, Cynthia returned to study five years prior to the interview, eventually undertaking social work training. She currently works at a community health centre and much of her work is supporting 'young mums'. She is completing a Masters degree in Social Work looking at attitudes of service providers towards teenage mothers.

Participant 6 – 'Deb'

Deb (35), a library technician, was 19 when she became a mother to her daughter, Kristine. (16). Two years later she had a son, Billy. (14). Her then husband, the father of the children was "physically and emotionally abusive" towards her. They divorced 2 years ago and she believes this was instrumental in the deterioration of her relationship with daughter Kristine., who recently moved out to live with her father.. She now shares her home with her son Billy.and a female partner.

Participant 7 – 'Karla'

Karla was 20 when daughter Claire (16) was born . Now 37, Karla divorced Claire's father when her daughter was 2 years of age. Karla is able to contact him through his family but says that Claire has shown no interest in this to date. Karla remarried twelve years ago, later giving birth to Nic. (9) her son and Rhiannon. (5) her second daughter.

Participant 8 ' 'Deanna'

Deanna (45) was 24 when she gave birth to her daughter Deirdre. who, at the time of interview, had just turned 21. Deanna also has a son Christopher. (17). Until the age of 36, Deanna, a youth worker, lived with her children and their father, her "childhood sweetheart." After "falling in love with a colleague" Deanna discussed the situation with her then husband Keith. and made a decision to move out with a view to having the children live with her once she was "properly moved." Two months after relocating to a unit to live with her new partner Graeme, circumstances changed radically when Deanna's partner had a fatal heart attack. "Overwhelmed with grief" she discussed the situation with the children's father and they made a joint decision that Deanna needed time to come to terms with her loss before the children joined her. Due to a range of circumstances, this never eventuated.

Participant 9 – 'Alicia'

Alicia (42) has 3 children including two daughters Celia. (15), Helena. (1) and a son Mitchell. (13). Alicia met her husband Lou. at university "when we were both studying Social Work." They have been married for 17 years. Alicia recalls becoming "very parentified from an early age" due to her mothers schizophrenia.

Participant 10 – 'Crystal'

Crystal (40) has five children. Her son Peter (22) is the only child not living at home. Her three eldest daughters include Lia. (17) and twins Karen. and Julia. (15). Her daughter Cara (3) is the result of her marriage 8 years ago to Michael. whom she met through professional colleagues. Crystal recalls being "beaten up" by her parents when she became pregnant at 17. She stayed with the father of her four oldest children for 6 years, deciding to end the marriage after "a number of violent episodes." Soon after, she made a decision to study social work at university, Crystal is currently employed as a Social Worker in a community health centre.

Partipant 11 – 'Jean'

Jean (42) is mother to two sons, Rob. (17)and John.(14). Marla. (15) is her only daughter. She has been married to Edgar., the father of the children since she was 20. She described herself as "very much a stay-at home Mum when the kids were small." She commenced her first job, as a Personal Care Attendant, in the aged care field five years ago.

Participant 12 – 'Lynda'

Lynda describes herself as "an older mother." She was 30 when she married husband Mike. and 33 when she had her first child, a daughter, Emily. now 17. Her son Sam. was born two years later. A trained social worker, Lynda works predominantly as a "counsellor for struggling parents."

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

APPENDIX 4

✠ ACU National

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: A/P Margot Hillel   Melbourne Campus

Co-Investigators: n/a

Student Researcher: Ms Cathy Deacey   Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Renegotiating Motherhood: A case study of the experience of mothering adolescent daughters in contemporary Australian society

for the period: 15/11/00 - 15/11/01

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: V2000.01-16

The following underline conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

(i)   that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii)   that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: .... Date: 15/11/00
(Research Services Officer, Melbourne Campus)

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