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**Mother-daughter relations: An exploratory study of feminine  
gender role identity**

**Vázquez-Arniella, Rosa, Ph.D.**

**City University of New York, 1989**

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MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY  
OF FEMININE GENDER ROLE IDENTITY

by

Rosa Vázquez-Arniella

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate  
Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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1989

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## Abstract

MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY  
OF FEMININE GENDER ROLE IDENTITY

by

Rosa Vazquez-Arniella

Adviser: Professor Arietta Slade

This exploratory study focused on the transmission of female gender role identity themes in a group of ten middle class, married women and their adolescent daughters. The psychoanalytic, feminist-informed literature, proposes that mothers transmit to their daughters "feminine point of view".

Through the use of a semi-structured interview, subjects were asked about areas such as: internal self-evaluation as a female, maternal messages regarding women and female roles, the influence of other object relations identity themes, and relational identifications between generations.

A content analysis was utilized to analyze the data. Three groupings emerged which were conceptualized as possible resolutions in the intergenerational transmission of female gender role identity. Of the ten mother-daughter pairs interviewed, two were classified as

Resolution 1: "I am like my mother". These were generally characterized by their reports of being comfortable with their gendered sense of self, and seemed to have achieved a balance between internal identity and external role behaviors. The four mother-daughter pairs in Resolution 2: "I Don't Want to be Like My Mother ... But am I?", reported their relations as generally characterized by ambivalent, contradictory feelings and behaviors. They also reported contradictory feelings about their femininity. They seemed to be trying to reconcile painful intrapersonal experiences of gender, while trying overtly to attain ideal female behavior. The third Resolution, "I am Different From My Mother", described relational themes between the remaining four pairs in the sample. Mothers conveyed messages regarding female gender role identity based on differentiation and even opposition to their own mother's conceptions. By balancing their needs as developing women and their gender-related roles, they were able to convey to their daughters positive attitudes and positive behaviors regarding being a woman.

The roles of the fathers, and other object relations were highlighted as enhancing a positive female gender role identity for most subjects.

Findings were discussed in the light of object-relations theory.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A great degree of appreciation goes to the ten mothers and ten adolescent daughters who opened their hearts and souls in the interviews. This work is a tribute to women's ability to talk about their lives.

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Developmentally-based personality theory, as well as clinical practice have concerned themselves for many years with what Freud (1912) called "the ways and means employed by one generation in order to hand on its mental states to the next". In varied and subtle ways maternal care of the developing child represents an ongoing process by which individuals are taught aspects of social structure and also acquire aspects of their personalities.

More recently, as the roles of parents, particularly mothers, have changed within the nuclear family, increasing attention has been paid to how a life-long relationship between a mother and her daughter tends to sustain, support, or tends to discourage a woman's ability to function in her gender-related roles (Chodorow, 1968; Fisher, 1981). Authors have argued that the mother's task is to hand down the "legacy of womanhood" and to pass on, within the context of the family, the "feminine point of view" about what it means to be a woman (Friedman, 1980). Several important clinical and theoretical papers (Bergman, 1982) have recently highlighted the importance

of examining the mother-daughter relationship, in order to expand our knowledge of female gender identity development and also offer more relevant, adaptative interventions to our female patients (Grossman & Stewart, 1977).

Despite these repeatedly stated arguments and assumptions, there has been remarkably little empirical work aimed at investigating what, in fact, are the contributions of a woman's relationship with her mother to her sense of self. Most work has been either clinical or anecdotal and little has been done to look systematically at either the positive or the negative repercussions that this primary bond has for the ultimate consolidation of the woman's female gender identity and what she in turns hands down to the next generation of women. While it seems to be clear in the literature, that the mother's gender-related messages reproduce themselves psychologically (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981), that these have an impact on the adult daughter's pregnancy outcome and early motherhood and that these affect the daughters adjustment to the maternal role (Deutsch, 1945); the complexity of the transmission of gender-specific messages has not been sufficiently documented.

This paucity of research has been due to several issues. In part, it stems from a long-standing misrepresentation of women's experience from the data base

of personality and developmental theories (Gilligan, 1982). In addition, there are inherent methodological difficulties in studying intergenerational transmission of parental behaviors due to the spans of time required (Ricks, 1985) and, in accurately representing and capturing aspects of relationships which are important and complex (Hinde, 1976, 1979).

The focus of this dissertation will be to explore and empirically document adult daughters' sense of self as females in the context of their recollections of their own mothers' messages regarding femininity. Secondly, the contribution these gender-related messages are making to the subjects' adolescent daughter's female identity will be examined in an effort to look at intergenerational transmission.

The developmental theory that guided this research is psychoanalytic theory. It has been concerned with the question of intergenerational transmission of parental qualities and behaviors and has also emphasized the qualitative aspects of relationships (Ricks, 1985).

Central to Freud's developmental theory and continued in the work of psychoanalytically oriented authors (Benedek, 1949; Fraiberg, 1975; Mahler, Pine, Bergman, 1975), is the idea that an individual's childhood relationship with his or her parents engenders a series of

intra-psychic identifications which continue from early childhood to adulthood. These identifications form the core of subsequent self-definitions (Kohut, 1977). These self definitions are either maintained or transformed as the individual struggles to resolve conflict and secure new adaptations. They are referred to broadly as "object relations" (Guntrip, 1973).

Psychoanalytic theory has also had a long standing interest in the conception of the self as a gendered self (Stoller, 1976; Chodorow, 1968; Spieler, 1986).

In this study it was proposed that the quality of the transactions and interactions between a mother and her daughter have a direct bearing on the daughter's sense of her own femininity and how the daughter, in adulthood, carries out gender related roles such as motherhood. Thus, a woman will pass on gender-related messages to her own female daughter. Consciously or unconsciously, as a mother, the woman will decide what it is about being female that she will convey to her own daughter.

The study's semi-structured interview questions were designed for the purpose of clarifying the usefulness and relevance of the above named constructs for the conceptualizations of female gender identity formation and its transmission across generations. It is hoped that they have not only theoretical relevance but that

they serve to point to specific information which will aid in working with women in a variety of clinical situations such as the individual psychotherapy setting and clinical work with mothers and their developing daughters. It is also hoped that the data gathered will be pivotal in pointing to further research by generating conceptual categories which in turn will be held as tentative hypothesis to be further explored in the future.

#### Statement of the Problem

The focus of the present study was to examine the complex process of intergenerational transmission of female gender-identity.

Through the use of a semi-structured interview, women were asked to explore their relationship to their mothers, specifically, as it pertained to behaviors, emotions and attitudes about the female self and female gender-roles (i.e., wife, mother).

In turn, these adult daughters' own adolescent daughters were interviewed utilizing a modified version of the same questionnaire.

The study to be described is considered an exploratory one, with the following two major goals:

- (1) to examine different patterns of adult women's conceptions of the self as female, based on the

transmission from one generation of mothers to their daughters of behaviors, emotions and attitudes about the female self and female gender-related roles.

- (2) to examine how the adult daughter's conception about the female self and female roles is having an impact on her adolescent daughter's own formulations regarding her female gender identity and roles.

#### Research Aims

The research's interview questions were designed to tap adult women's recollection of the development of gender identity themes in the course of their lives as these emerged in their interactions with their mothers. A series of questions addressed issues of gender-related rearing of the S's daughter. Three major areas were addressed in the Interview:

- 1- The adult daughter's recollection of her own mother's definitions about women, degree of comfort with specific female roles (wife, mother) and their impact on the daughter's view of herself as a woman.

- 2- The adult daughter's recollections of what it was like to grow up as a female, her own definition about women, her degree of current comfort with specific female

roles (wife, mother, adult sexuality) and specific ways in which she is conveying gender-related messages to her adolescent daughter.

3- The adolescent daughter's recollections of her mother's gender-related messages throughout childhood, her own definition about women, her current degree of comfort with specific gender-related issues (i.e., adolescent sexuality) and roles (projections about motherhood, being a wife).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Psychoanalytic theory must be credited with directing our attention to the study of the origins of gender and the existence of personality differences between the sexes. While initially its formulations contained accounts of gender development without making a clear distinction between biological sex and the social construction of gender differentiation, more recently, revisions within this theoretical model have begun to examine gender role identity in a perspective which covers the intrapsychic, affective, social and cognitive areas. The idea that the mother-daughter relation is a unique, qualitatively different and crucial influence in shaping a woman's sense of self and feminine gender role identity is discussed in the following review, in the context of the above mentioned theoretical revisions and expansions within psychoanalytic theory. How the relationship becomes internalized and influences a woman's current conception of gender role identity will be reviewed in detail.

### The Gendered Self

There is a knowing concept of self as female. A feminine identity exists as soon as there is awareness of a self. Self-experience is fundamentally colored by gender. From earliest infancy, practically from the moment a parent learns of the newborn's biological sex, the baby's experience, social as well as subjective, is inevitably influenced by sex assignment. This "given" or observable event creates particular responses from parents to offspring. The term gender has been utilized to refer to the psychological and cultural ascriptions made in response to biological sex, be it male or female (Oakly, 1972).

As summarized by Person and Ovessey (1983), Money et al (1955) originated the term gender role, in their pioneering work with hermaphroditism. These researchers were interested in making a distinction between biological sex assignment and the development of female and male self-perceptions. Later on, the confusion of terminology created by the pervasiveness of mind-body dualistic thinking, required that Money and Ehrhardt (1972) redefine the difference and relation between "gender role" and "gender identity" in order to properly explain and differentiate internal and behavioral experience. They defined it as follows:

The sameness, unity, and persistence of one's individuality as male, female, or ambivalent in greater and lesser degree, especially as it is experienced in self-awareness and behavior, gender identity is the private experience of gender role, and gender role is the public expression of gender identity. (p. 4)

Stoller (1968) coined the term core gender identity to refer to this "private expression of gender role" (Money & Erhart, 1972).

Core gender identity refers to the sense of belonging to one sex, not the other. Core gender identity is that immutable sense that "I am a girl" or "I am a boy" which solidifies by the end of the second year (Schwartz, 1986). It begins with sex assignment at birth, and sets in motion a series of acculturation experiences, which in the girl's case, teach her that she is female and further delimits for her how a female is supposed to act, think and feel in her family and society. Learning about one's gender also occurs in the context of the maturation of cognitive capacities (Kohlberg, 1966). Direct observation of little girls supports the view that once the girl labels herself as female, this serves as a primary and basic organizer of subsequent gender experience and plays an organizing role in psychic structure (Kleeman, 1976). According to Tyson (1981), self-labeling acts also as a guide for the child to seek "self-like" objects with whom to identify. Thus, at the end of the second year, a little girl's core gender

identity has been well established locating and guiding the girl's behavior in relationships with other people (Person & Oversey, 1983; Tyson, 1982).

Gender role identity, has been defined as the individual's self-evaluation of psychological femaleness or maleness. Gender role identity, is shaped by "body, ego, socialization and sex-discrepant objects relations ... it represents a psychological achievement." (Person & Oversey, 1983, p.222). Expanding this conception, Schwartz (1986) adds:

Gender role identity refers to a gendered sense of self, which is multiply determined by biological, sociological and psychological factors. Gender role identity involves an internal self-evaluation of maleness or femaleness and is thus continuous rather than discrete, mutable in a way that core gender identity is not. (p.58).

In summary, core gender identity emerges out of sex assignment at birth and develops through rearing experiences. According to several sources, core gender identity is non-conflictual (Person & Oversey, 1983; Stoller, 1968) and constructed through cognitive and experiential factors. Gender role identity, on the other hand, is more complex and mutable. It has to do with the meanings conveyed to the child related to being a male or female in particular bio-psychosocial contexts (Bergman, 1982; Kleeman, 1971; Schwartz, 1986).

Feminine Gender Role Identity and  
the Mother-Daughter Relationship

The idea that the mother-daughter relationship is an unique bond, necessary for the successful emergence of the adult woman's gender identity is recurrent in psychoanalytic thought. In general, the literature has described how based on a life-long relationship with her mother, the daughter learns to value or devalue her femininity. She internalized many of the same mechanisms used by her mother in resolving conflicts. She learns what it is to be an unique, separate person or finds she is not encouraged to develop a separate identity (Bergman, 1982; Friedman, 1980).

Through a mother's responses to her body, a daughter begins to acquire a sense of her own sexuality. In teaching, nurturing and sharing with her daughter, a mother becomes an example for her daughter about what it is to be female. It has been proposed that daughters, in turn, have the dual difficult tasks of identifying with their mothers while struggling to attain self-sufficiency and autonomy. These identificatory processes have been described as contributing to the ultimate consolidation of the adult women's female gender identity (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981).

The continuing relationship between mother and

daughter not only supports earlier acquired identifications but also fosters changes in the way these gender-related identifications are used in resolving conflict and promoting adaptations in adulthood. The role of the father in the context of the nuclear family has also been examined as one which provides validation or one which can undermine the daughter's sense of herself as a female. Yet, his contribution to the daughter's gender identity development has been conceptualized as qualitatively different. The father presents his daughter with a masculine view of her femaleness, while the mother's input is central in passing on the feminine point of view about what it means to be a woman (Friedman, 1980).

It has been proposed that a thorough understanding of feminine gender role identity, requires consideration of developmental sequences, since the same factors which contribute to healthy ego development also affect healthy gender identity formation (Kleeman, 1976; Schwartz, 1986; Stoller, 1968). These ego functions, as well as gender role identity, develop in the context of object-relations.

According to Kleeman (1971) gender identity includes the following developmental steps:

1. Establishment of core gender identity or sense of self as feminine.

2. Development of body image and reality testing.
3. Development of genital awareness, self-exploration, and stimulation.
4. Communication between parent and child (verbal and non-verbal).
5. Opportunity to imitate mother.
6. Development of identificatory processes with mother.

A review of these issues as they unfold in the course of a female child's psychosexual and separation-individuation process follows. The mother's input in these is documented.

### Developmental Considerations

#### Infancy: Emergence of Core Gender Identity

The normative lack of differentiation between the infant daughter and her mother is complemented by the mother's own blurring of boundaries, she cannot help but see herself in her infant daughter. The many ways in which these reverberations echo through the mother-daughter relationship have tremendous impact on the developing gender role identity and continue, with periods of greater and lesser decisiveness, through adolescence. (Schwartz, 1986, p. 60)

Although the totality of the self is much more than one's gender, gender-related feedback is crucial for a self-image and a self-concept. There is a very early onset of "gender feedback" effect (Money & Erhart, 1972).

Parents have gender-dimorphic expectancies and babies have gender dimorphic activity. In utero, girl babies move as much as boy babies, but their movements are less angular and somewhat smoother. A mother's attitudes about her baby's sex will, even at a very early stage, convey gender-related meanings and messages. The mother in responding to "you have had a little girl", begins to convey what she expects or wishes the child to become and in doing so influences results (Kleeman, 1971). Baby girls are reported to be touched more, vocalized to more and breast-fed more often (Goldberg & Lewis, 1969; Kagan & Lewis, 1969). The mother's reactions to her baby's sex will impact on the construction of the little girl's core gender identity (Stoller, 1976). Thus, feminine core gender identity begins with sex assignment at birth and continues through the building of a differentiated body image, which appears to become clearer by the middle of the second year (Tyson, 1982). Around this time genital arousal and cognitive advances facilitate the awareness of belonging to a specific sex, as well as, the discovery of genital anatomical difference (Galeson & Roiphe, 1976). It has been argued that the nature of the girl's reaction to these differences (for example, penis envy), is largely dependant on the quality of the mother-child relationship and the mother's sense of her own femininity (Bergman,

1982; Tyson, 1982). Bergman (1982) has further stated that the girl's femininity and the impact on her of the sexual difference are closely connected with the mother's subtle ways of communicating to her child how she feels about having a female child, what she wishes her to be and how she feels she might be as she grows up. Gradually, the child develops these maternal attitudes by way of her increasing capacity to construct mental representations. The internalized identifications color this important aspect of the little girl's sense of self.

After the second year of life, maternal attitudes are increasingly present in the child as the expressible identity of being a girl. Kleeman (1971) states this point clearer:

The little girl from one year to three can under normal conditions demonstrate a feeling of pride in her being, in her being a girl, in her body and specifically in her genitals, if these attitudes are being conveyed to her. Her femininity is not dependant on believing she is inferior and anatomically deprived. This is not to say that observation of anatomical differences, castration anxiety and penis envy are unimportant in the second year or thereafter, but it is to say that these latter are not prerequisites, as Freud claimed, for the emergence of femininity. (p.16)

### Rapprochement

Around 14 to 23 months, what Mahler et al (1975) have termed the rapprochement subphase of the separation-individuation process takes place in normative

development. The rapprochement stage is characterized by acquisition of upright locomotion and the beginnings of representational intelligence. Physical separateness and cognitive awareness of separateness lead the little girl to deliberately search for or avoid mother. Awareness that one could leave mother is accompanied by some emotional understanding that mother could leave the child. The toddler soon discovers that her wishes and needs do not control mother. At this point in development, several issues coincide: growing awareness of separateness, discovery of anatomical differences, failures in the toddler's omnipotent wishes and core gender identity awareness ("I am a girl"). Thus difficulties in negotiating the rapprochement crisis could become linked to gender and appear as chronic penis envy or castration fantasies in girls (Schwartz, 1986). How could this come about?

In the conflicts of the rapprochement phase (Mahler et al, 1975), the issues of maintaining pride in her femininity will also surface for the little girl. This means that she has to differentiate herself as an individual, separate psychologically from her mother, while still maintaining a secure sense of herself and pride in her gender. It has been argued that where the mother-daughter relationship has been positive and where

the mother is comfortable with her own femininity, the mother can transmit confidence to her little girl, pride in her body and this in turn increases the little girl's identification with her mother (Bergman, 1982; Tyson, 1982). On the other hand, a poor mother-daughter relationship or a mother with a negative appraisal of herself as a female, could foster a period of increasing anger, anxiety, defiance, penis envy and a depressive mood in her toddler girl (Mahler, 1966). At this point in development "penis envy" may come to represent a general sense of worthlessness, narcissistic vulnerability, inadequacy, deprivation and damage (Grossman & Stewart, 1976).

Swartz proposes that it is the "fall from omnipotence" characteristic of a poorly negotiated rapprochement and of the child's rage at the mothers' emphatic failures which could appear as chronic penis envy or castration fantasies in girls. She argues that these reflect gender role identity conflicts traceable to the rapprochement crisis.

Tyson (1982) expresses the idea that at this point in development, the discovery of anatomical difference acts like a "psychic organizer". The little girl, in looking to her mother as a "self-like" object, and in finding her mother comfortable with her own femininity can react with

increasing confidence in her sense of her own body. A girl whose relationship with her mother has been positive, reacts with increased fantasy and imaginative play around issues of gender role. Thus, as early as the first year and a half, a little girl's doll play is revealing in its manifestation of an identification with her mother's reproductive functions. The little girl increasingly portrays in her play her "wish" for a baby or her wish to "be like mother", identifying with the maternal ego ideal (Blum, 1981).

#### The "Phallic Phase"

Most psychoanalytic theorizing on the "phallic phase", next in traditional developmental considerations, focuses on the envy of the penis provoked by heightened masturbation and exhibitionism. Penis envy may surface in varying degrees in girls according to such accounts (Galeson & Roiphe, 1976; Tyson, 1982). It may be manifested in lack of pride in having a female body and envy towards boys. The development of femininity may be compromised if the girl doesn't find adequate solutions, such as those found in being admired for her physical skills and her feminine attractiveness (Tyson, 1982).

Blum (1981) has pointed out that although "castration anxiety" and "penis envy" are important, they cannot be

regarded as organizers of femininity. The phallic phase is no longer considered as the beginning of gender development for the girl (Stoller, 1968, 1977). Core gender identity and female gender role identity are established prior to the phallic phase (Tyson, 1982).

#### The Impact of the PreOedipal Maternal Representation

In revising the relevant psychoanalytic literature, one is struck by the numerous papers and references to the regressive pull of the pre-oedipal mother's psychic representation for the girl. Difficulties in differentiating from mother are stressed as authors describe the girl's struggle to emancipate from the pre-phallic mother (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1970; Deutsch, 1944).

This issue deserves particular detailed discussion. Several authors appear to be in agreement that the girl's preoedipal attachment to the mother differs significantly from the boy's and that this difference may lie in a particular quality of "ambivalence" or "hostility", which may be inherent. Freud (1933) and Brunswick (1940) suggest a number of sources for this ambivalence, including but not limited to the narcissistic injury presumed to be the result of the discovery of anatomical differences. Although Galenson and Roiphe (1976) refer to the contribution of maternal personality factors to the

girl's preoedipal mother-attachment they then stress the "castration reaction", excluding nearly all else.

Deutsch (1944) argued that certain aspects of the personality of the mother may contribute significantly to the ambivalent weight of the preoedipal mother attachment. All of the authors suggest that as a result of accumulated "hostility" the little girl gradually relinquishes her preoedipal attachment to her mother and turns toward her father erotically, thus entering the oedipal phase.

Tyson (1982) comments:

There are many paradoxes for the girl at this stage of her development. Her ultimate feminine identification and heterosexual adaptation depend on her taking the steps toward the positive oedipal position, but her anaclitic dependence on her mother continues, as does her fear of loss of mother's love. Her ego ideal is based on wishes to be with and like her mother, whom she continues to view as ideal. Oedipal fantasies involving father arouse loyalty conflicts and feelings of guilt. Often a little girl's continuing ambivalence toward her mother, due to prolonged symbiotic tie or an excessively conflictual rapprochement crisis, makes oedipal attachment to the father difficult. (p. 78-79).

There is however, insufficient documentation of the developmental transformations in the daughter's psychological experience of mother. Instead of thinking of the little girl's "renunciation" of the preoedipal mother, it seems more useful to think of this development as a transformation of internal representations (Dahl, 1982).

The pre-oedipal period is different in length and quality for the girl. Chodorow (1978) characterizes the difference as based on the fact that a mother is of the same gender as her daughter and different from her son's:

This leads to her experiencing and treating them differently. I do not mean this as a biological claim. I am using gender here to stand for the mother's particular psychic structure and relational sense, for her (probable) heterosexuality, and for her conscious acceptance of the ideology, meanings and expectations that go into being a gendered member of our society and understanding what gender means. Being a grown woman and mother also means having been a daughter of a mother, which affects the nature of her motherliness and quality of her mothering. (p. 98)

Chodorow further indicates that prolonged symbiosis and narcissistic overidentification are particularly characteristic of early relationships between mothers and daughters.

### Oedipal Relations and Triangulation

Psychoanalysts have offered varied interpretations of the girl's turn to her father. All accounts claim that the oedipal dilemma is not only a father-daughter concern but also a mother-daughter concern (Chodorow, 1978):

Every step of the way, as the analysts describe it, a girl develops her relationship to her father while looking back at their mother, to see if their mother is envious, to make sure she is in fact separate, to see if she can in this way win her mother, to see if she is really independent. Her turn to her father is both an attack on her mother and an expression of her love for her. (p. 126)

Preoedipal relations centered on the mother shape the structural and affective form of the girl's oedipal relations as well as the objects and rivals through the oedipal period. She never gives up her mother as an internal or external love object. What happens is that her infant dyadic world becomes triadic.

Abelin (1980) has described the process of triangulation in early development, which Schwartz (1986), has emphasized, as critical for the understanding of gender role identity in girls. The importance of this conceptualization for the girl's development strives in its explanation of how the world of relationships shifts from exclusively dyadic (mother-daughter) to the inclusion of others (mother-daughter-father):

Fathers and significant male others, in the positive affirmation of the girl's tentative sexual advances, help consolidate her sense of being both the object and subject of desire. Moving out into the world increasingly able to join and leave mother, the little girl has an other on whom to exercise her many creative skills and abilities. The quality of the mirroring of those abilities and skills, their reception or lack of it, their enhancement or denigration will inevitably be linked to gender role. (Schwartz, 1986, p. 70).

Identification with mother will be complimented with behaviors to members of the opposite sex. Approval for gender-specific behaviors and feelings will come from both sexes (Money & Erhart, 1972):

A mother approves (or disapproves of) the gender

-appropriateness of her daughter's responses towards not only herself, but towards the father also. The father reciprocates." (p. 185).

According to Abelin (1980), triangulation is divided into general early triangulation which is similar for boys and girls and a "tripartite model" which is related to gender differences. While the boy can easily disidentify from mother (Greenson, 1968), the little girl remains involved with mother as a "mirror of the self" and an identificatory figure.

It has been proposed that the quality of mother-daughter transactions at this stage would depend on two sets of factors. First, maternal personality factors, particularly the degree to which the mother has achieved her own mature feminine gender role identity will make a significant contribution to the quality of the daughter's attachment to the mother during the second and third years of life, Secondly, heightened ambivalence between mother and daughter will directly affect the girl's relinquishing of this "preoedipal attachment to mother" (Dahl, 1982).

After 18 months, as the girl turns to her father she brings with her the "mirror of the mother's eye" with which she will compare and integrate her father's reception to her gender: "Thus, along with the cognitive organization and process of identification her/like-me female there is a reflection in the eyes of the other:

woman as other seen through the eyes of the male."  
(Schwartz, 1986, p. 63).

Triangulation will bring to the foreground the incorporation into the mental world of the girl of significant others in addition to solidifying gender role identity.

Chodorow (1978) further recapitulates oedipal-triangular relationships for the girl as follows:

A girl does "turn" to her father, and experiences her mother as a rival. This change of object, however, is founded on a lack of change. It is based in a girl's relation to her mother, both as this has become part of her internal object-world and ego defenses and as this relationship continues to be important and to change externally as much as, or maybe more than her relationship to her father. Moreover this "turn" cannot be absolute because of the depth of her maternal attachment and because of the emotional and physical distance of her father (now and previously). An oedipal girl, according to psychoanalysts, oscillates between attachment to her mother and to her father. (p.129) ... The organization of parenting generates a relational situation in a girl's oedipus complex in which she does not need to repress her oedipal attachments so thoroughly as the boy does. Her attachment to her father in particular is more idealized and less intense than a boy's to his mother. Given this less charged attachment, and given her ongoing relation to her mother, she is less likely to fear maternal retaliation, (p. 133) ... the oedipus complex in girls is characterized by the continuation of preoedipal attachments and preoccupations, sexual oscillation in an oedipal triangle, and the lack of either absolute change of love object, or absolute oedipal resolution. (p. 133-134)

In summary, according to current psychoanalytic understanding, mothers remain primary in the girls psychic

life. This results in a structurally different inner world. When later on the father becomes an important primary person, the girls enters a "bisexual relational triangle" (Chodorow, 1978). This means that the preoedipal tie to the mother, one of intense involvement reflecting issues of primary identification, primary love, and dependence versus separation is added on to triangular attachments. In turn, because mothers tend to experience their daughters as more like themselves, daughters continue through the oedipal or triangular attachment situation involved in issues of merging and separateness.

These dynamics are postulated as particular to female personality development. It is because of her relationship to her mother that the girl emerges from this period with a connectedness and sense of empathy in her sense of self. Her experience with the now internalized preoedipal mother and the fact that she is parented by a person of the same gender, account for girls' experiencing themselves as more contiguous with and related to the external object world (Chodorow, 1978).

Female qualities of subjectivity, stronger fantasy life, greater intuition and inner perception are products of her richer context-bound inner world and of the continuing attachment to mother and lack of absolute repression of the oedipal father.

In terms of superego development, feminine development, as described above can account for a less rigid and less punitive super ego (Chodorow, 1978; Deutsch, 1944).

Gilligan (1982) stresses that relationships and issues of dependency and separation are the legacy of early childhood experience for women's femininity and identity. Her empirical studies have confirmed that in women's moral development:

The moral problem arises from conflicting responsibilities rather than from competing rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract. This conception of morality as concerned with the activity of care, centers moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships. (p. 19)

Girls also emerge from this period with the stage set for a heterosexual object-choice. Issues of gender role identity become linked with sexual orientation. This orientation has its roots in preoedipal and oedipal object relations. For most women this means a heterosexual object choice, stemming from the oedipal erotization of father. The father's role is to react to his female child in ways that encourage heterosexual-erotic attachment (Chodorow, 1968; Tyson, 1982). "Exclusion of identification with the mother" and "deidentification with mother as a female" (Schwartz, 1986) have been offered as failures in triangulation, and failures in heterosexual

oedipal resolution.

Again, the mother-daughter relationship has been explored to explain the dynamics of some lesbian object choices. In these accounts, erotic attachment to mother (versus father) and internalization of rigid gender role stereotypes coupled with the inability of the mother-daughter pair to negotiate separation-relatedness leads to early conflicted gender role identity, distancing from the world of women and denial of relatedness (Schwartz, 1986).

#### Latency and Prepuberty

Latency is currently defined by psychoanalysts as that period in a child's development where the demands of education and socialization, as mediated by the parents, consolidate ego and superego functions (Clower, 1977).

By the age of five, typical feminine behaviors are manifested. The little girl is now actively comparing herself and perhaps competing with mother. Another complex wish comes to influence mother-daughter dynamics; this is the little girl's wish to idealize mother in the service of rehearsal of gender-roles. The little girl wants to be big like mommy.

If she can, she will arrange or persuade her siblings, her playmates, her peers, or a doll into a game where they are little and she is big. She will recruit

adult clothes, tall and long, to "dress up" in, and up is where she wants so much to be. She has a patronizing disdain for someone younger or smaller.

Mother clearly becomes her "ideal"; mother knows more; mother is skillful; mother becomes the ideal attractive model. This is reciprocated by mother's identification of her little girl with herself and her own ideal self. The attraction of mother as ideal is a hallmark of the so-called "latency" period. This period is marked by learning and living in the larger extra familial world of school and peers. It is a period used to practice gender roles (Tyson, 1982), a period of "conscious role-training" (Chodorow, 1978).

The girl continues in a dialectic relationship with mother, and reworking self definitions and gender roles.

Further details of these developments were summarized in Chodorow's (1978) descriptions of Deutsch's (1944) writings of the mother-daughter relation during prepuberty. These, describe how during this period the girl may become very critical of her family, especially of her mother. Her mother and home may become the bad while the extrafamilial world is good. In an attempt to solve her ambivalent dependence and sense of oneness with mother, the girl splits the good and bad aspects of objects. Also, because the girl's cognition still

operates on a concrete level (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), it is difficult for her to reconcile this antithesis. The girl may further attempt to defend against the pull of pre-oedipal wishes for mother by idealizing another woman: a teacher or an older girl or perhaps a character from a book or a movie star. Her solutions involve defensive splitting, along with projection, introjections and negative identifications (i.e., "I am what mother is not."). All these developments reflect the prepubertal girl's attempts to shield herself from the intense identification, idealization and object-love of mother. Even while trying to merge herself with other female figures, she still expresses her feelings of dependence and her primary identification with her mother.

At other times the girl seeks in her "best, best friend", a reflection of the self, who offers continuation of merging experiences with a female other than mother (Chodorow, 1978; Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1982):

This is a sharing experience and a supportive relationship. ... There is a special friend with whom the girl has an intimate and exclusive relationship that fortifies the spheres of the self and body image. (p. 29)

The school-age girls' task is to become competent and knowledgeable. Mother and her generation are superior in their competence and knowledge. This makes the girl's self-image often deflated or infantilized. In the sharing

with peers of riddles and the keeping of secrets the girl tries to possess the power of knowing more than mother and other adults.

In the prepubertal period, the girl aided by increasing cognitive capacities and contacts with the extra-familial world will become more competent and knowledgeable. She will alternate between total rejection of mother who represents infantile dependence, and feeling like mother's extension or double. She will begin to wish for a promising future in which these contradictions will reconcile.

### Adolescence

Puberty and the onset of menstruation usher the next developmental phase in gender identity formation. Menstruation, a uniquely female development, shared by mother and daughter creates a "developmental crisis" (Ritvo, 1976). It is important thus, to consider its impact on the girl's feminine gender role identity. Menstruation is an important landmark in early adolescence with all the characteristics of a normal developmental crisis. It can be a stimulus or an obstacle to the progress of development, where new aptitudes and abilities become available or where vulnerabilities may heighten. Progressions and regressions are common in developmental

crises. Menstruation may stir old anal and urinary conflicts, if conceived as an excretory phenomenon. It could also stir old fears of damage, mutilation, genital injury and dissatisfaction with the body image in girls predisposed to these because of earlier unresolved conflicts.

Ritvo (1976) comments on a certain dynamic in the mother-daughter relation which could hinder resolution:

Compliance to a mother who persists in viewing the menarche in terms of anal function may further stifle the girl's ability to find an ego-syntonic and developmentally progressive resolution. This is one way a woman's attitude to her own femininity may be transmitted from generation to generation. (p. 129).

On the other hand, the mother can be a source of support and understanding. Talking about the physical manifestations of puberty with a mother and other females helps the girl in integrating body image conceptions realistically and in dealing with depressive fantasies about the body and the self brought about by conceptions of menstruation as a "female burden" or the "curse". There is also anger that in being feminine one is burdened with a degree of flooding, or painful contractions at the onset of menstruation. The synonyms for the menstrual period at this stage, including "the curse" are good natured expressions of anger. But the feeling is that this is an unfair burden, that men have it

easier.

Authors have pointed out that many of these undervaluation of menarche stem from culturally ingrained fear of women's reproductory functions and from a defensive devaluation of women's childbearing potential (Dinnerstein, 1977; Schwartz, 1986). On the other hand, menstruation can help the girl resolve earlier issues such as penis envy (Tyson, 1982). The girl can now begin to show greater pride in her body, which has a direct bearing in her ultimate sense of femininity and in her ability to experience sexual pleasure. Menarche can also enhance the girl's self-image by making her feel adult-like and belonging to the world of women (Ritvo, 1976).

During early puberty the girl begins once more to concern herself with her father and other males:

Just as object-relations during the pre-pubertal period repeat elements of the pre-oedipal period, object-relations at puberty and adolescence resemble those of the oedipal situation. ... This period is characterized by bisexual wavering and indecisiveness about the relative importance to the girl of females (mother/girlfriends) and males (father/boys). (Chodorow, 1978, p. 138). ... The two periods when a father is most crucial to his daughter's development are the oedipal period and early adolescence, both times when a girl is supposed to be negotiating her transition to heterosexuality. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 139)

How the father responded to the little girl's love for him during the earlier period is significant at this time, when hormonal and bodily changes bring an upsurge of

erotic interest and genital strivings (Ritvo, 1976).

In this regard, psychoanalytically oriented authors, have pointed to two general sets of circumstances which come into play as the girl enters adolescence. One is related to how girls, as they remain connected to their mothers internally and externally, must begin to form intimate relations with the opposite sex. Whether the girl ultimately chooses a man as erotic object or not, her strong ongoing relationship to her mother is omnipresent. According to Chodorow (1978):

Girls in our society have normally remained externally and internally in relationships with their preoedipal mother and have been preoccupied with issues of separation, identification without merging mitigation of dependency, freedom from not "rejecting" their mother and women in favor of their father and men, but remain in a bisexual triangle throughout childhood and into puberty. They usually make a sexual resolution in favor of men and their father, but retain an internal emotional triangle. (p. 140)

Ritvo (1976) adds: "If by the end of adolescence, the woman has not been able to keep the relation to the man free enough of this inheritance from her mother, the probability of establishing a satisfying or viable marriage is considerably reduced." (p. 134)

The other area of concern is the reception the girl's femininity, her sexual desires and dreams of romantic love receive from the male world, Authors point to this reception as one tinged with cultural preconceptions in

which women are devalued and viewed with contempt (Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1977).

Sometimes, it happens that both mother and father force the girl into traditional roles from which the child was free during childhood. Some mothers who were previously content of their daughter's "tomboyishness", now become worried and frightened that the daughter may deviate from cultural norms. Other mothers, may worry about their daughters because of their physical maturation and will become hostile and competitive towards their daughters, blocking all of the adolescent's natural attempts at identification. While yet another kind of mother may resent and stifle her daughter's attempts to experiment with flexible role standards which reject the "second sex" status quo. During their daughter's adolescence, mothers invariably feel the upsurging of their own psychosexual and role conflicts. This is evidenced in their questioning of the adolescent's own gender role identity (Schwartz, 1986).

Kaplan (1984) has pointed to several solutions for a girl to become psychologically separate from mother, while integrating her gender role identity: "During adolescence the emotional dissension between mother and daughters can assume wild proportions. The struggle, a result of personal unique inner conflicts, is always exacerbated by

the subtle social message that girls are better off if they remain childlike." (p. 169). Kaplan (1984) cites precocious heterosexuality as one attempt to "flee from mother", where the girl is searching for, in men and boys, the maternal cuddling and caretaking. Sexual intercourse becomes a "nursing situation". Ritvo (1976), points to the girl's need to hold and to be held, much patterned on old experiences and fantasies with mother, now occurring during adolescence. Exaggerated "sexy" womanhood, as exemplified in outrageous clothes, makeup and hairstyles, are subtle attempts on the part of the girl to measure up to womanhood. Another solution is the "good girl", who shares all with mother, never getting into trouble, always imitating mother in dress and mannerisms. Kaplan (1984) describes this mother-daughter pair as clinging to the "beginning", just as it was before the girl became a woman.

Kaplan (1984) has argued that where cultural role stereotypes are prescribed and limited, the transition from adolescent to woman is more of the latter type, on the average, but as a society becomes more complex:

... varieties of womanhood are more numerous, we expect more inner stress and overt conflict between mother and daughter, even in the intimacy just described, which is more rigid and defensive than the easy going intimacy of traditional societies. (p. 170).

Several authors coincide in their propositions that whenever gender role privileges remain asymmetrical and

dysfunctional, the female adolescent will have a more difficult time coming to terms with earlier internalizations of female gender role. The young woman's expected developmental contradictions can be the source of positive affirmations of womanhood when her relational identification with her mother and other females has proceeded in an atmosphere of reconciliation in the particular mother-daughter pair. The mother's own workings in terms of psychological closeness-separateness from her own mother play a crucial role here (Chodorow, 1978; Kaplan, 1984; Kleeman, 1976; Ritvo, 1976).

Because adolescent individuation leads the way to adult object relations, especially in the final outcome of sexual object choice, (Blos, 1979), the father's ability to positively affirm his daughter's sexuality and reflect to his daughter an appreciation of her interests and talents will also be crucial at this stage (Schwartz, 1986).

Blos (1979) and Blum (1972) have additionally examined the role of the female ego ideal in adolescent development. The girl through her relationships with admired older women, female peers and a less idealized, more integrated relationship with her mother, expands her concept of femininity. Identification with the ego ideal, is a source of early self-esteem rooted in the primary

identification with mother and the experience of maternal empathy during the separation individuation cycle.

The female ego ideal will be a major determinant of the girl's values, morality and self-esteem. The female ego ideal includes prohibitions and codes of ethics, as well as the maternal ego ideal (Blum, 1982). The wish for a child and motherhood changes during adolescence and as the girl develops from adolescent to woman (Ritvo, 1976). The girl's identification with her own mother and other mother figures will become very important in her development of her own ideals of motherhood:

Motherhood, as an ideal has early roots in the girl's identification with her mother and her infantile wishes for a child. As Freud said, nothing brings greater pleasure and satisfaction than the fulfillment of an old wish or dream. Many women find it the most moving enriching and profound experience of their lives. (Ritvo, 1976, p. 136)

The capacity of the young woman for pregnancy, child-bearing and motherhood, her abilities to handle a career or profession, as well as motherhood, will be colored by the impact of her ongoing relation with her mother.

Some authors (Eisenbud, 1982; Schwartz, 1986; Chodorow, 1978) have proposed that pride in gender, heterosexual object choice and resolution of the rage at the mother's emphatic failures, will help the girl in maintaining healthy gender role identifications with mother, only when role relationships and power-related

role privileges are found to be sufficiently flexible in families. Little girls can and will identify with a woman who is valued, confident and competent.

Constraints in female development have been pointed to stem out of systematic culturally produced distortions regarding the value of women (Waites, 1982). Phallocentrism and the asymmetry of parenting (Chodorow, 1978) as well as, the dread of women's bodies and reproductory functions (Dinnerstein, 1977) have been presented as arguments to point to the contributions of a series of conditions which affect how a mother feels about her gendered self and what she will transmit to her daughter. Social relations in the microcosm of familial triangular relations will thus be reflected in the girl's identifications with her mother and in her ego ideal.

#### Psychoanalysis and the Concept of Internalization and Identification

Following this review, what can we hypothesize about the contributions of the mother-daughter relationship to a woman's feminine gender role identity?

Psychoanalytic theory, guided by the premise that early experience creates a series of internalizations, which in turn structure and guide all later object relations, utilizes the concept of internalization to refer to the shifts of events, actions or situations

inward into intrapsychic levels. Through the process of internalization perceived characteristics of the other become elements of one's own enduring or subjective private world (Schafer, 1968). By internalizing an inner representation of mother, the child's needs for the actual mother is reduced and separation occurs (Mahler, et al, 1975).

Identifications are mental representations of significant others which may be based on real attributes of the other or may bear little resemblance to the real life person. Identification refers to those internalizations that contribute to regulatory or adaptational interactions with the environment. They are representations of significant persons which are accompanied by more or less positive or negative affect, may be more or less ego syntonic, may be largely preconscious and not accessible to awareness. Identifications may represent observable actions of a significant person or they may develop from some perception of another that may not necessarily be a very salient characteristic of that other person (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981).

An identification can be defined as a function or as a process. When defined as processes, identifications are internal representations which contribute to structural

changes in the ego and in various degrees reflect a differentiation of self from object. When defined as a function, they are conceived as internal representations which have a role in promoting adaptation and resolving conflict. In mother-daughter relations, the complexity of female gender role identity formation will be reproduced as the daughter from very early on, selectively identifies with qualities of the mother.

In the mother-daughter relation in contrast to the mother-son relationship, identifications are reciprocal. This means mothers also experience their daughters as being "like themselves" (Chodorow, 1978). Daughters use other sources of identifications including the father, family members, teachers, etc.

Although there has been clinical support for this theoretical position, as in case reports of simultaneous psychoanalysis of mother and daughter (Levy, 1960; Sprince, 1962), there have been no studies which contain sufficient data to permit detailed observation of the content of a woman's identifications with her mother or the impact of the mother's gender-related messages which significantly influence how the daughter as an adult raises her own female children.

It is proposed, that the complexity encompassed in what is meant by an identification, coupled with the fact

that the term is used to signify process, function or both, have contributed to the lack of studies which could help understand more about intergenerational transmission of psychological themes contained in a woman's identification with her mother.

A major aim of the present study is to investigate the stability and quality of feminine gender role identity over the course of a woman's life by examining her relationship with her own mother, her current conceptions and adjustment to gender roles and her formulations of how she is communicating gender messages to her adolescent daughter. The woman's adolescent daughter will also be interviewed in an effort to document intergenerational patterns (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Subjects

Ten middle class, married women and their adolescent daughters were interviewed. Selection criteria included that: 1) the adult daughter's mother was her primary caretaker during childhood, and that they were the primary caretakers of their daughters during at least the first five years, 2) their mothers are alive, and 3) they maintain contact with their mothers at the present time. This child should be between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. The first and second selection criteria ensured that the primary identificatory female figure in their childhood was in effect their natural mother and that they continue a relationship with her now.

The third selection criteria ensured that sufficient time elapsed in order for the subjects to have a number of opinions, beliefs and feelings about their own daughter's gender identity acquisition, as well as a sufficient amount of childrearing experience with their daughters, which were substantiate experiences regarding the transmission of gender-related messages.

Socioeconomic status (middle class) was determined using the following criteria:

1. Education (elementary school--grades, high school graduate, college--years completed, master's degree, graduate education in addition to master's degree, post-graduate education) and occupation of the woman and her husband.
2. Residential area where they live.
3. Family income: Over \$70,000  
\$70,000-50,000  
\$50,000-30,000  
Under \$30,000

In addition, the subjects who met the criteria for "middle class" reported themselves as presently belonging to that class at the time of the initial phone contact.

#### Recruitment

Subjects were recruited through personal and professional networks of the investigator. Friends, acquaintances and professional colleagues were informed of the subject selection criteria discussed in the previous section. They were asked to identify persons who could be potential participants in this study. Attention was paid to exclude personal friends from the sample to minimize

potential sources of bias in the interviews.

The investigator then made an initial phone contact with the women identified as possible participants. Potential volunteers were informed that the study involved an exploration of the relationship between mothers and their adolescent daughters and that the data were to be collected through a personal interview requiring approximately one and a half to two hours allotted at their convenience. In addition, they were told that in order to gather intergenerational data, their daughters were also to be asked to participate in the study.

If the mother-daughter pair agreed to participate, they were informed that the interviews would be audio-taped. At that point the volunteers were screened to insure they meet the demographic selection criteria. A meeting time was then set at the subjects' convenience.

### Setting

The women were interviewed in their homes to foster familiarity and maximize the degree of rapport which is conducive to greater self-disclosure. This decision was also based on the observation that information gathered in a respondent's home provides a wealth of detail that is often missing from the information collected in a

laboratory setting (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981).

### Procedure

Mothers and daughters were interviewed over the course of two and a half hours. At that point, they were asked to complete the Family History Data Sheet (refer to Appendix A) and sign the Consent Form (refer to Appendix B).

They were then interviewed using the "Mother-Daughter Interview" (refer to Appendix C). This is a semi-structured interview developed for the purposes of this study on the basis of careful reading of the relevant literature on current psychoanalytic views of feminine gender identity development. The questions were also generated on the basis of a small number of pilot interviews with women who had an adolescent daughter.

The data were organized by dividing the Mother-Daughter Interview into the following content areas (refer to Appendix D):

Area A - This area addressed the issue of how the subject verbalized her "internal" self-evaluation as a female. It additionally addressed how the gender message of "I am a girl" was integrated and recalled for each subject during the course of development.

Area B - This area addressed specific maternal messages regarding women and female roles. The aim of this set of questions was to further understand what was being transmitted intergenerationally regarding issues of female gender roles and conceptions of women and how it was being transmitted.

Area C - The questions in this area aimed at obtaining each subject's verbalizations regarding how they perceived the influence of other significant object relations on their gendered self. The role of the father was specifically explored in this area. The topic of identity themes within the family of origin was explored.

Area D - This area explored further themes of the adult subjects' current degrees of comfort with the female roles and what they were actually saying to their daughters were about being a woman. The questions in this area also tapped further relational identifications between mothers and daughters at the time of the interview and projections for the future by also asking the adolescent about what their mothers were conveying to them about being female.

#### Data Analysis

A qualitative methodology was utilized in the analysis of the data in this study. The audiotaped

Mother-Daughter interviews were transcribed verbatim. Data analysis depended on the following sequence of analysis:

1. Initial readings of each subject's transcript, as a whole. Notations were made regarding the narrative: affective tone of whole interview, affective contradictions and similarities were particularly noted.
2. Following the above, in each transcript, notations were made for each of the four general analysis areas, following the underlying questions in areas of write out descriptions for each interview question.
3. Three classifications began to emerge in the next three readings of the interviews. This was guided by step 2 (above). Then, notations were made regarding mothers' descriptions of her own maternal relations and these were compared this with their adolescent daughters' descriptions of their relations to their mothers.

The three groupings were conceptualized as three possible resolutions in the intergenerational transmission of female gender role identity in the context of the mother-daughter relation.

Two mother-daughter pairs were characterized as Resolution 1: I am like my mother; four mother-daughter

pairs were characterized as resolution 2: I don't want to be like my mother, but...am I?; four mother-daughter pairs were characterized by resolution 3: I am not like my mother. An additional separate content area emerged. The role of the father and other object relations. Qualitative variations in intergenerational transmission of gender messages were developed for mother-daughter pairs in each resolution, presenting some descriptive quotes from the interviews.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

In the data analysis it appeared that there were varying modes of resolving gender issues in the context of the ongoing mother-daughter bond. Three possible "resolutions" are presented in this chapter. These emerged from the analysis of the transcripts with the aid of the underlying questions proposed in areas A, B, D (Chapter III).

The second distinct issue that emerged from the content analysis was the role of other object relationships. This emerged from the analysis of transcripts aided by underlying questions proposed in area C (Chapter III).

In the following chapter, three modes of resolving female gender role identity issues will be presented and described. This presentation will be followed by a description of the role of other object relationships.

The three particular ways that the mother-daughter bond had an impact on the daughter's sense of self as female and on her gender roles were conceptualized as

resolutions. While the resolutions refer primarily to the mothers' relationship to her own mother, resolutions which reflected similarities were found in the adolescent daughters for Resolutions 1 and 2. However, in Resolution 3, the adolescent daughters differed from their mothers in the manner in which they described themselves in the context of the mother-daughter bond. These points will be further clarified in the sections below.

Three Resolutions of Issues of Female Gender Role Identity  
in the Context of the Mother-Daughter Bond

Of the ten mother-daughter pairs interviewed two pairs were classified as representing Resolution 1 (I am like my mother), four pairs were classified as representing Resolution 2 (I don't want to be like my mother . . . but am I?), and four pairs were classified as representing Resolution 3 (I am different from my mother).

Resolution 1

I am like my mother. This describes a type of resolution of the primary mother-daughter identification in which adult daughters tended to describe a harmonious bond with their own mothers. They further described feeling that they agreed with their mothers about what was valuable about being a woman, and in their descriptions of themselves. They reported positive recollections about

growing up female. These women described themselves as having their mothers as primary role models. They also described enjoying being a mother to a female child. Their adolescent daughters seemed to share the same positive experience about their gender and gender roles. Relational identifications between generations took place in an atmosphere of reciprocal admiration, acceptance and empathy.

Two pairs appeared to have achieved this form of resolution of female gender role identity. These two pairs had similar, consistent descriptions of women and of self as female across generations. They had positive recollections of growing up female and both adult daughters and adolescents reported that their primary female role model was in fact their own mother. Furthermore, the adult daughters, currently mothers to adolescent girls, reported that they had enjoyed mothering their female child.

Specific themes were found in terms of relational identifications between the generations in these two pairs: mothers and daughters were empathic toward each other and filled with admiration for each other; their descriptions of each other contained themes of reciprocal acceptance. They were also able to express and seemed to experience strong emotions toward each other.

Quality of descriptions of women and self: Positive

The mothers and daughters classified as developing Resolution 1 were found to describe themselves and other women using adjectives which reflected positive self-perceptions. Additionally, their descriptions also reflected that being female is for them a source of pleasure and pride.

For example, one mother, when asked to describe herself as "a woman" responded,

I would tend to see myself as very positive.  
... I have a very strong personality ... am kind and generous ... I love people ... am a hard worker ... I am strong, emotionally and physically.

One of the adolescent daughters responded:

Independent ... but proper, happy, very loving ... She wouldn't tell exactly how you have to be, but there were things you have to know in order to be a woman ... cross your legs ... she'll say that's just the rules to be a proper woman ... Independent, she'll always say do what you want, don't let no one stop you ... Loving and being happy are important things for her ... to her and to me I guess ... I am proud of it.

Quality of Recollections of Growing up Female

The mother-daughter pairs classified as developing Resolution 1 were found to have reactions to gender differences characterized by an early enjoyment of gender awareness (dressing up, looking pretty) followed by a mediating period, usually around latency, in which there was some resentment and rejection of that early conception of "femaleness" due to discovery of the privileges which characterized male gender role learning in their social context at that developmental period. With the advent of adolescence, they described a similar change of attitude toward the gender-related developmental crisis of menstruation. The flexibility and range of emotional expressions contained in their recollections pointed to how their unique mother-daughter relation provided a context of nurturance and reassurance which aided in this particularly female developmental occurrence.

For example, one of the adolescents commented on her recollections of growing up as a female when responding to the question when did you think of yourself as a girl and how did you feel about being a girl?:

I couldn't miss knowing I was a girl, I think I understood that so ... I think I was 4, I think I realized I wasn't gonna be with guys playing and I loved dresses and laces so ... I guess that around four I was pretty much aware of what I was and I liked it ... The only difference between a boy and a girl would be boundaries that we had ... I didn't

mind I was happy about it.

The above quote exemplifies the manner in which, in general, the mothers and daughters in Resolution 1 tended to describe growing up as females.

#### Quality of Identity Themes Related to Mother

The term identity theme refers to inferential descriptions regarding a subject's primary maternal identity. Continuity of gender messages was also found for these two mother-daughter pairs in their descriptions of and references to each other. In the case of the adult daughters a commonality was found in the way in which they recollected their relationship to their own mothers while they were growing up. These pairs can best be described by characterizing their relationships as ones in which there is a general affective tone of reciprocal appreciation, recognition of strengths, admiration, respect and empathy.

For example, one of the mothers described her identity theme in the following manner:

Probably like her (referring to her own mother) like her! ... I had a role model who still is in many ways ... my mother.

To a question requesting the subject to describe who is she more like in her immediate family, one of the adolescents responded "my mother." She elaborated her

identity theme in the following manner:

I have the same ideas ... The reason I say we're alike is because we are closer and we do agree on a lot of things ... we disagree on some things (smiling) ... we like the same things ...

The above quotes exemplify the general tone of what characterized the relationship between the adult daughters and their mothers and adolescent daughters and their mothers in Resolution 1.

In summary, mothers and daughters chosen to exemplify Resolution 1, reported a great deal of comfort with their gendered sense of self, and they seemed to have achieved a balance between internal identity and external role behaviors. They were able to reconcile strengths and weaknesses in the quality of mothering they had received. Mothers had the ability to recollect their past history and integrate into it more recent experiences, and had gradually incorporated these into the manner in which they currently relate to their daughters. Apparently this has contributed to their daughters developing an optimistic, flexible manner of negotiating separation-individuation issues in adolescence. Both mothers and daughters in Resolution 1 seemed aware of the existence of a range of possible feelings positive--as well as negative--in their interactions and were able to report these during the course of the interview in a coherent manner.

In addition, the mothers and daughters were very

empathic toward and admiring of each other. The mothers felt they have done a good job mothering a female child and they reported not being worried about their child's future as a woman.

The mothers who had achieved this resolution perceived their own mothers as strong and very determined women, who worked outside the home and who were raising their children mostly alone, due to different circumstances regarding their husbands (i.e., employment, migration). These particular issues might have created for the adult daughter a special set of circumstances in which, coupled with their mothers' personality variables, contributed to an idealization of the female role. Whether this idealization could be conceptualized as mostly a compromise internalized, formation--that is--defensive, was more difficult to elucidate from the subjects' reports. What was clear from the data was that mothers and daughters in Resolution 1, described how this idealizing of the female role and women had served as a developmental force which led to adaptive choices for the subjects. This was especially true for the mothers in Resolution 1 in terms of feelings of self-worth and ability to enjoy multiple gender-related roles.

Resolution 2I Don't Want to be Like My Mother But . . . Am I?

This describes a kind of resolution in which these adult daughters' descriptions of themselves, of their growing up female and of what is valuable to them about being a woman were characterized by ambivalence, inconsistencies and contradictions. As adults, these women seemed to be trying to integrate their intrapersonal experience of gender, which they described as painfully similar to that of their mothers, while also trying through their overt behaviors to attain their ideal version of a woman, one different from that espoused by their mothers. They seemed to worry about how they had mothered their female child. Their adolescent daughters also had contradictory feelings about their femininity. This was reflected in their difficulties trying to recollect childhood events related to being female. They had contradictory self-descriptions, and described ambivalent experiences of their gender and gender roles. Like their mothers, these adolescents seemed to be trying to reconcile contradictory affects with overt ideal behaviors and attitudes. Relational identifications between generations took place in the absence of a reconciliation between maternal gender role messages and internal gender identity experience.

Four mother-daughter pairs exemplified this type of resolution. Both mothers and daughters were found to be either inconsistent, contradictory or both in their descriptions of themselves and of women. Their recollections of childhood memories of growing up female were negatively toned or meager in content. As mothers of adolescent females they had tried but had been unable to reconcile intrapersonal experiences related to gender to their ideal external gender roles. Their adolescent daughters reflected similarly contradictory, unresolved affects, attitudes and behaviors toward their current and past experience with gender issues and gender roles. The quality of their identity themes was found to either exclude their own mothers or to be negative in reference to their mothers.

#### Quality of Descriptions of Women and Self

The mothers and daughters classified as developing Resolution 2 were found to describe themselves and other women in terms of others' expectations of their behavior or as denoting a very keen awareness of gender issues and dichotomies in gender roles. While some of these mothers were in general more positive about what women are than their own mothers, they described themselves as generally frustrated and as having ambivalent conflicted feelings

regarding women. In general, they reported experiencing gender related feelings much like their own mothers but seemed more aware of the contradictions.

One mother, when asked to describe herself, answered as follows:

Myself as a woman ... I er--(pause) Outgoing and friendly. I guess ... I'm not outgoing, I'm friendly. I like to help other people. I--don't know, that's how I was raised--it's my mother's ... I'm not good at talking about myself."

Another one used the following description referring to how her mother would describe women:

A good woman ... like ... referring to ... when she described a good wife, mother, daughter ... a bad ... a bad woman like someone who has taken away another woman's husband.

Yet another mother, elaborated on how she is somewhat conscious that she couldn't help but replicate unfavorable maternal messages about women to her own daughter. Her mother would have said:

honorable ... humble ... modest ... obedient, affectionate with children not with men ... a lot of insecurity ... feelings of inferiority ... comfortable with her role as a mother, not as a wife ... made motherhood seem like a trap for me ... Women have to work harder ... sometimes I think she thinks I think she's not good enough, which I'm afraid is what my mom used to convey to me.

The above examples from the interviews represent the general tone of descriptions of themselves and other women for mothers in Resolution 2. Their adolescent daughters' transcripts reflected similar viewpoints: women were

defined by either their roles (mother, daughter, wife) or by the manner in which they perform roles for others (i.e., responsible, good, bad, not lazy).

#### Quality of Recollections of Growing Up Female

These mothers and daughters were found to have a keen awareness of gender-related privileges. This often led them to feel resentful and at times rejected. Competitiveness with boys was a major issue reported. Some had a difficult time remembering or were unsure about the quality of affects related to growing up female. This inability to remember childhood memories and the emotions which accompanied it, seemed to be a reflection of defenses against precisely the negative affect associated with growing up female for both mothers and their adolescent daughters.

One mother barely came up with childhood memories, when she did, she talked as follows:

Felt comfortable ... I guess ... I don't know ... long time ago ... enjoyed nice clothes. Period? ... pretty comfortable ... no trouble adjusting ... sex ... nothing exciting ...

Those which elaborated their memories tended to recall feeling mixed up or inferior in comparison to boys or male siblings. For example, one mother's childhood recollections were more specific. They tended to reflect, in her own words:

Some degree of ambivalence ... being very little and having to take care of my little brothers and also ... getting dolls and breaking dolls not being (laughs) good with dolls ... It seemed that boys had more exciting toys. ... a recollection too of sometimes being kind of (pause) feeling like I was you know a little nonplussed by the idea of being a girl because it was going to restrict my access to certain activities.

Those mothers and daughters which recollected memories of a different nature, reported these in the light of liking being small and enjoying the adults' attention and caretaking. They did not report deriving any satisfaction while growing up due to their specific gender.

#### Quality of Identity Themes Related to Mother

When asked questions related to identity themes, none of the four pairs reflecting Resolution 2 saw themselves as sharing any likeness to their own mothers in their personalities, in their behaviors or even as role models.

One mother recalled how she tried to establish her own identity by being unlike her mother:

I've always looked for other women role models knowing--seeing a model that I didn't want so it was almost in quest of something that would feel comfortable . . . and I did tend to go to hang out with women who were concerned about themselves first, they weren't--their sense of self wasn't tied to a man and I wasn't going to get stuck with somebody and not--and be trapped--which is how I saw my mom.

Another related being more like her father and paternal aunts in personality and appearance:

I'm a carbon copy of my father. Just--well I

resemble my father and all my father's sisters. Physically I look like my father's sisters ... My mother says we're a carbon copy ... we put off tomorrow what we could do today till tomorrow ... Built like him. Not built like my mother. My mother's a size (laughs) eight and I'm size 16.

In summary, identity themes were not shared by mother-daughter pairs in Resolution 2. They tended in general to report discomfort with their gendered selves, feeling inadequate or less privileged than boys or men. Their internal identity as females was found to be conflicted or in transition toward a more consciously positive view of themselves as female. Thus, their external role behaviors were contradictory and inconsistent in relation to their roles as mothers to female children. These mothers had not yet been able to reconcile the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of mothering they had received. Some mothers were unable to recollect much in terms of their past history and had not successfully integrated more recent knowledge about themselves as women into the current relationship with their daughters. The voices of their own mothers were being heard in the messages they were conveying to their daughters. Two mothers were able to spell their dissatisfaction and verbalized their conflict about this particular issue during the course of the interview. These mothers seemed to have become more aware of the possible transmission of conflicts related to gender but

have not yet found a way of incorporating this awareness into their relationship to their daughters.

In general, the adolescent daughters in Resolution 2 were struggling in their efforts to negotiate separation-individuation issues. Creating a balance between autonomy and connectedness was found to be a very conflicted task for the adolescents in Resolution 2. Competition, confusions related to gender privileges, some sense of being either controlled or abandoned with accompanying feelings of betrayal were found in the interviews of this sub-group of adolescents. They seemed to be longing for self-actualization yet were caught in opposing feelings of rage at gender restriction and self-doubt. Furthermore, these adolescents' protocols denoted a general feeling of lack of internal security and greater emotional vulnerability.

Both mothers and daughters in Resolution 2 were found to be less aware of the possible range of feelings in their interactions. Their reports during the interviews were less coherent than those of the subjects in Resolution 1 or Resolution 3.

### Resolution 3

I Am Different From My Mother. This describes another type of resolution in which these adult daughters'

descriptions of themselves, of their growing up female and of what is valuable about being a woman, were characterized by what seemed to be a negative yet less conflicted, less contradictory identification with their mother than those in Resolution 2, based on being distinctly unlike their mothers. As adults and even while growing up, these women seemed to be clearly opposed to their mothers' conception of women. In their own self-descriptions, they utilized adjectives which radically varied from their mother's description of women. They also seemed to differ from their mothers in what they felt was valuable about being a woman. Their recollections of growing up as female were often painful and negative but they seemed to have made an early and often seemingly conscious decision to be different in their attitudes and behaviors in terms of being female. They tended to describe other women as being their ideal of womanhood and were happy to have a daughter to whom they could communicate their currently clearly different attitudes and feelings about being female. Their adolescent daughters, in turn, seemed to represent the negative yet unconflicted identification resolution in that they reported being like their mothers and experiencing themselves as being able, while growing up, to be very positive about being female. For these

adolescents their own mothers represented the ideal female.

In descriptions of themselves, these adult daughters tended to pay attention to their unique needs as persons rather than conforming to their mothers' dictum of defining themselves by rigid female role stereotypes. Their daughters seemed to have received clear gender-related messages in that they could describe themselves in a positive manner when talking about their gender and gender roles. In general, these adolescent daughters have thus been more able to tolerate gender-related and individuation conflicts while developing alternatives in their conceptions of women. They have been more able to reconcile internal identity with the demands of external role behaviors. While their mothers sought to identify with women other than their own mothers, the adolescent daughters in this group reported admiring their mothers and identify with her as a primary role model.

Additional themes found in terms of relational identifications between the generations in these four pairs were: adult daughters' reports that they perceived their own mothers as emotionally distant and unable to express strong or negative emotions (i.e., anger) as well as their either conforming to rigid, stereotypical

traditional roles or conveying to their daughters such negative appraisals of men that women had to "join forces" and surpass their oppression thus becoming more assertive and developing self-worth in the process.

Four pairs exemplified this type of resolution. The adult daughters seemed to have chosen a type of relational identification with their mothers that made them distinctly different from their own mothers while enabling them to communicate consistent feelings, attitudes and behaviors to their daughters. These were based on differentiation and even opposition to their own mother's conception of female gender role identity.

These adult daughters' descriptions of how their mothers would represent women varied distinctly from their own descriptions of themselves as females as well as from how they represented women to their daughters in their affects and behavior. This was supported in their daughters' descriptions of themselves and women in the interviews.

#### Descriptions of Women and Self as Female.

Inconsistencies and contradictions characterized in the continuity of gender-related messages between adult daughters and their mothers and what in turn they chose convey to their own daughters in this group.

The descriptions below represent Resolution 3 because of the discontinuity in the quality of descriptions of women and self as female found between grandmother and adult daughter and the continuity found between herself as a mother and her daughter. Examples from their interviews follow:

My mother pushed me to be a good girl ... intelligent ... be different ... she was always on my back ... the only thing is that she was so strict. She wanted everything to be so perfect. I think it was hard for her ... With my mother all she say is oh you're a woman you have to do it, you have to act like this. Anything that comes you just have to take it the way they come because you're the woman and that's your role.

Referring to her communication with her daughter she stated:

I try to be specific, because I remember with my mother I couldn't talk about it and if I did ask her something she would lie to me (laughs) ...

Her daughter, taking on her mother's feelings and attitudes described herself as "joyful", "playful", "very happy", "study ... like to study", "like to dress up." In terms of how her mother would describe women, she said:

... watch out ... be serious with men ... happy ... enjoy your life ... my mother ... she's like a teenager ... she's happy. She's nice.

This adolescent's ideas, as conveyed by her mother, present a very different picture of what a woman is.

### Quality of Identity Themes Related to Mother

In Resolution 3, discontinuity was found in the four mother-daughter pairs in this area. This refers to how daughters tended to choose others as models, either fathers or other women or they would synthesize their experiences of women and their mothers into a unique "primary" resolution characterized by selective identifications. Their adolescent daughters invariably identified with their mothers primarily. An example from their interviews follows:

My perception about a woman has changed so much over time ... see my mother obviously, you know, was my major role model, umm ... 90, 95% of her impact I see was negative on me, the worst ... two things ... were positive ... her political involvement ... she did a lot of brave and unusual things for a young [describing her mother's involvement in the French Resistance during WWII] ... And the fact that she has traveled a lot by herself ... she encouraged me to travel ... that was good ... that independence ... But the negative was that I think she did hate being a woman and I really believed and grew up distrusting men, umm.

In contrast, her daughter's responses were revealing of admiration toward her mother and a statement of positive identification.

I: Do you think you are like your mother?

S: Yes ... well, OK, I'm not too sure but like I know I am not very different ... I just think the way that the understanding I have of problems and people stuff like that ... I think the way I'm different is I have more understanding of myself than she did ... I know a lot about myself already ... she would tell me sometimes

that she didn't ...

The above quotes reflected how, in general, the mothers in Resolution 3 were more able to select and integrate positive identifications into their identities, than those in Resolution 2.

#### Quality of Recollections of Growing Up Female

While the circumstances that set the stage for the following recollections clearly varied from pair to pair, a general pattern was found in which the adult daughters tended (with the exception of one mother who described more neutral experiences while growing up in Europe) to have had negative recollections of growing up as females, these varying in different developmental moments. Some had a more difficult middle childhood, another a more difficult adolescence. All recalled the pessimism, negativity and critical tone of the maternal messages in childhood. All made efforts to communicate differently with their female children. Their daughters' self-descriptions and relational identifications bear the mark of much more positive, consistent messages regarding female gender role identity.

The four pairs' recollections varied. Two mothers recounted early rejections due to maternal messages which were negative and stifling. They wanted their daughters

to have a different kind of experience growing up female. Their daughters, now in adolescence, recounted much more positive childhood memories related to gender.

Another mother described not really feeling self-conscious about being female until adolescence, when differences between the sexes made her wish she was older. Additionally, another mother recalled being popular in school, admired because of her looks. Their daughter's feelings about growing up female conveyed, in general, positive memories of growing up female.

In summary, for mothers and daughters in Resolution 3, inconsistencies were found in the continuity of gender-related messages between adult daughters and their mothers and what the former chose to convey to their own daughters throughout the course of their development. Mothers in Resolution 3 conveyed messages regarding female gender role identity based on differentiation and even opposition of their own mother's conceptions. They seemed to share, as a group, a tendency to have had some kinds of experiences, relationships or alternative models which allowed them to transform their own mother's negative, pessimistic and conventional messages regarding women and their roles.

Mothers and daughters in Resolution 3 seemed to have achieved a balance between internal identity and external

role behaviors. The mothers were able to critically examine the quality of the mothering they had received. While they felt, in this regard, that their mothers' weaknesses outnumbered their strengths, they had been able to negotiate a balance between their own unique needs as developing women and what is expected of their roles as mother and wife. Thus, they were able to convey to their daughters a general positive attitude toward their gender and gender roles which had allowed the daughter to better negotiate separation-individuation issues in adolescence. Both mothers and daughters were better able to verbalize a range of affects toward each other. These mothers were additionally able to express confidence and optimism about their daughters' future as women.

#### The Role of Other Object Relations

This section will describe the role of fathers and other significant identificatory figures in the lives of the mothers and daughters interviewed. This part of the data will be presented in two sections "Role of the Father" and "Role of Other Object Relations". In some instances data will be quoted directly from the interviews.

The Role of the Father in Mothers and Daughters Classified as Resolution 1

The two mother-daughter pairs classified as Resolution 1, had remarkably contrasting recollections of the role their fathers played or were playing in regard to their sense of self as females. One mother reported a distant, emotionally absent type of relationship to her father and wished her children would have what she reported as not getting from her father. Her daughter reported feeling close to her father and getting positive feedback from him in his treatment of her as delicate, sweet and pretty. Another mother felt her father was very approving and always made her feel good about being a female. Her memories were described in a cohesive manner which denoted that there was emotional closeness and general approval in this man's reception to his daughter's gender. In spite of an early loss, this woman's daughter focused on what seems to be also a very corrective positive later relationship with a stepfather who currently can relate to how a girl her age should be treated by and should respond to males. His availability seems to be making an impact on her conceptions of her gendered self.

In summary, mothers and daughters representing Resolution 1 were able to coherently integrate the role

their fathers played throughout their development into their experience as females.

The Role of the Father in Mothers and Daughters Classified as Resolution 2

These mothers' and daughters' descriptions of the impact their fathers had on their sense of self as women was similar to their descriptions of their interactions with their mothers. Their narrative was filled with inconsistencies or ambivalent descriptions. Some seemed to have either too little emotional closeness with their fathers or too much. Others presented overidealized seemingly unrealistic pictures of their fathers. Others constructed their father's messages as asking them to remain "little girls" or reported being mother's rivals and father's favorite which created confusion in gender related messages from the father and augmented an already mixed-up identification with their own mothers.

One mother described the role of her father as follows:

... My father really--when I was growing up my father was never home. My father was always out working. Working crazy hours ... I mean he was around, but he wasn't a man that wasn't around but he wasn't around like you come home you know after being in school ... I didn't have that ... He wasn't an outstanding character in child raising ... My father's a very close-mouthed individual, not outgoing. Well I shouldn't say yes no (laughs) I'm his daughter.

She exemplified the kind of emotional distance described above.

Another mother described the favoritism for boys conveyed by her father:

... I am more like him in order to win his favor I had to do extraordinary things and so as a result prove my worth and by the longshot I am the overachiever in the family. He invested a lot more in the sons than the daughters ... my father didn't really pass on much of a sense of self in terms of womanhood to the girls and he's--I think he is a little curious as to why the girls in the family, the women, wound up being in better shape than the boys ...

In summary, mothers and daughters in Resolution 2 tended to report inconsistent, conflicted, overidealized or emotionally extreme descriptions of their fathers. These seemed to create confusion in gender related messages from fathers to daughters. The role of the father was presented in a manner that seemed to add more conflict for these mothers and daughters throughout their development as females.

#### The Role of the Father in Mothers and Daughters Classified as Resolution 3

Of the four mother-daughter pairs described in Resolution 3, all but one mother described the significant, mostly enhancing role that their father's reception to their gender had on their sense of self as females. This woman resembled another mother from

Resolution 1, in that they both reported an emotionally distant relationship between them and their father. They were similar in other ways: they both recollected their experiences with their fathers toward them as females as colored by the stereotypical rigid conceptions these fathers had of women and women's roles. Yet they were also able to articulate these recollections coherently. In addition, their daughters' descriptions of their own father's reception to their gender was similarly presented as positively toned affectively.

It seemed that this subgroup of women dealt with their emotionally distant fathers by a rationalization which took the form of a socially-based explanation: their fathers were too extreme in their conceptions because they were "old-fashioned" and "rigid" in their constructions of women's roles. This allowed them to move away from their father's viewpoint and integrate into their gendered self a different, more positive conception of women and a less rigid viewpoint regarding their roles. They were also able like other mothers and daughters in Resolution 1 and 3 to present to their daughters a coherent message regarding the above discussed issue. Other mothers and daughters in Resolution 3 described in general that they felt admired and supported by their

fathers. In addition they did not feel restricted by their fathers in their roles as women.

#### The Role of Other Object Relations

Other significant people and selected life events were reported by the mothers and daughters in the study as having had an impact on their sense of self as females. A brief report of these follows.

For some of the subjects grandmothers played a very significant role since they lived with their grandmothers throughout childhood. One woman described seeing the positive exchanges between her own mother and her grandmother. Another was raised by a grandmother who was a pioneer in the women's movement in her country. Another group of women reported being significantly influenced by paternal or maternal aunts.

A subset of the sample, reported having been in boarding schools run by women. While one expressed her admiration for the women who were the school administrators, another expressed feeling that the women who ran her school, because of their strict moral religious codes, created an "external negative influence." She has had to battle with these externally imposed values until this day, yet she reported their contribution as

helping her reject strict moralistic codes for herself, her daughters and other women.

One of the mothers felt the women's movement of the '60s and early '70s created a positive force which helped shape some of her views regarding herself and the manner in which she raised her daughter. Another mentioned the women's movement but was ambivalent about what it had done to her values as a female, doubting whether she could have been happier if she had just had to stay home and not juggle multiple roles or have to deal with men's competitiveness. Several women mentioned the impact of close friendships with other women as providing a sense of strength, camaraderie and support through their development. Several adolescents verbalized the role of female friends as helping shape their sense of empathy toward others and as providing alternative models to their mothers and other women in their families.

Two pairs both classified in Resolution 2 also attributed some of the changes in their perceptions about women's roles and their sense of self as females as stemming from being currently involved in psychotherapy. Notably, the mothers in particular seemed to be representative of women in transition who have more awareness of their conflicted relational dynamics to their own mothers than other women in Resolution 2.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

This study is an exploration of the relationship between a group of ten mothers and their adolescent daughters. Its specific focus was to understand how gender related messages reproduce themselves from generation to generation and how the messages conveyed to the adult daughters by their own mothers impacted on their conceptions regarding their gendered self and how they sustain, support or discourage the woman's ability to function in gender-related roles.

In addition, the study explored the nature and quality of the gender-related messages the adult daughter was currently conveying to her adolescent female child and how these were contributing to the daughter's concept of herself as a female, her comfort with specific gender-related issues and roles in adolescence.

#### Continuity of Gender-Related Messages Across Generations

Continuity of transmission of gender-related messages referred to how similar and consistent or how contradictory and inconsistent were the mother's

recollection of grandmother's, her own and her daughter's descriptions of themselves as female and descriptions of women.

On examining the data particular differences were observed among the subjects. Two mothers had essentially positive views of themselves as women, and linked this to their own positive feelings about their mothers. Their adolescent daughters described themselves in similar terms, and with the same consistency that characterized their mothers' reports. This was termed "Resolution 1". Four of the mothers described their mothers as negative about themselves as women, and seemed determined to differentiate themselves from their mothers in this regard, and yet the inconsistency and contradictions inherent in their transcripts suggested that this struggle had been unsuccessful and that the conflict was still alive. Their daughters' view of women and self as female were similarly contradictory and inconsistent. This was termed "Resolution 2". Finally, a third subset of the mothers described their mothers as having essentially negative reactions to their own femaleness, and yet they had been able to successfully differentiate themselves from their mothers' views. Thus, they felt positively about themselves as women, and saw this as distinct from their own mothers' views. There were clear consistencies

and similarities between mothers' and adolescent daughters' descriptions of women and self as female. This was termed "Resolution 3". Thus, there appeared to be a clear relationship between the quality of a woman's resolution of issues related to gender identity, as manifested in the qualitative and content features of interview data, and the quality of her daughter's resolution of these same issues.

These differences will be discussed in this chapter from a psychoanalytic psychology of women and object relations perspective. Differences in the following areas will also be discussed.

1. Quality of Recollections of Growing Up Female
2. Quality of Identity Themes Related to Mother
  
3. The Role of the Father and Other Object Relations

#### Quality of Recollections of Growing Up Female

Psychoanalytic theory proposes that self-experience and personality are basically colored by gender-related perceptions, since from the early years there is a concept of self as female or male. It adds that a person retains their gender-linked self-perceptions embedded in the history of their past relations and that these memories shape the perception of actual and future relations.

In this study, subjects were asked specific questions related to their memories of growing up as a female. Mothers and daughters who reported positive, pleasurable memories did so in the context of reporting warm, affectionate and empathic interactions with their own mothers. Thus, an early important factor in creating an enhanced, esteemed image of oneself as a woman is reciprocity of affects in the mother-daughter relation. Relational sensitivity leads to a positive developmental pathway as discussed in the work of object relations theorists such as Mahler and in Kohut's self psychology.

In writing about female development Chodorow (1976) and Bergman (1982) have also emphasized that emotional empathy leads to a unique sense of connectedness that enhances identificatory processes for the girl and facilitates psychological differentiation.

The sense of mutual connection and understanding, reported by mothers and daughters in Resolution 1, has also been discussed by writers such as Jordan and Surrey as leading to a sense of mutual empowerment. Positive early recollections of reciprocity as reported by pairs in Resolution 1 become a fundamental component of a woman's experience of self-worth. Mutual concern and care heighten the psychological well-being of both mothers and daughters. Indeed the mothers in Resolution 1 reported

being pleased with how they have brought up their daughters and reported a sense of trust in how their daughters would deal with future tasks.

These relational dynamics were different for the mother-daughter pairs in Resolution 2 and Resolution 3. Mothers in Resolution 2 provided either very negative, very meager or very ambivalent recollections of growing up female. None of them reported feeling connected, understood or to share a sense of mutuality with their own mothers as they were growing up. These women felt, in general, that they lacked something important from their mothers. As adults they feel in conflict and mutual sharing of experiences with their daughters doesn't come easy to them. As a group they tended to worry more about the kind of future their daughters would have as women. In general, these mothers' transcripts, especially their recollections of early interactions with their own mothers, left the impression that currently they continue to struggle with issues of self-worth. They appeared to be currently trying to extricate themselves from a history of an early experience which lacked mutual understanding. Their daughters' recollections were, in general, very constricted. Their transcripts were generally impoverished, especially in the area of responses to recollections about growing up female. Notably, two of

the daughters in Resolution 2 referred to their fathers as being more caring and comforting when they had their periods. Two of the daughters in Resolution 2 also reported going to or receiving advice from their fathers rather than their mother in matters which preoccupy adolescents such as sexuality, going to parties and getting new clothes. Self-esteem seemed to be an unresolved, problematic issue for the adolescents in Resolution 2. As several authors have pointed out, self-esteem becomes related to the degree of mutual empathy in a relationship and to a sense of shared regard and understanding which for the mother and daughter pairs in Resolution 2 seems difficult to maintain.

Mothers in Resolution 3 tended to have very negative recollections of growing up as female, all recalling the pessimism, negativity and put-downs of women which they heard from their mothers. They did not report early experiences which could form the foundation of a core sense of self as accepted, admired and cared for. The basic difference between mothers in Resolution 3 and mothers in Resolution 2, was that mothers in Resolution 3 reported not recalling empathic experiences from their own mothers but obtaining a kind of surrogate mothering from another significant person. One mother reported feeling cared for by her grandmother, who lived with her family.

Another recalled with fondness her father's admiration and warmth during her early and middle childhood, while yet another remembered her father's respect, availability and responsiveness, particularly during adolescence. These findings sustain the earlier discussed relational dynamics: mutual empathy and connectedness leads to feelings of reciprocity, self-worth and empowerment. These dynamics provide a basis by which to understand how the mothers in Resolution 3 were able, as evidenced in their daughters' reports, to replicate experiences of mutual empathy when raising their daughters. These women also reported making an effort to communicate differently with their female child. M. Klein had spoken about reparation and other authors in the psychoanalytic tradition such as Alexander refer to a corrective emotional experience. The mothers in Resolution 3 understood and valued a good relationship and were able to offer and maintain one with their daughters. Their daughters in turn reported an ongoing interest and an emotional attentiveness as hallmarks of their relationship to their mothers. Their childhood memories were positively toned. Their sense of their mothers throughout their development was similar to that of daughters in Resolution 1. They also shared a sense of confidence about their future as women with their mothers.

### Quality of Identity Themes Related to Mother

The term identity theme refers to an outsider's inference about someone's primary or maternal identity. Psychoanalytic theory proposes that in the girl's case her primary or core gender identity begins to be formed as soon as parents and others ascribe her biological sex. The work of Stoller (1976, 1968) and Money (1972) elaborates on this point. Throughout development her female gender role identity unfolds. Kleeman (1977) and Schwartz (1986) are among the authors who have sustained the premise that while core gender identity is stable or immutable, gender role identity is more mutable since it responds to intrapsychic, cognitive and social factors. Thus, the process of identification is a complex one. As the child matures she wishes to be like mother and internalized selective qualities of mother. While it was not possible in this study to address such complexity, it was feasible to delineate the identity themes which best characterized the relations between the mother-daughter pairs studied. These were categorized as three resolutions: "I am like my mother" (Resolution 1), "I am not like my mother ... but am I?" (Resolution 2) and "I am different from my mother" (Resolution 3). These identity themes refer to what characterized the relationship between the mothers and their own mothers in this study.

For example, mothers in Resolution 1 reported that following identity themes: they were powerfully and positively influenced by their own mothers, they shared similar descriptions regarding each other, they admired their mothers, appreciated the quality of the mothering they had received, recalled their mothers' strengths and felt empathy toward their mothers. These women's daughters also reported a harmonious bond with their mothers, sharing a generalized positive view of themselves and other women. These mothers' beliefs that women are valuable, that women can be accomplished and can manage many roles have been incorporated by their daughters, whom as adolescents, feel equipped to make their own decisions, while maintaining a close connection to their mothers. According to Bergman, the daughter's ability to manage separation-individuation tasks is closely connected to the mother's messages about having a female child and how she feels her child might be when she grows up. Both mothers in Resolution 1 felt optimistic that their daughters would succeed in their future endeavors as women.

In contrast, mothers in Resolution 2 reported not sharing identity themes with their own mothers. One common report was an acknowledgement that their own mothers made them feel boys and men had it better. Dinnerstein, Schwartz and other writers have pointed to

the mother's reflection of cultural devaluation of women and women's roles as stifling healthy gender role identification. The mothers in Resolution 2 described role relationships characterized by inflexibility and stereotypes, with boys being more valued and girls being the object of social prescriptions where women were either "good" or "bad" depending for example, on rigid conceptions of their sexual behavior. The mothers in Resolution 2 reported feeling compelled to either reject their mothers for fear of being stereotyped or oppressed or to seek other models with whom to identify. None of these mothers had a sufficiently valued, confident and competent perception of their mothers or themselves as females, they reported dissatisfaction and conflict in the manner in which they described themselves and other women. Some additionally reported being aware of not conveying positive messages regarding the value of women to their daughters. Their daughters, in turn seemed more confused in terms of how they described themselves, their own mothers and other women. Congruent with Bergman's notion that separation-individuation is powerfully influenced by mother's messages regarding her gendered self, these girls seemed to be struggling with issues of connectedness to their mothers coupled with ambivalence about separation. Mahler has also pointed out that a positive

mother-daughter relationship and the mother's ability to convey comfort with her own femininity can transmit confidence to the daughter.

That was the case for mothers and daughters in Resolution 1 and Resolution 3, but not for pairs in Resolution 2. Following Mahler's and Ritvo's descriptions of the effects of the maternal message on the girl's mood, adolescent daughters in Resolution 2 seemed affectively more constricted and less able to report psychological well-being in entering adolescence. Clinically, both mothers and daughters in Resolution 2 appeared more dissatisfied and saddened about belonging to the world of women.

Mother-daughter pairs in Resolution 3 were characterized by incongruent, inconsistent identity themes between grandmothers and their now adult daughters and similar identity themes between mothers and adolescent daughters. For mothers in Resolution 3 their own mother's identity themes referred to femininity being perceived as a burden. They reported a shift or transformation in their identity themes when compared to their mothers because of the availability of other significant figures in their lives who conveyed a positive portrait of femaleness. Several authors have supplied propositions which could account for these shifts. Sandler et al.

(1986), have discussed how the child is inherently oriented toward objects and wishes constantly for interactions. They have added that a powerful human motivation is the wish to re-experience satisfying aspects of past relations. Chodorow (1978), Schwartz (1986) and Kaplan (1984) have pointed out that the mother's pride in her own gender will help the girl identify with a woman is perceived as confident, powerful and valued. Thus, mothers in Resolution 3 seemed motivated to identify with people who offered highly satisfying relationships in which they as females, were valued. In transposing this identity theme to their relationships with their own daughters, the relatively enduring impression of that other significant object relation seemed manifested for the women in Resolution 3. Thus, their adolescent daughters were able to develop an alternative and more positive conceptions of themselves and women in general. These adolescents' identity themes were related to perceiving themselves as capable of psychological differentiation from their mothers while being able to admire mother and continue their connectedness with their mother. These adolescents felt confident about their future as women.

### The Role of the Father and Other Object Relations

The contributions of object relations theory highlight the issue that relations with others are not only inborn and primary, but that actual transactions between people are joined by unconscious fantasies in creating a subjective map of representations of self in relation to others. In the development of feminine gender role identity, especially during the period of triangulation, the father becomes incorporated into the girl's internal object world. The girl's view of her gender will become qualitatively different as relations with fathers and other significant males are incorporated into this internal world. Fathers are said to provide a masculine point of view in regard to their daughter's femaleness. This particular impact will depend on two sets of factors: the quality of the pre-existing mother-daughter tie and the father's emotional closeness to his daughter.

In this study, it was noted that women who described a strong, positive tie to their mothers from early on were able to coherently integrate into these experience of being female their father's contributions. This was particularly characteristic of mothers and daughters in Resolution 1 and also observed in daughters represented in Resolution 3. Daughters in Resolution 3 reported similar

recollections, identity themes and intergenerational continuity of gender messages to daughters in Resolution 1. Mothers in Resolution 3 in contrast, described unsatisfactory early relations with their own mothers. However, most of them described emotionally close relationships with their fathers. They were able with the exception of Mother 1 (Resolution 1) and Mother 5 (Resolution 3), to coherently and consistently relate experiences in which their fathers admired them for their beauty which added pride to their sense of self as females. These women's memories conveyed a sense of warmth and acceptance from their fathers.

It is noteworthy to state that, again with the exception of the two mothers listed above, mothers and daughters in Resolution 1 and Resolution 3 reported a range of perceptions in terms of male/female gender role privileges. Most reported not experiencing any restrictions or stereotypes in terms of gender roles from their fathers. Many described their fathers as nurturant and otherwise emotionally available. Of particular importance, in this connection, was the finding that marked asymmetry in gender privileges and rigid stereotypical roles for women where the hallmark of Mother 1 and Mother 5's descriptions of their father's reception to them as females. These dynamics have been presented in

theoretical papers by Schwartz (1986), Kaplan (1984) and Kleeman (1977).

Mothers and daughters in Resolution 2 presented, in general, descriptions of ambivalence, confusion and lack of empathy on their mother-daughter relationship. For these mothers and daughters fathers were apprehended as equally confusing external objects. Many described, in addition, fathers who were emotionally absent or distant while they were growing up. Others in Resolution 2 further described fathers who conveyed the message that they should remain little girls or fathers who conveyed a preference for their little girls in favor of their wives. Representations of the female self in relation to men were distorted in the case of the mothers. Findings related to the adolescent daughter's self perceptions in relation to men were inconclusive because of the nature and time limitations of this study.

While it was clear that other significant figures and father's relation with mother will profoundly effect mother's relation with daughter around all those issues impacted on the subjects' perceptions of their gendered selves, these were not sufficiently developed in the course of the study and remain an area of fruitful inquiry for future research.

### Theoretical Contributions

Psychoanalytic theory as exemplified in the general works of S. Freud and E. Jacobson as well as recently in, Bergman's, (1982) and Schwartz's (1986), proposes that there is a knowing self which is gender-related. Self-experience is basically and uniquely colored by gender-related perceptions. It is in psychoanalytic theory that the most attention has been paid to the transmission of parental qualities and the study of gender differences in personality. Additionally, it has maintained that the mother-daughter relationship is basic in shaping a woman's female gender role identity.

While the findings of the present study certainly support these general notions, it is also true that gender related messages are experienced within a larger familial context, and are substantively influenced by paternal and other significant relationships. Thus, while as Bergman and others have stated, a mother's sense of her gender identity will profoundly influence her relationship with her daughter, it is also possible that this identity will be powerfully shaped by other of the child's relationships. As is evidenced by the fact that 8 out of 10 of our subjects had the feeling that their mothers--for the most part--viewed women negatively, half of these women were able to establish a more positive view of

themselves as women, and to convey this sense to their daughters.

These findings challenge Freudian determinism regarding women's inherent sense of physical and moral inferiority. They point to the fact that what occurs very early is the core or primary gender identity and that this clearly refers to biological sexual assignments. The later more complex developments are best described by the term gender role identity, which includes social-familial as well as cognitive factors. This data additionally supports the notion that the relationship with the mother, and a woman's subsequent resolution of that relationship, profoundly influences later relationships as well as her ability to parent a female child. This data is really a testimony to object relations theory, since it is there where it is made clear just how powerfully a mother's internal experience influences her daughter's adjustment and influences her daughter's psychosexual development.

While an attempt was made at assessing mother-daughter pairs, much more was known about the mothers' internal lives and their resolutions of their relationships with their own mothers than about the adolescents. This could be partially understood by considering the daughters' developmental stage. Adolescence has been described as a period of flux and

emotional turmoil. Regressive pulls to the mother of early infancy as well as sudden stretches of time of comparative dependence from infantile relations are the hallmark of this period. These issues help us understand why the girls' descriptions of their tie to their mothers was less explicit in this study. These adolescents are immersed in a process which in ideal circumstances is being solved at the intrapsychic level with the support of the mother. In other words, we knew less about the daughters' resolutions precisely because they are only strong tendencies at this point in their lives and not yet resolutions. Their female gender role identity is in the process of emerging and will consolidate further under the influence of other powerful role models throughout life. What the data did reveal was the dramatic influence which maternal resolutions had on daughter adjustment. This was clearly depicted in the adolescents classified as Resolution 2. None of these mothers had a sufficiently stable, valued or competent perception of themselves as females. Some were surprised or apologetic yet explicit about not conveying positive messages regarding the value of women to their daughters. Their adolescent daughters reported similar lack of confidence, ambivalence and lack of satisfaction in belonging to the world of women.

Although it was beyond the scope of this study to assess the actual impact of the feminist movement, its historical importance cannot be overlooked. Several mothers as well as some of the adolescents hinted at notions such as equality between the sexes in the work area as well as in the personal freedom area. Other issues briefly touched by the subjects included economic independence, gainful employment with equal compensation for both sexes, expanding career opportunities for women and a general sense, specially in the adolescents, that they had a right to voice their opinions and to excel in any enterprise they chose. These notions point to the pervasive influence of the feminist movement in the lives of contemporary women. Undoubtedly, as these issues become more integrated in the social ethos they will become more and more salient components of the maternal legacy that comes from the previous generation of women.

#### Methodological Contributions

A particular contribution of this exploratory study, was the employment of a methodology which was developed to generate qualitative data. The study's open-ended interview format was particularly well suited in an area where most work has been theoretical, clinical or anecdotal. It further served to reach the women's complex

experiences and in representing multi-dimensional aspects of the mother-daughter relation. By interviewing the adult daughter about her own mother and the adolescents regarding their own mothers, the impact of intergenerational transmission was documented. This methodology also served to convey the richness of the subject matter and the importance of the meaning of particular experiences for the subjects. It provided a way to study female experience utilizing women's focus on relationships and their sensitivity to context. As Gilligan (1982) and others have proposed empirical research in psychology has tended to utilize men's life as data. Thus, studying women required departing from conventional frameworks. This study was an effort to enhance theory building by what the data indicates, rather than trying to fit forcibly the data into the theory. In this matter, it successfully addressed a major criticism directed at psychoanalytic theory and its efforts to fit male-based developmental constructs into female experience. Thus, this unique methodological approach in which interviews were analyzed individually and cases were then compared as a group, yielded predominant themes which created the conceptual categories which have been discussed throughout this chapter.

Limitations of the Study  
and Directions for Future Research

A number of limitations in methodology emerged from this research. These pointed to significant issues which warrant future research. First, this was an exploratory study which employed a design characterized by a small subject sample, these results are not generalizable to the larger population. This study aimed at assessing a normative process chiefly the transmission of gender related messages across generations was conducted in a group of high functioning, educated middle class subjects, who live in nuclear families. A larger and more representative group of subjects would include nontraditional families such as single parent families, families where girls are being raised by fathers, families which have same-sexed parents (i.e., lesbian caretakers) or families in which there are multiple significant male figures throughout the girl's life. This study's sample was not uniform ethnically or religiously. Comments by some of the mothers suggested that particular cultural, moral, religious beliefs and practices make some conflicts in the mother-daughter relation more poignant. Some of the women in this study have had a harder time extricating themselves from highly traditional, though ego-dystonic cultural-religious influences on how women are raised.

Other subjects reported some brief separations from their mothers while attending boarding school or college during their early or late adolescence suggesting a multiplicity of questions related to the effects of these separations during particular developmental moments and their effects on the mother-daughter relation, specifically in negotiation of separation-individuation. A further area of research which was suggested by comments stemming from the adolescents in the study, related to the investigation of the impact of gender-related messages which are verbally and nonverbally transmitted by the girl's observation and experience of how father relates to mother. In other words mother's sense of herself in her marital relation will generate what she communicates to her daughter at different stages. The data suggested that these are also incorporated in the girl's internal representation of how women should behave and how women should be treated.

A crucial variable in the lives of contemporary women is the area of their involvement in work. This issue came up with some frequency during the course of the interviews of both mothers and adolescents across groups, but it did not appear consistently enough in order to make cohesive generalizations from the study's data. This might be attributed to the fact that the area of work was not

specifically woven into the construction of the interview. Some inferences from the available data indicated that it is not work itself which makes a difference in terms of making a positive or negative contribution to a woman's female gender role identity, but the social attribution of prestige attached to the kind of occupation that the particular woman engages in. In other words, there seemed to be a difference between a conception of working such as "because my mother had to" or "she had no choice" and the alternate possibility of choosing an occupation which acknowledged the woman's intellectual potential and involved some satisfaction of her developmental needs. Most mothers who talked about their mothers' work addressed the point from the perspective of their mothers working because of financial need. In this sense, some expressed some admiration for their own mothers' ability to endure long hours of work--both at home and outside the home. Other women were not so clear that the fact that their mothers worked helped them construct a positive, differentiated self-image of women since maternal occupations were in general not viewed as adding prestige to their mothers' roles. The grandmothers were either clerical or semi skilled workers. A small sub-group of women mentioned that the fact that their fathers allowed their mothers to work or expressed some admiration of

their mothers' financial contributions, made an impact on the manner in which they perceived their occupational choices. For most, work was conceived as an addition to and an expansion of a more autonomous, differentiated sense of self as women.

Professional-occupational concerns were primary for all adolescents in all groups, perhaps reflecting more contemporary issues regarding the economic-social position of women in the current and future generations. Overall, those adolescents who spoke about the work area, did so by elaborating on the pressures of choosing and succeeding in different professional endeavors. These themes are in great need of being further explored in future research.

Last, but definitely not the least important, were the implications of this study for clinical practice. An area of future research suggested was the impact of the woman patient's identification with a female therapist as "surrogate" mother and its effect on the reparative-corrective working through of the primary mother-daughter bond. The study further pointed to multiple possibilities for investigating the impact of therapeutic interventions with mother-daughter pairs throughout development with interventions not only based on psychosexual hypotheses but also on the impact of maternal identifications and internal representations

which are integral to female gender role identity development.

### Closing Summary

In summary 10 pairs of mothers and their adolescent daughters were interviewed with regard to their experiences growing up female, their conceptions of women's roles and the manner in which they had interpreted the messages their mothers gave them regarding femininity. When the interviews were subjected to a qualitative analysis of their contents, three categories emerged. These reflected the manner in which the subject perceived the impact of their mother's messages regarding femininity and also the manner in which they understand and seemed to resolve the primary maternal identification. The data was interpreted from the perspective of psychoanalytical object-relations theory. The essential finding was that it is the affective quality of the maternal message which impacts on a woman's sense of self as a female. These manifested themselves across generations, from grandmother to adult daughter to adolescent daughter. Women who described receiving a generally positive message regarding femininity reported a general mutual concern between themselves and their mothers which highlighted their experience of self-worth regarding particularly their

roles as mothers. These relational dynamics were also found between these women and their adolescent daughters. Women who described receiving a generally ambivalent, inconsistent message regarding femininity reported having difficulty in maintaining a sense of shared regard between themselves and their mothers. They were found to experience difficulties in the manner in which they regarded themselves as women and particularly as mothers. Their daughters described similar experiences. A third grouping, described receiving generally negative messages regarding femininity. They reported receiving generally positive messages from another significant person. This experience seemed to help them achieve the sense of mutual empathy in relationships which later reflected in increasingly positive experiences of self-worth and in how they regard themselves as women and particularly as mothers. Their daughters reported relational dynamics between themselves and their mothers characterized by mutual empathy and positive feelings regarding femininity. The quality of paternal messages and paternal regard for a female child was found to be linked to two experiences for the subjects studied. One was the quality of the ongoing mother-daughter bond, the other was the degree of emotional availability of the father together with his perceptions regarding gender roles.

## Appendix A

Family History Data Sheet

Interview Time:

Mother/Daughter

Pilot/Study

Date:

S#

Birthdate:

Ethnicity/Race:

Religion:

SES:

Reported:

Determined:

Current Occupation:

Family of Origin:

How many children in your family?

Birth Order:

Father's Age:

Parents together?

If married- how long?

If divorced- how long?

If widowed- how long?

Other:

Maternal education:

Paternal education:

Maternal occupation:

Paternal occupation:

## Education:

Elementary School:

High School:

College:

Graduate School: Degree Earned:

Post Graduate Training:

## Current Occupational Description:

## Family Data:

Marital Status: Married?  
Divorced?  
Widowed?  
Separated?

Year of marriage:

## Family Composition:

Number of Children:

Birth Order: Birth Date:

Husband's Birthdate:

Husband's Education:

Husband Occupation:

At what age did you get pregnant? \_\_\_\_\_

Was your first pregnancy planned? Yes No

What sex did you want your first baby to be?

Boy Girl

Comments:

What sex did your husband want your first baby to be?

Boy Girl

Comments:

Have you or your daughter ever been in therapy? Was it helpful?

## Appendix B

Informed Consent

City University of New York  
Doctoral Training Program In  
Clinical Psychology  
139th Street & Convent Avenue  
New York, New York

I agree to participate in this independent dissertation research project conducted by Ms. Rosa Vazquez, a doctoral student at City University of New York. I understand that I will be asked questions about my current and earlier experiences with my mother.

It is my understanding that the interview will be tape-recorded for the purpose of transcription and its contents will remain confidential, since a number will be substituted for my name to preserve my anonymity.

A summary of the study's findings will be sent to me, if I request so.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please check here if you want a summary of findings.

## Mother/Daughter Interview

I am interested in understanding more about how women view themselves, what they think about their roles and how their mother's behaviors, feelings and attitudes had an effect on their feelings about femininity and women's roles in society.

-A-

- 1) I would like you to chose 5 adjectives that describe yourself as a woman... Take a minute to think about these... then I would like to ask you why you chose them.
- 2) Now, I would like you to recall your childhood, Try to think as far back as you can.. when did you first think of yourself as a girl? How did you feel about being a girl? (Probe for specific memories, feelings behaviors.)
- 3) How did you feel about entering adolescence? What are your memories about getting your period? ... about your changing sexuality?
- 4) And how about your feelings about your sexuality now? How comfortable are you with the aspect of being a woman? (Probe for specific memories,

-B-

- 1) I would now like to choose 5 adjectives your mother might have used to describe girls and women to you. Take a minute to think about these ... then I would like to ask you why you chose them.
- 2) Do you feel your mother was comfortable as a woman? ... that she valued and enjoyed her roles as mother, wife, working woman? Did she make these roles seem attractive or negative? How? (Probe for specific memories.)

-C-

- 1) In your immediate family who do you feel most like? 2) Your ideas and feelings about yourself as a woman ... to whom do you attribute them ... to your mother, to other women in the family, to your friends, or other role models?
- 3) What about your father ... how do you think he contributed to your sense of yourself as a woman?

-D-

(To mother:)

- 1) What do you think you've told or conveyed to your

daughter about being a woman?

- 2) If you could make 3 wishes about your daughter's future as a woman... What would these be? What are your worries about your daughter's future?

(To daughter: Make 3 wishes about your future as a woman. What worries you about your future as a woman? What would you wish for your mother's future?)

## Appendix D

Underlying Questions to Analyze Content of the  
Mother-Daughter Interview

Area A

#1- If female gender role identity involves a self-evaluation of femaleness, how does a woman describe herself when she is asked to do so? How does a woman verbalize her "internal" self-evaluation with respect to her gendered self?

#2- Is the self gendered? How do memories reported reflect critical developmental occurrences? How does the gender message "I am a girl" come through? How did it manifest itself? What feelings accompanied it, i.e., "envious", "delighted", "puzzled"?

#3- If female gender role identity includes a woman's feelings and behaviors regarding her body and her sexuality, how do women experience these?

This question focuses specifically on adolescence, a critical developmental period for the integration of female gender role identity and on current reflections regarding this important aspect of female gender role identity.

Area B

#1- What other significant persons in a woman's life contribute to the construction of a woman's female gender role identity? With whom does the woman identify?

#2- How do the gender-related message regarding specific roles (wife, mother, working woman) come through?

Area C

#1- What other significant persons in a woman's life contribute to the construction of a woman's female gender role identity? With whom does the woman identify?

#2- The role of the father has been described as essential in the formation of female gender role identity, how do women experience their father's reception to their gendered self? How does the response to this question relate to significant aspects of this study?

Area D

#1- How are gender related messages being transmitted from the adult daughter to her own daughter? What are the messages regarding femininity and the roles of women?

Is the mother transmitting an "identity theme" to her daughter? Is it similar or different from her recollections of her own mother's messages regarding femininity and women's roles?

#2- In asking about "wishes" and "worries" in reference to the future, this question aims to tap the projected dimensions of what is there in the woman's sense of herself and what is lacking for both mother and daughter.

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