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A GROUP OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS' LIFE EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG

Thesis presented for the Degree of Master of Philosophy
At the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

By

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2002
Abstract of thesis entitled “A Group of Adolescent Girls’ Life Experience and Development in Hong Kong”.

This research is concerned with how the pinnacle of psychological development in general, and adolescent development in particular, has been narrowly defined as occurring in the process and with the goal of separation-autonomy-individuation. I intend to show that this model excludes other vitally important aspects of the human condition such as connection-empathy-caring, which need to be included in order to envision and establish a more wholesome and well-developed picture of what constitute successful human development. This means that a new focus on the process of relationships, which reflects the interdependence of reality, is called for.

Based on empirical evidence generated from an in-depth study of a group of adolescent girls living in Hong Kong, the present study argues that conventional theories on human development cannot adequately describe the life experience of these girls. On the contrary, the Relational paradigm, which postulates that relationships are central to female development, is better equipped to depict the unique life concerns articulated by these girls. Through their narratives we come to learn the importance of relationship to the development of self and morality. Specifically, the relationships that the girls have with their female friends, their male friends, their parents, the surprising lack of interest in boyfriends, and their relational dilemmas, which help to reconstruct some of the misconceptions surrounding the ideas that female friendship is shallow, that relationships between boys and girls are only of a sexual kind, that the parent-adolescent relationship is characterised by ‘storm and stress’, that the goal of adolescence is separation and individuation, and that morality lies within a justice perspective. The way girls experience relationships
clearly show that they are not in the process of ‘separating’ from their parents, or in a competitive relationship with their friends, but rather that they develop through ‘connection’. Moreover, the relational dilemmas girls experience, reflect their capacity to operate from both the use of the ‘care’ and ‘justice’ moral orientations. They also show a high level of moral awareness in terms of being able to take a multiple perspective to situations they encounter. This is reflected in how they see themselves, how they deal with relationships, as well as future aspirations. These expanded ideas of self and relationship are also found to be enhanced by their multicultural environment, and they show ‘active’ tolerance for different cultural groups, as well as a blatant dislike for any kind of discrimination. These findings were very inspiring and gave glimpses of how the foundation for a ‘culture of peace’ could be built. On the other hand, it draws attention to the question of the ‘silencing’ of the ‘voice of care’ in the ‘public’ world of patriarchal societies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As the last two years’ academic journey draws to a close, it also marks the beginning of a new chapter. Bringing forth knowledge is one thing, coupling that with wisdom is the foundation for creativity. Having the opportunity for expanding one’s life philosophy through academic pursuits is unfortunately still the privilege of the few. I would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation to those people who have been great influence on my life during the present research and who continue to my work with the objectives of expanding social privilege for all.

First, I would like to sincerely thank my dissertation supervisor, Professor Ting Wai-fong, who has been one of the most important persons during these two years. Not only has she been academically inspiring, helping me to stretch far beyond what I could have ever down on my own, but she has also been my mentor and friend always generous with her support, encouragement, and practical application of abstract academic theorising. What I admire and find most inspiring, is her optimistically open and seeking mind towards practically exploring new ideas, and her completely egalitarian approach.

I would also like to thank my second supervisor, Professor Stevenson, for her useful and constructive feedback, the professors and office staff at APSS for their always swift and ready support, as well as my fellow students from APSS for the many enjoyable discussions.

The girls in this study have all been marvelous in unreservedly sharing their lives with me. Without their participation, the present study would not have materialised. I would like to sincerely thank all of them. I would also like to extend this appreciation to the school in which the preset research was conducted, particularly the vice-Principal, and the teachers who kindly answered my queries.
I would also like to thank all my many friends in the Soka Gakkai International of Hong Kong, especially the Young Women’s Division in Headquarter 10, who make life truly enjoyable by their great friendship. It is through all our activities for peace, culture and education that facilitate the unfolding and development of our potentially great human aspects that I come to understand the real meaning of being ‘human’. The same goes for my partner, Rob, who through striving for the same goal has become one of the greatest comrades in life.

Lastly I would like to sincerely thank my mentor in life, Daisaku Ikeda, who continues to be the most superb example of what it means to live life for others. It is his numerous writings and activities for peace, culture and education that actively sustain and cultivate the process of my ‘human revolution’. Being a member of the Soka Gakkai International of which Ikeda is the president, and having the opportunity to study and practice the life philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin together with numerous friends who earnestly seek the meaning of life is an invigorating and wisdom creating process that truly brings to the fore the essence of life: human happiness. Thank you all.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Epistemological and Methodological Biases in Understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Adolescent Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Human Development in Patriarchy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Female Development as the Devalued ‘Other’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Biases in the Quantitative Mode of Inquiry</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Objective of the Present Research</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Philosophical Differences of Inquiry Paradigms</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A Feminist-constructivist Paradigm</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Other Characteristics of the Present Study</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Feminism Constitute the Principle Perspective of the Present Study</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Conversant with the Relational Paradigm</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 A Study Directed by Qualitative Methodology</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Overview of this Report</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter Two: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Introduction</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Qualitative Research Objectives and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Long Interview Method</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Criteria for Doing Qualitative Research</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Deciding on the Long Interview Method</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 A Four-step Method of Inquiry</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Stage 1: Review of Analytic Categories: Literature Review</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 Stage 2: Review of Cultural Categories: Familiarize and De-Familiarize</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3 Stage 3: Discovery if Cultural Categories: Questionnaire</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Data Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.4 Stage 4: Discovery of Analytic Categories: Transcription and Data Analysis</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Establishing Trustworthiness of the Research</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Credibility of the research</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Prolonged engagement</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Persistent Observation</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Triangulation</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4 Referential Adequacy Materials</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.5 Peer Debriefing</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.6 Member Checking</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Transferability</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Dependability</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Confirmability</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 A Personal Note on the Researcher’s Participation</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Three: GIRLS’ EXPERIENCE IN ADOLESCENCE: TO BE FEMININE OR INDEPENDENT?

I  Introduction 70
II  Dominant Theories and Discourses on Adolescent Development 71
  2.1  Psychosexual Development 71
  2.2  Psychosocial Development 73
  2.3  The dominant discourse surrounding adolescence 74
     2.3.1 Self-differentiation Through Separation 74
     2.3.2 Development of Firm Self-boundaries 75
     2.3.3 The Normalcy of Storm and Stress 76
  2.4  Discourse on Femininity 77
  2.5  Conflicting Messages: Exposing the Dilemmas Girls Face by two Rivalling Discourses 81
III  Alternative Theories: A Paradigm Shift 83
  3.1  Girls Develop Together With the Primary Caretaker 85
  3.2  The Relational Paradigm 87
     3.2.1 Connection/Separation 88
     3.2.2 Permeability/Self-Boundaries 89
     3.2.3 Mutuality and Autonomy 91
IV  Remaining in Connection While Striving for Independence 93
  4.1  Adolescence as a Time for Developing Connection 95
  4.2  Expanding Self Through Developing Permeable Self-boundaries 100
  4.3  Autonomy Developed in Mutuality 104
  4.4  The Myth of storm and stress 107
  4.5  Independence Developed with Taking Responsibility 111
V  Conclusion 118

Chapter Four: ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND FRIENDSHIP 119

I  Introduction 119
II  Female Friendship and Relationship in Patriarchy 120
III  Psychological Development in the Relational Paradigm 122
IV  Girls’ Friendship: a Possible Model for Connection and Mutuality 125
     4.1  Friendship Circles 126
        4.1.1 Loosely Knit Friendship Circles 127
        4.1.2 Cultural Barriers to the Formation of Close Friendship 132
        4.1.3 Gender as Barrier in Boy-Girl Friendship 134
     4.2  Closely Knit Friendship Circles 136
        4.2.1 Treasured Attributes in Girls’ Close Friendship 137
        4.2.2 Crossing Gender Barriers in Close Friendship in the Private Domain 140
        4.2.3 Movements Between Loosely Knit and Closely Knit Friendship 144
Chapter Five: SELF, RELATIONSHIP AND MORALITY

I Introduction 159

II Kohlberg’s Theory on Moral Development 160
  2.1 Moral Development as Abstract Universal Principles 160
  2.2 Reassessing the Universality of Kohlberg’s Morality 164

III Bringing in a Different Voice 167
  3.1 Background of Gilligan’s theory 168
  3.2 The Voice of Justice and the Voice of Care 170
  3.3 Themes of Morality that Emerge from a Justice and a Care Perspective 174

IV Morality for Girls in this Study: a Care or Justice Focus? 177
  4.1 The Meaning of Morality 178
  4.2 The Framing of Moral Dilemmas 185
    4.2.1 A Justice Orientation Includes a Solution of Care/Response 185
    4.2.2 A Care Orientation 190
    4.2.3 A Mixed Perspective 194
  4.3 Interdependence and Responsiveness 197
  4.4 Responsibility and Integrity 201

V Conclusion 204

Chapter Six: CONCLUSION 206

I Summary of Findings 206
  1.1 Adolescence: A Time for ‘Independence’ and ‘Femininity’ 206
  1.2 Girls’ Friendship and Girls’ Talk 208
  1.3 Relational Dilemmas and Solutions 211

II Girls’ Worldview and Dominant Theories 213
  2.1 Independence in Interdependence 213
  2.2 Trust, Friendship and Dialogue 216
  2.3 Responsibility and Integrity: Moral Dilemmas and Resolutions 219

III Expanding the Theoretical Framework of Adolescent/Human Development 221
  3.1 A Central Issue: Finding a Balance Between Autonomy and Attachment 221
  3.2 Relationship with Self/Other: Relational Mutuality 223
  3.3 Self, Relationships and Morality 225

IV Limitations of the Present Research 227
Appendix 1: Preliminary/Biographical Questions  229
Appendix 2: Grand-tour Questions & Follow Up Questions  231
Appendix 3: Abstract of the first interview  232
Appendix 4: Background information of the ten interviewees  236
Appendix 5: Brief life history of the ten interviewees  237

Bibliography  250
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.1 Basic Beliefs Four Major Paradigms in Social Science Inquiry (Adopted from Guba and Lincoln, 1994) 15

Table 2.1 Basic Steps in the long Interview Method and the Corresponding Stages in Other Qualitative Research. (Adapted from McCracken, 1988:30) 34

Table 2.2 Establishing Trustworthiness: A Comparison of Conventional and Naturalistic Inquiry. Adapted from Lincoln & Guba (1984) 51

Table 2.3 Summary of Techniques for Establishing Trustworthiness (Adapted from Lincoln & Cuba, 1985) 68


Table 5.2 Girls’ Moral Orientation Upon Answering the Question “What does morality mean to you?” 177

Table 5.3 How Girls Express Morality When Faced With a Real Life Moral Dilemma? 185

Table 5.4 Summary of Girls’ View on Equality and Relationships 198

Figure 2.1 Long Qualitative Interview: Four-Step method of Inquiry (Adapted from McCracken, 1988:30) 34
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The present study of a group of female adolescents' life experience and development in Hong Kong was initially triggered by an uneasiness that arose during the process of reviewing dominant theories in psychology that define what constitutes human/adolescent development. The psychology of adolescence portrayed as culminating in the developmental goals of separation, individuation, and autonomy did not seem to ring true with the adolescent girls I was dealing with. Moreover, it seemed directly reflected in the many individual and global crises facing humanity today, such as excessive focus on self-gratification, increasing violence and discrimination, and environmental degradation. The list could go on. Desired psychological development as portrayed in dominant literature essentially denies the importance of relationships. The notion of 'separation' carries the idea that individuals exist independently from both their fellow human beings as well as the environment in which they live. This troubling notion of 'separation' goes to the heart of the hierarchical social structure called patriarchy, which dominates most societies today, and which guides epistemological and methodological ideas of 'truth'.

This fundamentally goes against my worldview and 'knowledge' as a Buddhist, which promulgates life as existing in interdependence. This lack of understanding and inclusion of the importance of relationship in conventional theories prompted me to look for alternative models. The interdependent view is also espoused by the Relational paradigm, which claims development of psychological connection,
empathy and care as hallmarks for human development. This view does not deny the importance of autonomy and independence but prescribes a connected mode of being that fundamentally transforms and expands on the understanding of such traditional developmental objectives. Refocusing from the traditional occupation with intrapsychic development to finding a balance between staying connected to both self and other, the Relational paradigm espouses such a connected mode as the way towards healthy psychological growth. It shows how an individual's self-concept based on a connected mode is fundamentally different from a self based on 'separation'. The main thrust of this dissertation is to contribute, in however small way, to a greater understanding of the importance of relational development, or a self based on connection.

In part I, I will outline the three major areas of concerns in the present study: human development in patriarchy, devaluation of female development, and gender biases in the quantitative mode of inquiry. Part II will outline the objectives of this study. Furthermore, clarification of one's underlying belief system, or paradigm, is of utmost importance to understand epistemological and methodological ideas and preferences. Part III will discuss philosophical differences in four major paradigms. Following upon this discussion, I will examine my choice of the 'feminist-constructivist' paradigm, and continue with outlining my response to particular criticisms made of such qualitative research. In part V, I will elaborate further on other characteristics of the present research such as the use of a feminist framework and the Relational paradigm. Finally, an overview of the present report will be presented.
I. Epistemological and Methodological Biases in Understanding Female Adolescent Development

Being female myself, and having had the experience of dealing with female adolescents and young women for the past 10 years built the groundwork for the increasing amazement I felt as I filtered through literature that describes human/adolescent development. I found the epitome of human growth to be narrowed down to separation, individuation, and autonomy. However, biases of these concepts and their historical and gendered determinants also became increasingly clear. In order to understand better the historical and patriarchal environment from which such ideas of ‘self’ emerged and developed in the theories of Freud, Erikson, Piaget and Kohlberg, I will include in my introduction some of their historical/philosophical contexts.

1.1 Human Development in Patriarchy

From Plato (427-347), who perceived the world to be one of ideas and matter, the West inherited both beliefs about an unchanging order of the earth’s biological diversity, as well as propensity to dichotomise everything into oppositions such as spirit and matter, mind and body, self and world, men and women, culture and nature. Plato’s ideas supported a vertical social structure that made inequality of wealth and social status appear natural. The Aristotelian notion of “gradation” further formed the basis for a framework that justified the exploitation of individuals lower down the cultural/social/economic ladder. Plato’s ordering of the universe provided the rationale for a certain ranking system, which put human above nature, bishop above
priest, man above woman, and white above coloured. Furthermore, throughout more than 2000 years of western history, the 'patriarchs' (males in power) have controlled what part of human experience shall be noticed, what shall be preserved, and what shall be exhibited. The most central patriarchal stereotype is the split of the cognitive and the affective state, reason from emotion, which has been used to portray emotions as neurotic as well as the greatest female weakness, and reason as cultured and the virtue of men. In a climate dominated by the superiority of Newtonian physics, Rene Descartes (1596-1650) saw the universe as divided into mind and body, which were seen as two substances fundamentally different. This separation of mind and body, which has been tied in with the separation of reason and emotion, remains deeply embedded in Western mentality even today, and has greatly impacted the understanding of 'who' is 'self' and 'who' is 'other'. 'Self' has historically been equated with White, heterosexual, middle-class male, and 'other' with everybody else such as women, other races, ethnicities, the poor, and so forth. The reason/emotion dichotomy was embodied in two spheres: the sphere of 'reason', the public world of culture, justice and 'rationality', and the sphere of 'emotion', the private domain of nature, love, and 'irrationality'. The belief that one's wife was neurotic, because she was portrayed as the embodiment of emotions and incapable of being 'rational', perhaps strengthened those men with poor self-esteem. This was certainly the view of Virginia Woolf who in the 1920s suggested that if they were not portrayed as inferior, women would cease to enlarge. Moreover, the seventeenth century political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) postulated that human beings are essentially competitive and work only for their own self-interest, which worked well

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1 One way that this vertical system was maintained was the promulgation of virtuousness as up-keeper of the social order. Those who humbly accepted their place on earth without challenging the law of God and the 'natural' order of things would gain a place in heaven. Even today, individuals who protest the existing social and cultural order are often portrayed as a nuisance or even dangerous.
with the rising capitalist ethic, and the concept of the human being as inherently selfish and in need of control by a sovereign. And women even more so as they were essentially incapable of attaining full 'rationality'.

The public/private split meant that men dominate the community’s public affairs and control its resources, whereas women almost exclusively ‘dominate’ the private realm. Men tend to have more access to education, managerial positions, be head of governments, and the community’s religion. Patriarchal religion, which uses male symbols and worships male deities, with women ranked below men in religions worship, has had a big impact on our concept of the ‘natural’ gender division. Some would argue (see for example, Pagels, 1979; Lerner, 1986; Plumwood, 1993) that 2000 years of Judeo-Christian culture has accustomed us to think of everything divine as masculine, located ‘up-there’, whilst ecofeminists proclaim (see for example Spretnak, 1991; Merchant, 1992; Turpin & Lorentzen, 1996; Mellor, 1997) that we have forgotten to respect the earth upon which we depend for our survival. Moreover, genealogy traces through male names, which usually fosters a stronger wish for a boy heir. In short, patriarchy favours hierarchical systems of control within all its institutions with males at the top, and male experience and masculinity as exemplifying human experience and development. This hierarchical mindset branched into types of thinking that justified exerting control over other peoples and nature, and is echoed in the anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism that have penetrated much of modern civilisation. Perhaps the crystallisation of patriarchal institutions promulgating masculinity is the military.

Whatever the contentions of the above - postulations, simplification, or ‘truth’ - it is clear that history is a story of societies dominated by hierarchical notions and
objectives of development related to the wish for power and control, and that such power and control have been infused with being male and the meaning of masculinity.

The next section will highlight the dualistic notions of dominant concepts on human development that arise from patriarchal explanations of human existence and relationships.

1.2 Female Development as the Devalued ‘Other’

The above account points towards the idea that gender identity and gender relations are central to the understanding of any social order. Ideas about what it means to be a man and a woman have particular connotations, which are infiltrated hierarchically in theories on human development. Descartes’ notion of the suppression of the affective state (emotions) from the supposedly ‘superior’ cognitive state (reason) is a similar process prescribed by dominant theories in psychology that ascribe to a ‘self in separation’. Divorcing self from the relational needs and concerns brought about by a connection with the emotional core of one’s being is the process of detachment revered in western philosophy and psychology, and seen as a necessity for cognitive and moral development. For an adolescent to achieve separation, he must first detach himself from the mother, who represents the seat of affection and care, while also detaching himself from such affective states that may interfere with his development as an abstract thinker. Through the separation from his affective state he learns that it is not through empathic understanding or inner knowledge that the social world functions, but through certain codes of rule-bound behaviour that will ensure order. Trust is seen as a naïve, intuitive and inferior emotion.

The dominancy of the philosophy of ‘self in separation’ has received incessant criticism from feminists who postulate that what is portrayed as normative adult
behaviour is in fact behaviour expected of males. Indeed, it has been found that this
type of male growth is based on the servility of women as the devalued ‘other’ (Lloyd,
1984, 1993; Gilligan, 1992; Bem, 1993; Hekman, 1995; Furumoto, 1996). The
theories of Freud, Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg depict human development within
the framework of masculine behaviour in the public realm. Successful development,
which takes place during adolescence, means that separation, individuation, and
autonomy result in the ability for detachment, competitiveness, assertiveness, and
independence with demarcated self-boundaries. In light of feminist philosophy, we
can see that the epitome of ‘human’ development has been based on the public/private
split, which sees virtues of human development as virtually opposite to female
development, or femininity. The public realm of politics, the social, the cultural,
educational, is the realm portrayed in dominant discourses on rationality and
universality. Simultaneously, the private realm has constituted the realm of the body
and nature, irrationality and particularity, emotions, and the situated self, all aspects
that are identified with the female. Moreover, such discourses on masculinity and
femininity derived from men’s and women’s cultural and social position, demarcate
men’s experience as morally, cognitively and developmentally superior to women’s,
whose ‘private’ role has typically been seen as affective, caring and nurturing, all
devaluated qualities in patriarchal societies. As developmental theory has been based on
male experience in the public realm, female experience has been ignored or discarded
as unimportant and irrelevant. Moreover, this situation has created the dichotomous
notion that the cognitive and affective realms are separate spheres, hierarchical and
gender specific.
1.3 Biases in the Quantitative Mode of Inquiry

A lack of acknowledgement of the above-discussed gender-related discourses in social sciences inquiry can also be found within the tendency of quantitative methods to decontextualize both the researcher and the 'object' under study. Decontextualization, however, has usually been done in the name of achieving 'value-free' and 'objective' data. Take for example, a quantitative researcher who decides to undertake a comparative study of 'self-confidence' in early adolescent boys and girls, and sends out a questionnaire with a set of supposedly 'objective' questions. With the goal of assessing the percentage of 'confident' boys and girls, the method chosen may be seen as appropriate as long as it is done within the parameters of what is considered acceptable quantitative research (internal and external validity, reliability, and generalizability). However, the idea that an inquirer can achieve the status of objective observer simply by detaching (disregarding) personal subjective views overlooks an inquirer's influence on the formulation and choice of questions and categories of confidence, as well as portray a particular epistemological world-view of separation between knowledge-formulation and the ontological position of the knowledge-builder. Instead the lack of acknowledgement of the researcher's cultural and social socialization that determine categories of 'confidence' (for example), the 'percentage' that emerges is a product of a particular set of questions asked within a

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2 The postpositivist inquirer claims value-free inquiry can be guaranteed by virtue of the objective methodology employed. Lincoln & Guba (1985), however, reject this and point out at least five reasons for why an inquiry will always be value-bound. Inquiry is influenced by (1) the inquirer expressed in the choice of problem, evaluand, or policy option, in the framing, bounding (2) the choice of paradigm, (3) the choice of substantive theory utilized, (4) values that inhere in the context, and with respect to the above (5) inquiry is either value-resonant (reinforcing or congruent) or value-dissonant (conflicting) (p. 38 & Chp. 7)

3 Just simply deciding what questions to ask in a questionnaire, or asking those questions in a structured interview format will be a researcher-led activity, which is why the qualitative researcher during an interview process will attempt to conduct only semi-structure interviews and leave plenty or room for exploration, as well as self-reflectively analyse the source of the questions. Simply because a question appears in a questionnaire does not guarantee objective, no matter how uninvolved the researcher tries to be.
particular framework, and is in reality far from objective. Such lack of self-acknowledgement, or ‘detachment’, on the part of the researcher, however, has been confused with the achievement of objectivity, or value-free inquiry.

Moreover, if the goal is to deepen the understanding as to why boys and girls may face different problems with self-confidence, simply focusing on answers to pre-formulated questions that test specific variables will fail to consider the particular contexts of respondents. Qualitative researchers (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985) regard this as committing the error of ‘context stripping’. Focusing on selected variables, the quantitative researcher fails to include the social and cultural discourses that may influence the male and female adolescent (to follow the example above) differently at that particular point in their life, or fail to include their personal background, present circumstances, relationships with teachers, friends, and family, which are all factors that cannot just be ignored. In short, there is a whole set of valid happenings in an individual’s life that cannot be accounted for with quantitative methods. This puts a question mark at the claimed ability to generalise from such a situation, since such generalisations may have little applicability in the individual case, let alone live up to the claim of knowledge/representation of reality.

Quantitative measures, however, have been and still are the favoured and more ‘prestigious’ way of doing research because of this claim of objectivity and ‘ability’ to generalise. Unfortunately, without owing up to the subjectivity of such claimed

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4 The qualitative inquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Chp. 5) would say that the “Only Generalization is: there is No Generalization”. Traditionally, generalization has been the aim of science, and little value was attributed to knowing the unique. It was believed that if one rejects the goal of achieving generalizations, all that can be left is knowledge of the particular. However, Lincoln and Guba argue that this view ignores the fact that we are not dealing with an either or proposition; that the alternatives include more than deciding between nomadic generalizations and unique particularized knowledge. Although generalization may seem an appealing concept and can serve its purpose, without paying attention to the particular, it gives too easy an answer. In order to use generalizations they must be applied to the particular, which is exactly the point where their relative nature comes sharpest into focus (p. 116)
‘objectivity’ and stripping of data of their social and cultural contexts, many values continue to be portrayed as facts. This is not to say that quantitative methods cannot be useful, but its claim of objectivity and generalisability must be scrutinised.

Another pitfall of the quantitative mode is the exclusion of meaning and purpose from human activities. Unlike physical objects, human beings cannot be understood without reference to meanings and purposes attached to their endeavours. In order to understand such meanings and purposes the context in which an individual lives (the cultural, the social, and particularity of situation) must be attended to. Continuing with the above example, the conclusion may be that early adolescent girls are less assertive and outspoken than their male counterparts. However, without considering the increasing influence of cultural scripts of masculinity and femininity impinging particularly at that point in an adolescent’s life, the meaning and purpose of her ‘silence’ and his ‘outspokenness’ (for example) may be totally lost, and the naked ‘fact’ will be: early adolescent girls are less assertive and outspoken than boys, and the inference may be because boys are in the process of developing healthy autonomy, whereas girls lack such autonomy, which again without a researcher’s self-reflective engagement is not recognised as a particular value judgement. Thus quantitative inquiry has been seen as an instrument to acquire the etic (outsider) point of view that is brought to bear on an inquiry by an investigator. This etic view may carry little meaning to the emic (insider) of those under study. Thus Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Cobin (1990) conclude that theories should be grounded in and data confirmed by qualitative research. Thus I can conclude that a number of methodological problems have contributed to the particular portrayal of female development (and human development) that is under dispute in the present study. My choice of a qualitative mode of inquiry will be discussed further in part III and IV.
II. Objective of the Present Research

From the previous discussion we see various ontological, epistemological and methodological problems. Having discussed the narrow emphasize of separation, individuation, and autonomy in theories on human development and the equation of male development with human development that devalue qualities traditionally associated with female development, we find that the process of living our lives in a web of relationships have been vastly overlooked or even dismissed as unimportant. However, it is through significant relationships that we develop the relational capacities so clearly devalued and overlooked in traditional theories and in the public realm. To combat this undesirable situation, I have designated three specific objectives of this study. First, to readdress the emphasis on separation, autonomy, individuation as developmental objectives by bringing in the relational paradigm so as to widen the scope of our understanding of human development, and better capture the complexity and creative dynamics of ‘living’. Second, to combat the insidious portrayal of ‘feminine’ qualities (relational qualities) as unimportant and irrational, and the continuous devaluation of female development in general. Third, to fulfil the objectives of the first two and to enrich our understanding of female adolescence in particular, and the relational mode of being in general, I will follow the qualitative mode of inquiry. Specifically, through using a gender sensitive framework the objective is to understand female adolescent development, explore their life concerns and moral development, which have largely been ignored by theories that consistently portray females as the ‘other’. It is hoped that this will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of developing relational capacities to improve the ‘quality’ of our lives.
III. Philosophical Differences of Inquiry Paradigms

The foregone discussion of conventional theories exposes flaws in the understanding of female adolescent development, and we discover that previous research data, mainly based on and done by men (white, middle-class, heterosexual), are androcentric and incomplete. For example, a typical belief is that research based on a male-only sample can be generalised to all others\(^5\). This idea springs from a belief system that carries particular ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings, and points towards the importance of examining underlying paradigms of a researcher. A paradigm is the basic belief systems, or world-view, that guides the investigator. Guba and Lincoln (1994) proclaim through a systematic portrayal of four presently competing paradigms in social sciences inquiry “questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm” (p. 105). They suggest that to choose the most appropriate research method an investigator must be aware of his/her ontological\(^6\) and

\(^5\) Feminist knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of all human beings is valid, whereas patriarchal knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of only half of the human population needs to be considered. This is why patriarchal knowledge and the methods of producing it are a fundamental part of women’s oppression.

\(^6\) Philosophers have introduced arguments asserting that one’s ontological position, how one views “reality”, might exist at any one of four levels (outlined in Table 1.1): (1) Objective Reality, which is also called naïve realism or hypothetical realism. It means that the world is seen as existing independently of our knowledge of it. This view believes in error elimination (of reality). There is a drift towards consensus in science, that is, different inquiries are directed towards one and the same reality. (2) Perceived reality, which assumes that there is a reality but which cannot be fully known. Reality can only be perceived from different perspectives. It is seen as a partial, incomplete view of something that is nevertheless real, but capable of different interpretations. The perceptual realist, however, believes that no one person (or group) can know all of reality at any one point in time. (3) Constructed Reality, view questions whether there is a reality, and if there is, we can never know of it. Any given construction may not be in a one-to-one relation to other constructions of the same (by definition) entity. (4) Created Reality, propounds that there is no reality at all, and that numerable realities can be created. 1 & 2 adopt similar posture on reality, i.e. that that there is a reality, the only difference is whether or not individuals know it wholly or not. 3 & 4 the ontological position here also exhibit similar basic assumptions about the nature of reality – that is, it does not exist until either it is (1) constructed by and agent, or (2) created by a participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:81-87). We should also note that some physicists are now postulating the existence of an infinite number of parallel universes. Moreover, examples of constructed realities are numerous (labels, euphemisms, and stereotypes – labels help us sort out reality easily, euphemisms construct reality in a way that makes it more palatable, stereotypes makes it easy to deal with people, and make quick reference points for categorization) Lincoln & Guba, 1985:88).
epistemological position, which subsequently determines methodological direction (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Ontological questions are concerned with the “form and nature of reality” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). Taking the example above, whether the phenomenon of the ‘silencing’ of early adolescent girls is regarded as a developmental failure of girls that is ‘discovered’ by the investigator, and a reflection of ‘reality’, or whether this is a culturally and socially created phenomenon that may not exist at all times and in all places are two different ways of looking at the nature of reality. How we answer such questions depends on our ontological position. Questions of epistemology are concerned with the “nature of the relationship between the knower or would be knower and what can be known” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). The answer to this question depends on the answer already given to the ontological question, e.g. if a ‘real’ world is assumed to exist ‘out there’ the position of the knower is one of objective detachment in search of discovery of ‘how things really are’. This means that the investigator is not part of the process of investigation but can keep the position of ‘objectivity’. Questions of methodology are concerned with how “the

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7 Lincoln & Guba, (1985) postulate that we literally create a reality that reflects our view of the world and who we are in relation to it, but that such constructed realities must depend on some form of consensual language. They say that “constructive research” takes an ethnographic approach and becomes an extensive descriptive and interpretive effort at explaining the complexities. They go on to cite some of the ‘realities’ found in the disciplines, such as Bakan (1972) who they say “cries out for psychology to eschew traditional or conventional science for a more relevant or empirical science (based on, as he notes, discovery rather than prediction and control) . . . to focus on those things that make men and women human, the cognitive and creative processes” (1985:76). They also quote Kelly (1955): “the open question for man is not whether reality exists or not but what he can make of it”, indicating that meaning should be imposed on individual experience. Schutz (1967; again cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) agrees with such explanations of reality, and says that reality must be rooted in the meanings that are constructed and attached to everyday life. This phenomenological perspective aims to interpret the actions of individuals in the social world and the ways in which they give meaning to social experience. Lincoln & Guba, (1985) continue to say that evaluators should seek to resolve the contradictions and misunderstandings, but should expect that they will have to portray the multiple realities they find. The Marxist critique of naturalistic or ethnomethodological approaches would be that “Naturalism accords to the social scientist the role of passive reporter of events and member accounts rather than interpreter of the world that Marxist analysis wishes the intellectual to adopt” (Cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985:78)
inquirer (would-be-knower) goes about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). Again the answer to this question is constrained by the answers to the first two questions. Thus if a ‘reality’ is assumed to exist ‘out there’ awaiting to be ‘discovered’, certain quantitative (such as a questionnaire) or observational methods could be regarded as appropriate and sufficient. If, however, ‘reality’ is believed to be multiple and variant, and even created in the process of investigation, a quantitative mode of inquiry would be insufficient, at least at the stage of generating hypotheses and themes. These questions serve as the major foci of the following comparison scheme set up by Guba and Lincoln (1994). Feminist theory is to be found within the Critical Theory Category, and since I also align myself with the Constructivist Paradigm, I will focus my discussion on these two paradigms. I will refer to this location as the feminist-constructivist paradigm. The following scheme is just a brief outline of all four paradigms reproduced for the sake of clarity.

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8 It could be that after a qualitative investigation of generating hypotheses and themes, quantitative methods could be useful to see whether such findings hold for different groups of people. Which methods, qualitative or/and quantitative, thus depend on the objectives of the investigation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Postpositivism</th>
<th>Critical Theory et. Al</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td>Naive realism—&quot;real&quot; reality but apprehendable</td>
<td>Critical realism—&quot;real&quot; reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable</td>
<td>Historical realism—virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and gender values; crystallized over time</td>
<td>Relativism—local and specific constructed realities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td>Dualist/objectivist; findings are true</td>
<td>Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true</td>
<td>Transactional/subjectivist; value-mediated findings</td>
<td>Transactional/subjectivist; created findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong></td>
<td>Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods</td>
<td>Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplicity; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods</td>
<td>Dialogical/Dialectical</td>
<td>Hermeneutical/dialectical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 Basic Beliefs Four Major Paradigms in Social Science Inquiry (Adopted from Guba and Lincoln, 1994)

IV. A Feminist-constructivist Paradigm

In the above four paradigms, Guba and Lincoln see feminist theory as one theory belonging to the camp of Critical Theory. Feminist theory⁹ is located within this paradigm because it holds the same beliefs in the three fundamental questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology, but has its main focus on gender. Here I will elaborate on the feminist and constructivist paradigms and discuss the implications of such beliefs for social science inquiry in general and with regards to female adolescents in particular.

Contrary to the positivist/postpositivist position, historical realism is the ontological position of the critical/feminist theorist. They believe that realities are constructed by cultural, social, political, economic, ethnic, and gender factors. These

⁹ Although there are many branches of feminism, which differ on various points, they all agree on the patriarchal structure of society that make gender identity central to human development.
factors are manifested in and shape a number of structures and discourses that become seen as natural and as the ‘true’ nature of reality. For feminists, gender relations are seen as a dominant ideology that constitutes the basis for patriarchal society, and accounts for the manifestations of patriarchal ideology both in individual psychology, as well as in prominent institutions and discourses, which serves to uphold hierarchies that generally keep women in a submissive position. Epistemologically speaking, critical/feminist theory believes there is a transactional and subjectivist relationship between the researcher and the researched; that they are intricately linked with the values held by the researcher, which means that knowledge is necessarily value mediated and thus value dependent. Data is the result of an intricately intertwined process of the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular respondent. In terms of methodology, the critical/feminist adopts a dialogical and dialectical mode of inquiry. The inquiry process is conducted via a dialectical dialogue that aims to transform misapprehensions into informed consciousness. There is an aim at ‘consciousness raising’, i.e. to raise the awareness of the researched of the constructed nature of historically mediated societal structures (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Olesen, 1994).

The major difference between the critical/feminist and constructivist paradigms is their ontological position, which moves from ‘ontological realism’ to ‘ontological relativism’. To constructivists, realities are “apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific in nature and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the construct” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:110-111). Constructions are not more or less ‘true’, but just more or less informed, and are mutable like ‘realities’ are alterable.
Despite this ontological difference, the constructivist holds similar views on epistemological issues to the critical/feminist stance. Researcher and respondent are intricately linked, and findings are seen as a 'created' outcome in the process of inquiry. This dynamic view of the inquiry process breaks down the conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology, as was also the case with critical theory. Methodologically speaking, owing to the idea that constructions are personal and variable, constructions can only be elicited and refined through the interaction between the researcher and the researched. Methods would be dialectical and hermeneutical in nature, such as semi-structured to open-ended interviews, and aim to distil a construction of consensus that is more informed than the previously held construction (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

My position is a partial 'combination' of the critical/feminist and constructivist paradigms. Ontologically speaking, I am aligned with both because I see the nature of reality as being shaped by "social, political, cultural, economical, ethnic, and gender factors", but also mediated by individual differences depending on background and personal experience, as well as personality. (I perhaps, however, ontologically speaking lean slightly more towards the critical/feminist paradigm.) Owing to these differences, girls may have different constructions of reality that play out against the "historical realism" postulated by the critical/feminist. To accommodate a better understanding of the life experience and development of the adolescent girls in the present study, I need to have a good grasp of both the 'historical realism' the girls find themselves in, as well as their personal 'differences', and be able to be open to the personal versions of constructed realities each girl may hold.

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10 This position was first proposed by Wai-fong Ting (1997) in her PhD. dissertation as she saw the need to create a "partial-marriage" between these two paradigms.
In terms of epistemology, I agree with both the critical/feminist and constructivist paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) that findings are mediated and that inquirer and respondents may interactively 'produce' findings. For the present study, this means that my outlook on life as made up of intricately interdependent relationships, and my gender sensitive disposition will inevitably influence my role as investigator, the data collection and the analysis. For example, another investigator may not be able to build up the same kind of rapport, collect the same kind of data, or come to the same conclusion as the respondents and I have 'mutually' 'created'. However, I have attempted to make the assessment of the usefulness of the findings for future research easier by providing thorough and accountable details of the research process, the circumstances and the reasoning of the present study. It is then the task of the reader to make the necessary adaptations so as to make the research relevant to his/her future study.

Methodologically speaking, I am in partial agreement with the critical/feminist approach to conducting social inquiry. I agree that the transactional nature of inquiry must be in the form of dialogue between the researcher and the respondent. But I have misgivings about the right to make that dialogue directly dialectical with the aim of transforming ignorance and misapprehensions. Also when recruiting the respondents I did not tell them I was going to 'interpret' the best way for them to live their lives. Instead I informed them of my interest in knowing more about how they see the world, and that I needed them to be willing to tell me about their worldview. For respondents who participate in qualitative research, however, it will always to some degree be a dialectical process, since the research process itself requires the respondent to articulate his/her experience, which necessarily fosters a deeper understanding of the issues involved. Therefore, rather than directly 'enlightening' the respondents in the
present research about their possible gender 'traps', I have attempted to follow what to me is the most 'natural' process of dialogue, without directing my more informed opinions and analyses against the backdrop of the respondents' response. I have tried to respond to both the collective as well as personal constructions of realities that I came across simply by trying to elicit their perspective as much as possible. Although I refrained from being directly dialectical during the interview process itself, I still hope [and as the response from the respondents indicate] that the research process for the respondents have been one of deepening their understanding of some of the constructs they take for granted in their daily life, which may stimulate philosophical questions as to why they think in a particular way while trying to refrain from 'informing' them how they 'should' think. Although my position as researcher has been more 'restrained' during the research process itself, my underlying motive for conducting this research is by all means to engage in a 'dialectical' process with the aim of contributing to the overall well-being of adolescents and their social existence (and on a broader level to human development) by identifying and examining critically the social conditions that shape their lives.

V. Other Characteristics of the Present Study

5.1 Feminism Constitutes the Principal Perspective of the Present Study

In order to understand the life experience and development of female adolescents, feminism has aided me as the principal perspective for the present research. A variety of feminisms exist that branch into different areas but all aimed at social transformation. One thing they have in common is that they all take women's experience of living in patriarchy as the central focus for change. Deconstructing
patriarchy becomes the process for realising social justice and transforming hierarchical notions of relationships. This process for some feminists (including myself) entails advancing various developmental aspects, such as empathy and care, which have traditionally been portrayed in dominant discourses as less important concepts in human development because they have been linked to the development of femininity. Such humane qualities, however, are worth accentuating in concepts on human development, whether male or female. Women have manifested a tendency to emphasize sensitivity to others' needs, empathetic understanding, and caring for others that disappears/is devalued under a perspective that takes masculinity as the desired way of being. (Conversely men who show such aspect would also be considered autonomously immature, or 'dependent'). While exploring the missing links in the conventional masculine concept of human development that still emphasize masculine and feminine types as biologically natural, it is not only important but also necessary to have a gender sensitive framework to understanding female experience and development. Theories and research that do not include a gender perspective in understanding cultural and social conditions that shape psychological experience cannot be said to be either responsible or 'scientific'.

On the same note, however, I am also aware that my feminist framework may limit my understanding of girls' relationship with the various male persons in their relational context, and I have taken steps to become aware of my own subjective stand (ontological position) during the cultural review (described in Chapter Two on methodology). From findings of the present study, it has been encouraging to see how some of the respondents have been able to transcend gender barriers in establishing close friendship with male counterparts, for example, or how they have been able to transform typical characteristics of femininity into strength in their relationship with
both others and themselves. Without a feminist framework it would have been
difficult to appraise or 'discover' such findings.

5.2 Conversant with the Relational Paradigm

Relationship is a key word; an issue that has been neglected or seen as a 'women's
problem' in an individualistic, agentic culture that focuses on separation and
individuation as developmental milestones. These concepts, as they stand in
conventional theories of human development discussed in this dissertation, essentially
deny the importance of 'relationship' and the interdependence of reality. The present
research focuses on how persons, and especially female persons, grow through
empowering relationships with significant others.

Why do I find girls who feel both happy and responsible for affecting others
positively? Why do I find a great concern with how others think and feel, and a strong
interest in other people and their welfare in general? Why do girls feel unhappy when
they face discord in their relationship with friends? Relational psychologists have
found a tendency in females to manifest a greater capacity for connection, empathy
and caring, and that these qualities are based on a view of the world and relationships
as existing in interdependence. I found these aspects highly worth exploring both to
combat distorted views of human development, as well as to facilitate more
recognition of the importance of relational qualities to human existence. I hope that
the present research will contribute to some of these developments.

However, it should be recognized that the Relational Paradigm, or an ethic of care,
has been criticised on various accounts including its lack of focus on class, and its
apparent emphasis on an essential nature of justice and care of males and females.
respectively. Although the lack of attention to the influence of class is in some sense repeated in the present research, it does not mean that the social/economic situation of the girls has gone unnoticed by either the researcher or the respondents themselves. Both indeed recognize the somewhat privileged background of respondents expressed for example in the taken for granted attitude towards continuing through tertiary education, and the obvious parental expectations of daughters to develop a career. However, since my intention has not been to generalize from this group of girls, I have refrained from including an analysis of class, while I have still included a detailed script of the background of each girl (see appendix 5), for considerations of transferability for future research.

With regards to the discussion on whether the Relational Paradigm perpetuates the traditional view of females and males as being essentially different, the fear is that by stating that women are more relational oriented, the traditional identification of women with caring practices will only be perpetuated and thereby contribute to women's oppression. The aim of identifying women's greater sense of connection and recognition of reality as interdependent, however, has not in any way been to maintain the devalued position of women in patriarchal societies. Instead, as Gilligan clearly states, the Relational Paradigm does not talk about gender specific differences, but rather describes two different ways of being in the world, i.e. the ontological position of seeing oneself as an atomistic entity and that of believing self to be an interdependent being. This difference in ontology is not meant to promote essentialism but rather converse around the themes of the child's experiences of inequality and attachment, and the socialization process of a masculine and feminine identification. The aim therefore of the Relational Paradigm has been to include the

11 Whether boys have similar experiences I am not in a position to comment on, but this has not been
importance of relational development to both men and women, and understand how this voice of care is developed through experiences of attachment and the recognition of the importance of relationships of connection based on empathy.

5.3 A Study Directed by Qualitative Methodology

The qualitative/naturalistic paradigm postulates that meaningful human research is impossible without the full understanding and cooperation of respondents as opposed to the ‘one-way mirror’ approach seeking ‘objective’ truth. Therefore no manipulation on the part of the inquirer will be required. The emphasis is on what is ‘created’ during the research process itself. Moreover, since it is believed that theories and facts are not independent, that facts cannot exist in and of themselves as absolute truth, the naturalistic inquirer will not employ a priori hypotheses. This does not make it desirable to start with a ‘blank slate’, if that was at all possible, but implies that a priori hypotheses are replaced with “working hypotheses”, which means that conclusions can only be said to be true under those particular conditions and circumstances, and are an evolving process rather than a final product of absolute findings.

Moreover, characteristics of the qualitative inquiry include: a natural setting which allows realities to be understood as holistic and dynamic, the researcher as reported on in any research I came across. In fact, relational capacities have not been cited as desirable or important developmental aspects in conventional theories on human development.

12 Naturalistic/qualitative inquiry expounds two salient points; first, no manipulation on the part of the inquirer is implied, and second, the inquirer does not impose a priori hypotheses on the outcome (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

13 Cronbach (1975; cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was the first to propose that we should replace the classic idea of generalization not with naturalistic generalization but with a new formulation: the working hypothesis. This implies that we are dealing with a continuum, the two ends of which do not begin to encompass all of the possibilities that exist (not either nomothetic or idiographic). When we give proper weight to local conditions, any generalization is a working hypothesis, not a conclusion. He suggests that there are always factors that are unique to the locale or series of events that make it useless to generalize. A working hypothesis means findings are mutable and in constant flux, which militates against conclusions that are always and forever, true. Findings can only be said to be true under such and such conditions and circumstances.
instrument of data collection, purposive sampling, inductive data analysis, negotiated outcomes, ideographic interpretation, and tentative application (Guba and Lincoln, 1984; Ting, 1997; Padgett, 1998). These operational characteristics have been adopted to guide the present inquiry, and will be discussed in Chapter Two.

VI. Overview of this Report

The remaining chapters of this dissertation are the elaborations of a group of adolescent girls’ life experience and development in Hong Kong. Chapter Two depicts details of the methodology, the actual inquiry process, as well as the trustworthiness of the present study. Chapters Three, Four and Five deal explicitly with themes that emerged, which are discussed within relevant theoretical frameworks. Chapter Three focuses on how adolescent girls in this study experience developmental milestones depicted in traditional theories as separation, individuation, and autonomy, how the discourse on adolescence conflicts with the discourse on femininity, and how girls exercise choice in the midst of these conflicting messages. This discussion will surround major themes of the Relational paradigm of “connection”, “permeability”, and “mutuality”. Carrying on with the underlying postulation of the Relational paradigm, and Chapter Three of the importance of relationships and significant others in the lives of adolescent girls, Chapter Four is devoted to describing the importance and nature of friendship of adolescent girls. This discussion will be underscored by the themes of “connection” and “mutuality”, and I will highlight the qualities found in girls’ friendship and the significance of verbal communication. Chapter Five will focus on articulating what constitute moral dilemmas for girls in this study, and how such dilemmas are being assessed and resolved. I will discuss the dominant ideas of
morality espoused in Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, as well as bring in alternative theories, namely Gilligan’s moral framework of an ethics of care.

It should be noted that a lack of a separate chapter on theoretical and conceptual frameworks does not imply an absence of such a discussion. Instead, literature reviews and theoretical frameworks will be discussed in correlation with the emergence of relevant themes. This has allowed me to adopt a more focused and coherent framework that can be developed in relevant places and around specific themes. Thus in Chapter Three traditional theories on adolescent development of Freud and Erikson will be discussed and reviewed, and I will bring in postulations of female adolescent development of Relational psychologists and the Relational paradigm. The themes of Chapter Four will then be discussed with further elaboration of the Relational paradigm on mutuality, and in Chapter Five dominant theories of Piaget and Kohlberg will be discussed in contrast to Gilligan’s moral framework so as to correspond to the themes of morality discussed in that chapter. As a final note, feminism and the Relational paradigm are the dominant theoretical perspectives that have guided literature reviews, and theoretical and empirical discussions.
CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I. Introduction

In the last chapter I located the present study within a feminist-constructivist paradigm and considered the respective ontological, epistemological, and methodological dispositions of such research. In this chapter, I will outline my choice of method in an attempt to follow the clear guidelines on what are appropriate methods in a research design of a qualitative nature in terms of sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Moreover, a set of trustworthiness criteria is discussed and with which the quality of the present research can be appraised. In the first section of part II, I will outline some of these fundamental requirements, and then move on to discuss my choice of method. I will describe how my choice of research design falls within the 'critical-constructivist parameters', and give a full description of the current research process in light of the Long Interview Method and its four-step procedure. Second, I will discuss in more detail how I have incorporated criteria of trustworthiness suggested by qualitative researchers throughout the present study.

II. Qualitative Research Objectives and The Long Interview Method

The main source of data came from ten 16-17 year-old girls, five Caucasians, four Chinese, and one Eurasian, who had volunteered to participate in the present study. Consent was obtained from both the respondents and their parents. All respondents
came from the same international school, which uses English as a medium of instruction, and all were in the first year of their A-levels. Each respondent was interviewed twice individually, with each interview lasting approximately 1 ½-hour. The two interviews took place with an interval of approximately three months. During these three months, as well as after the second interview further contact was made over the telephone and via e-mail to clarify data analysis or ask for further elaboration on particular issues. All interviews took place at the school of the respondents and were audiotape recorded for later transcription. Further details of sampling, background information of respondents, data collection, and data analysis will be discussed below, together with the criteria for doing qualitative research and corresponding choice of method.

2.1 Criteria for Doing Qualitative Research

Since realities are wholes that cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts, or as parts to be studied in fragments, the qualitative researcher is most likely to choose and carry out the research in a natural setting or context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The act of observation influences what is seen, and context is crucial in deciding whether or not findings carry meaning in other contexts. This means that findings are mutually shaping\(^1\) rather than part of a linear causation\(^2\). Observations or

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1 Lincoln and Guba (1985) postulates that observation not only disturbs and shapes, it is also shaped by what is observed. Contrary, in positivism the observer becomes the creator of the universe. The constructivist paradigm, however, questions whether even seemingly simple quantitative research method can result in accurate information. Instead, respondents are constantly being shaped by their perceptions and expectations about the researcher and his/her use of the data. Therefore the investigator-respondent dyad is transitive, and in continuous unfolding. Each shapes the other and is shaped by the other—because a dialogue/interaction is always two-way.

2 Lincoln and Guba (1985:129-159) question whether causality is a viable concept. They argue for replacing the concept of causality with that of mutual shaping (see footnote 1). The aim of science has for a long time been prediction and control, and understanding causes is the key to these objectives. Indeed, without viable causes the hope of a nomothetic science would seem to be in vain. Critical theorists would argue that if understanding causes is the key to prediction and control it is also the key to power, which means that such an inquiry can produce information that can be used to political effect.
interviews are favoured over the decontextualizing approach of positivistic scientific inquiry. Interviews by and of themselves do not, however, automatically overcome the problem of decontextualization, and can easily be serve the same purpose of hypotheses-testing as a prestandardized questionnaire. Therefore while the interviews in the present study were carried out in respondents' school so as to fulfil the objective of a more natural setting, and other contacts were made with girls over the phone, when they were at home, and in that sense, still talking to me from their natural setting i.e. their own homes/bedrooms, at a time convenient to them, most importantly, most important was avoiding 'decontextualisation' during the interview process itself. Various steps were taken to minimise problems associated with decontextualisation, which are discussed below.

Unlike prestandardised questions, the qualitative researcher must be a sensitive instrument of observation, capable of developing categories of meaning from raw data. Therefore in line with qualitative criteria the constructivist inquirer chooses to use him/herself as the primary instrument for data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McCracken, 1988; Miller & Crabtree, 1992). The main reason is that human beings are the only 'instrument' that is capable of assessing meaning into the interaction. Consequently the present study adopts a face-to-face interview method as the primary data collection method, while attempting to be extremely sensitive during the interview process itself.

In qualitative research sampling is not based on probability theory, and the idea is not to make a sample from which generalizations can be made. Purposive sampling increases the scope or range of data exposed (random or representative sampling is likely to suppress more deviant cases), is more likely to uncover multiple realities,
and to maximize investigator’s ability to devise a theory that takes adequate account of local conditions, mutual shaping, and local values (for transferability). Thus the group of girls in the present study are not necessarily representative of the population from which they are drawn. Instead they were selected to illuminate the experience of the individual, and were selected purposively (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandsou et al. 1993).

Qualitative methods are inherently inductive, and they seek to discover, not to test, explanatory theories or hypotheses. Moreover, since the aim is to ‘discover’ multiple realities, a deductive method would be futile. Inductive methods are more likely to identify multiple realities, and make the investigator-respondent interaction explicit, recognizable and accountable. Inductive methods are also likely to more fully describe the setting, which increases the potential for more accurate decisions about transferability, and identifying mutually shaping influences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This means that values are an explicit part of the analytic structure.

“Negotiated outcomes” is a term that refers to the practice of the investigator to negotiate meanings and interpretations with the respondents in the study, because it is their constructions that the investigator wishes to reconstruct, and because the outcome depends upon the nature and quality of the interaction. The qualitative researcher believes that any specific working hypothesis is only applicable within a given context and is best verified and confirmed by the people inhabiting that context who are in a better position to interpret the complex interactions under study. This criterion is followed up by a “members’ check” both during the data collection process and also after the data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandsou et al. 1993).

Furthermore, the objective of quantitative research is to interpret data nomothetically, that is in terms of law-like generalisations, because it is believed that
interpretations from one setting are likely to be meaningful and applicable to another. The qualitative researcher is more inclined to seek ideographic interpretations of data, that is, interpretations that correspond with the particularities of the respondents in the study. More meaningful data depend heavily on including the contexts of respondents, such as personal particularity, local conditions, the investigator-respondent interaction, local mutual shaping factors, and the investigator's values. "Thick description" of such contexts allows for making more accurate decisions about transferability. In accordance with this guideline, I have tried to provide the service of thick description, to make future transferability possible.

Another criterion for the qualitative researcher is tentative application. Since the qualitative researcher is likely to regard outcomes of the inquiry process as data 'created' under particular circumstances (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and view realities as multiple and different (which makes duplication difficult), he/she is also likely to only be tentative about broad applications of findings. It is therefore important, as described above, to provide a thorough description of the research process. It is then the responsibility of the reader to make the necessary considerations of similarity of the sending and receiving contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given these considerations, for any qualitative social inquiry, like the present study, 'generalisation' is not, and should not be, the objective.

Lastly, whereas quantitative methodology has been concerned with operational definitions (internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity), qualitative research methods seek trustworthiness through an alternative set of criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, linked with corresponding empirical procedures. All of the above mentioned criteria and procedures of qualitative research are discussed in the context of the present research in the following parts.
2.2 Deciding on the Long Interview Method

In a book titled *The Long Interview* Grant McCracken (1988) presents a systematic guide to theory and method of the long qualitative interview method, and recommends this method over other qualitative methods such as participant observation. The Long Interview Method employs in-depth interviewing techniques designed to generate narratives that capture participants' own version of the world, in terms of cultural categories and shared meanings. McCracken puts forward two major arguments as to why to adopt this method. The first is concerned with 'affordability' of time, for both the researcher and the respondents. Even the most committed of respondents are likely to lead hectic and deeply segmented lives that allow for little interruption in their daily schedules. Although willing to participate, respondents may have little time and attention available for the researcher. This poses a crucial constraint on the qualitative researcher. This was also the case for the respondents in the present study who were all actively engaged in and committed to their school work as well as extra curricular activities that often lasted both into the night and weekend. It was thus a great help to be able to conduct a focused and semi-structured interview in between lessons and within the space of two free periods, which provided a convenient and uninterrupted hour and a half in which to engage the respondent. This greatly enhanced the possibility of the girls being able to participate. Similarly, for myself as the researcher who has a two-year time limit to finish the present study, time constraint was also a factor. Being able to generate that much data within the limited time available greatly helped me finish on time. Considering the fact that although attending the same school, respondents live scattered all over Hong Kong\(^3\), if

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\(^3\)None of them in fact lived in the same neighbourhood. Sending children to international schools outside their own area is quite typical for Hong Kong, that is, if the family can afford the fees, and children can pass the entrance requirements. Fees for international schools are by no means cheap at around HK$7000 per month, which means that only children from upper-middle class to upper class
I would have had to use methods such as participant observation it would have caused considerable time constraints. The Long Interview method, however, allows the investigator to follow qualitative objectives with manageable methodological techniques (McCracken 1988) in the most affordable time, and moreover without violating the privacy of the participants.

Respecting the privacy of the respondents is the second argument put forward by McCracken. He stresses that certain aspects of modern life are simply closed off to social scientific inquiry. In the present context, to have conducted the research at the respondents’ home for example, would have been ‘impossible’, not so much with regards to being allowed entrance, but more in terms of violation of time and privacy. It would have put considerable constraints on the respondents and their families as most of them engaged in daily extra curricular activities, which engages them until or after six o’clock. Therefore they return home late, have dinner, and then either continue with their homework or engage in other activities. Such a hectic life-style makes participant observation almost impossible without seriously intruding on respondents’ lives, and perhaps causing them to drop out of the research. The Long Interview Method is therefore recommended as not only a viable but also a valuable research strategy that gives access to individuals’ experience without violating their privacy or testing their patience (McCracken, 1988; Crabtree and Miller, 1991; Globerman, 1994)

I have adopted the Long Interview Method as the basic research methodology for the present study, because it allows me to step into “the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world” (McCracken, 1988:9) while overcoming the constraints of time and privacy cited above. However,
the most crucial concern is that this mode of inquiry allows me to engage in ‘dialogic’ interaction with the respondents in order to elicit their construction of reality. In the following sections I will describe the entire research process of the present study based on the ‘four-step’ framework suggested by McCracken.

2.3 A Four-step Method of Inquiry

The Long Interview Method involves a number of structured steps: to develop an interview guide, to conduct the interview (collect the data), and to analyse the data obtained from the interviews. The focus is on gathering in-depth data with well-thought consideration and care from a small number of respondents. The emphasis is on depth rather than width, and provides a chance to glimpse the complicated character, organization, and logic of culture. The idea is that “less is more”, so as to gain more in-depth rather than superficial data. Figure 2.1 illustrates McCracken’s conceptual framework of this research method. These stages are organised into a “four-step” pattern that illustrate their sequence and the nature of their interaction. Table 2.1 illustrates how the different steps correspond to stages of research in other qualitative inquiries.
Figure 2.1. Long Qualitative Interview: Four-Step method of Inquiry (Adapted from McCracken, 1988:30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in the Long Interview Method</th>
<th>Corresponding Research Stages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Reviewing Analytic Categories</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Reviewing Cultural Categories</td>
<td>Reviewing of researcher's own implicit preconceptions of the research topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Step 3: Discovery of Cultural Categories  
  a. construction of interview guide  
  b. sampling  
  c. the interview process  
  d. transcription | Data Collection |
| Step 4: Discovery of Analytical Categories  
  a. utterance identification and observations  
  b. expansion of observations  
  c. comparisons of observations  
  d. theme development  
  e. comparison of different interview themes | Data Analysis |

Table 2.1 Basic Steps in the Long Interview Method and the Corresponding Stages in Other Qualitative Research. (Adapted from McCracken, 1988:30)
2.3.1 Stage 1: Review of Analytic Categories: Literature Review

The first stage is, like many other methods in social inquiry, devoted to a thorough literature review. Some researchers have argued that qualitative methods are a license to ignore previous research done in the same area, and others have argued that literature reviews create preconceptions that could be avoided (Pieper, 1989, cited in Ting, 1997). However, like McCracken I believe that a thorough literature review contains many benefits. It is not simply a period for gathering ideas, but also facilitates the construction of a critical view of cultural categories. Indeed it helps the investigator to recognize conscious and unconscious assumptions, and how these assumptions are portrayed and interlinked in other literature and research. Thus a literature review helps to keep the investigator on alert for assumptions, biases, pitfalls, as well as sharpen his or her capacity for surprise (Laserfeld, 1972b, cited in McCracken, 1988).

The literature review undertaken for the present study served to deepen understanding of familiar conceptual frameworks (McCracken, 1988), and to raise awareness of cultural scripts (Bem, 1993) surrounding the chosen topic of interest. This facilitated a discovery of familiar preconceptions, and a "deconstruction" of scholarly literature within the area of human development. Even before starting the formal period of literature review, I read up on female development, and became familiar with feminist contentions in this area, and how biases were present in conventional theories and research. As I continued to venture into feminist/and other texts, it further enlightened me on the areas of neglect of various important aspects of human existence and development; fundamentally a neglect of the importance of relationships, and relational capacities such as empathy and caring. As I sharpened my gender sensitivity it became clear how pervasive such patriarchal notions of self are
both within the academic world and psychological theories, as well as in social institutions such as education, medicine, and government. Especially in traditional literature on adolescent development gender blindness and myopic notions of what it means to be 'human' are rampant. I also read up on more informal literature to capture some of the aspects of adolescent experience in today's world, such as magazines like *Cosmopolitan* and *Seventeen*, as well as watched films about teenagers such as *She's All That*, or *Mommie Dearest*, to understand how girls and women are portrayed in the popular media. In terms of theory and philosophy, I found that the work of Gilligan and other Relational Psychologists provided the most coherent, expansive as well as suitable theoretical framework for understanding the underlying psychological processes, as well as cultural issues involved in understanding 'female' psychology. I also undertook much reading on research, both quantitative and qualitative, done in the area of female adolescent development.

The second purpose of a literature review is to aid the construction of the interview guide. The literature review helps to specify the domain for exploration with particular categories and their linkage, as well as determine what to ask about and what to listen for. The first interview guide for the present study can be found in Appendix 2. In sum, the first step of the inquiry process offers both a review and a 'deconstruction' of scholarly literature, and helps to survey the scope within which the first interview will be conducted (McCracken, 1985). However, this should not be understood to mean that the interview guide is an absolute framework that is to be followed to the letter. Rather, the interview guide serves as a 'guide' with a heuristic basis that leaves room for discovery and revision as the research proceeds.
2.3.2 Stage 2: Review of Cultural Categories: Familiarize and De-Familiarize

The second step of the qualitative circle is the review of cultural categories. After the literature review, the process of using oneself as an ‘instrument’ of inquiry in the data collection and data analysis begins (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Crabtree & Miller, 1991; Erlandsou, 1993; Globerman, 1994). As an ‘emic’ (Drisko, 1997) investigator there are both advantages and disadvantages. The first is the ‘insights’, or intimacy with respondents from a similar cultural and social background that can be gained from being an insider, which would be almost impossible to capture as an ‘outsider’. The implicit meaning of ‘using oneself as an instrument’ is that qualitative research cannot be done without the investigator’s own experience, imagination and intellect. Therefore the second stage of the Long Interview Method helps to prepare the investigator to get ready to use oneself as an instrument by reviewing and understanding one’s own experience of the topic under study. Thus to both sharpen the ability to see assumptions, as well as to be able to use this vital ‘emic’ information, the goal is to familiarise oneself with the intimacy of the topic under study through a cultural- and self-reflective process. In order to do so the investigator needs to recall associations, incidents and assumptions that surround the topic. Another function of the cultural review is to help the investigator de-familiarise through “establishing distance” (McCracken, 1988). Being ‘too’ familiar with the topic under study can be a drawback when investigating one’s own culture as the investigator runs the risk of overlooking important information that is simply too familiar to notice. Thus the second step entails a process of creating a critical awareness of matters with possible blinding familiarity.

In response to this, prior to conducting the interviews, I continuously asked myself questions such as: What was life like when I was 16-17 years old? What was my
relationship with my parents and friends like? What was most important to me? How did I experience school? I also asked myself questions with regards to living in Hong Kong such as: How do I see myself as a ‘foreigner’ living in Hong Kong? What is it like looking at Hong Kong as an outsider? What is my experience from having lived overseas compared to living in Hong Kong? I would think about what it is like living in Hong Kong as an expatriate, and relatively economically well-off individual, and my life here for the past ten years. Feelings of privilege, not having to worry about financial problems, the sense of self-confidence pervading the expatriate community, which stems from being an ‘admired difference’ in a Chinese society, and simultaneously disliking any arrogance displayed by some white foreigners towards the Chinese because of cultural differences. I would think about the change of mindset that have occurred during the processes of moving away from this circle of expatriates into the Chinese community, and the cultural transformation that takes place when one’s own culture becomes more ‘distant’. And then moving back to accepting the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parts about one’s own culture, and the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parts of the new culture (the Hong Kong culture).

My adolescent years are also not that long ago, and I remember for example strong feelings of the importance of friendship, and the feelings that your whole life was in front of you which brought the notion that anything was possible. But I also remember all the anxieties of feeling not quite ‘right’ and worrying about my appearance. Thus retrieving and becoming aware of more detailed and systematic appreciations of personal experience, examination of associations, incidents, assumptions, and preconceptions surrounding adolescent experience and development, I have been more able to appreciate how the girls in this study feel about their friends, parents, future aspirations, living in Hong Kong.
Through such personal review one builds sensitivity to respondents’ experience, such as for example, relational dilemmas experienced with friends or family, or other concerns. In qualitative studies “this material is the very stuff of understanding and explication. It represents vitally important intellectual capital without which analysis is the poorer” (McCracken, 1988:34). Moreover, the third reason for the literature review and the cultural review is to prepare for the questionnaire guide and the “rummaging” that will occur during the data analysis process.

2.3.3 Stage 3: Discovery of Cultural Categories: Questionnaire Construction and Data Collection

This stage includes the design of the interview guide used to ‘discover’ the girls’ perception of their life situation, and conducting the interviews. As recommended by McCracken, I started the first interview with a set of biographical questions, an example of which is given in Appendix 1. This allowed me to ascertain simple descriptive details, and cued me to the contextual reality of the respondent. It also worked as a ‘warmer’ at the beginning of an interview.

4. Interview Guide

After the collection of this initial biographical material, the first objective of the qualitative interview is to allow respondents to tell their story in their own terms. Since the goal is to ‘discover and describe’ themes or patterns of human experience, the idea is for the investigator to keep a low and unobtrusive profile. I deliberately did this during the interview process in which questions were phrased in a general and non-directive manner. I also refrained from supplying the terms of the answer (McCracken, 1988). A “grand-tour” questionnaire guide was prepared to support this
process with questions such as "How would you describe yourself to yourself?", "Is there anything that is bothering you at the moment?", "How do you see yourself five years from now?", "What does morality mean to you?". All these are typical grand-tour questions that are open and non-directive with the objective of eliciting respondents' own stories.

In the present study, respondents seemed both willing and enthusiastic about responding to such grand-tour questions. The main prompts that were needed to sustain the natural flow of the utterances were 'floating prompts', such as verbal and non-verbal gestures to encourage the respondents to further elaborate on their utterances, or by repeating the respondent's last remarks using an inquisitive tone of voice. I occasionally used contrast prompts to elicit a particular clarification, but only with terms introduced by the respondents. Moreover, I also had a number of sub-questions prepared that supplemented the grand-tour questions. However, questions that arose spontaneously during the interview, which would have been impossible to plan, were just as important as the planned questions. After transcribing the interview I would sometimes find that I had missed a particular point or perhaps would want to know more about a particular issue. I would then try to ask follow up questions either at the beginning or during an appropriate time at the next interview. For reference, an example of the grand-tour question guide is attached in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 is an abstract of an interview transcript, which highlights some of the spontaneous follow-up questions I have used in interviewing NS.

B. Sampling

Choosing respondents is the final order of the interview preparation. Respondents in qualitative research are not meant to constitute a 'sample', as discussed in section
2.1, and their selection should not be governed by quantitative sampling justifications. A few rules, however, apply: respondents should be perfect strangers, and few in number (i.e. no more than eight). McCracken has pointed out that the most important objective in qualitative research is to discover rather than to test various cultural and analytical categories. "Less is therefore more" since it is more important to work longer, with greater care, and with fewer people than more superficially with a large number of people (McCracken, 1988). To McCracken and other qualitative researchers (Crabtree & Miller, 1991; Globerman, 1994, 1995), eight respondents will be enough for qualitative inquiry. This 'magic' number is in fact less 'magic' than it sounds, but is instead based on empirical experience, which shows that after eight respondents, 'saturation' of cultural categories is normally achieved. This small group of respondents is not meant to somehow be representative of society at large, but rather meant to offer a glimpse of the complexity and organization of a culture (McCracken, 1988).

In the present study my goal was to recruit a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve respondents, so as to safeguard against possible dropouts. The end result was a recruitment of ten respondents. All of them were able to continue throughout the study, which satisfied my requirements, and was a suitable number, not too large for the scope of this study to prohibit a more thorough investigation, and not too small to discover particular patterns and cultural categories. Moreover, respondents were not especially knowledgeable or ignorant of the topic under study, which is another requirement of naturalistic and qualitative research, so as not to make the group of respondents 'unnatural' (unless of course that is the specification). The selection of respondents is also an opportunity to manufacture distance, by deliberately creating a contrast in the respondent pool, as well as an opportunity to find a homogenous group,
which are both requirements of sampling in qualitative research. The major contrast in
the pool of respondents in the present study was their race difference. The respondents
were both Chinese (from Hong Kong but with experience of living in Australia,
England, and Canada) and Caucasian (with the experience of living in Australia,
England, and with parents from Australia, England, Germany, Greece, Ireland and
America). There was also one Eurasian whose parents were Chinese and Irish. The
homogenous aspects of the group were that they were all female, and all were
attending the same international school, in the same year, that is, year 12, which is the
first year of A-levels. This meant they were 16-17 at the time of the interviews. They
are also all from a middle- to upper-middle class background with professional
parents. Also, none of the respondents' parents were divorced, but one parent had
passed away in an accident, possible murder. Moreover, one girl was also the mother
of a baby girl. All of them had also had the experience of having lived in another
country, which meant they were all able to reflect upon the experience of living in
different cultures and settings. This enabled me to look at a particular group of girls
with similar social/economic status, background and life experience, the same school
environment etc. but with the contrast of difference in race.

The school from which the respondents were recruited is an international school,
using English as the medium of instruction, which means that respondents are all
native or near native English speakers. Due to its size and resources it offers many
extra curricular activities. Any researcher who has tried to gain access to a school will
appreciate the difficulty in gaining legitimate and free entry into a school for a
prolonged period of time. Upon a friendly referral to the Vice-Principal I was able to
gain access to this school. Once being introduced to the school the support from both
the Vice-Principal and the willingness of the teachers to provide information was
tremendous. The Vice-Principal helped with introducing my project to the year 12 female students, who then on a voluntary basis consented to participate in the study. The criteria announced for participation were being from a Western culture or having lived in one for a number of years, as well as having spent a good part of their life (at least three years) in Hong Kong, so as to be able to know 'life' in Hong Kong. A more detailed description of the individual girls' background is presented in Appendixes 4 and 5.

C. The Interview Process

The interview is the third source of information, the literature and the cultural review being the first two available to the investigator, which started off the search for categories and relationships. The interview, however, is the most important opportunity to pursue empirical data for this search, while also the most challenging because during the interview itself there is no time for reflection or unhurried identification of important information being disclosed. The interviews in the present study lasted mostly one and a half hour (the time of a double period), which allowed the respondents enough time to tell their stories. Spending ample amount of time together builds rapport and fosters greater understanding that follows with increased social interaction. The investigator must also always take the respondent's account seriously, so that it is always the respondent's words and perspective that is being sought and highly valued. Moreover, it is important that there is an egalitarian concept of role between inquirer and the respondent. It takes a certain 'personality' of the investigator to be able to fulfil the above criteria and thereby enable the respondent to relate intimate information to a total stranger. These criteria are implied in the concept
of using self as an instrument for investigation and are vitally important to being able to capture respondents' worldview as much as possible.

In order to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere where the respondents could feel comfortable revealing intimate information, I spent the first few minutes of the first interview in 'idle chatter', as recommended by McCracken (1988). This chatter, however, is by no means 'idle', but helps to create an appropriately friendly 'connection' between the investigator and the respondent. By being accepting, non-critical, and eager to listen I tried to reassure them of the benign nature of the investigator. This idle chatter is supposed to contain opening questions that are simple and informational (McCracken, 1988), so I started with asking them how their day had been so far, what lesson they had just come from, then explained briefly the purpose of the present study again (I had done this more thoroughly the first time I met with the respondents in groups of 3-4), and reassured them that there were no right or wrong answers, that what I was interested in was how they thought about things, about their lives and so forth. Then I went on to check for some demographic information, which they had given me the first time we met, and asked them for a few more details. Before switching on the tape recorder I again asked for their permission, and reassured them that all information would be confidential and the tape recording was just for me to listen to, allowing me to concentrate better on the interview. None of them seemed to find the tape recorder obtrusive, and some of them even asked if they should wait to continue talking when I had to turn the tape over, indicating that they wanted all their words to be heard. Thus I tried to create an atmosphere of friendliness where the respondents could relax and feel comfortable as recommended by McCracken (1988).
Once the preliminaries were completed, I employed the grand-tour questions I had prepared, as well as "floating" and "planned prompts". I took care to see that data were collected from all of the categories and relationships I had identified as important. Questions were prepared in the main areas of importance to adolescent girls, such as friends, school life, parents, future aspirations, boyfriends. These were categories and relationships that I had retrieved from the literature review, and from the cultural review. However, as recommended by McCracken, I was also prepared to respond to categories and relationships that had not been anticipated. This is where it becomes important to continuously pay full attention to the respondents during the interview, and try as much as possible to respond and ask further questions to utterances. As stated above such spontaneous questions were impossible to prepare before the interview. Moreover, I listened carefully for key terms and invited the respondents to elaborate with follow-up questions. Some of the girls were more talkative than others, and talked easily and described events and relationships elaborately whereas some found it more difficulty to describe what they really meant. One girl was particularly talkative and would jump from one topic to another without stopping. She also talked very fast and had a cold, which made it more difficult to follow. Tape-recording the interview then became especially useful as the transcription revealed a number of issues I had in fact overlooked during the interview. In the following interview I was then able to follow up on some of these issues, as well as being a bit more prepared for her style of talking so as to gently draw her attention to elaborate on topics that would not come to the surface of the conversation by themselves. However, this was done in a way so that the respondent was allowed plenty of room to talk, and was still allowed to go wherever she wished (McCracken, 1988).
All of the interviews were highly enjoyable and, as I recorded in my journal at the time, "I find it amazing how willing these girls are to talk so openly, I feel like I have become part of a whole new world in a very short period of time" (Nov. 1999). All of the girls also reported that they enjoyed the interview, and the general sentiment was that the interview had made them think more about 'things' that they experience in their daily life but do not usually think about in great detail. I also paid attention to topic avoidance and was careful not to 'push' too far unless I felt they were willing to talk with me. For instance, within the first ten minutes of the first interview one girl brought up the fact that her dad had died when she was nine years old. Since I was not sure whether she would like to talk further about that, I left it, but brought it back during the second interview when we knew each other a bit better. Before bringing up this potentially sensitive topic I was careful to ask her permission to 'ask' first. Although at first appearing fine, she broke down and cried talking about her father, in fact cried and laughed at the same time as she told me she was happy to talk to someone about this traumatic episode in her life. Thus the overall feeling was that the girls experienced a new way of looking at their everyday happenings, and I hope this has been a contribution to the respondents.

2.3.4 Stage 4: Discovery of Analytic Categories: Transcription and Data Analysis

After the completion of the first round of interviews in November 1999, I started the rather time consuming and exhausting experience of transcribing the tapes. The first round of interviews I transcribed myself, but with the second round I had help from a few undergraduate students who transcribed some of the tapes for me (five of the ten tapes). However, I would still go through the transcripts to check for accuracy and listen to the tone of voice etc. The object at this stage is to determine categories,
relationships, and assumptions that can inform the investigator about the respondent’s view of the world in general and the topic in question in particular. The data analysis is a five-stage process, which describes a movement from the particular to the general, which also records the processes, reflections and analyses of the investigator, as required for qualitative reliability.

A. Stage 1 – Identification of Utterances and Making Observations

McCracken (1988) recommends that utterances\(^4\) should at first be treated in their own terms, observations should be made, and the sorting out of the important from the less important using one’s heightened awareness (developed through the review of cultural categories) and intuition should take place. At this stage of the analysis individual utterances will be highlighted with little concern for their larger significance. For example, when I read the utterance by one of the respondents “being a mother herself I’m sure she can understand it is the daughter’s perspective”, I made the observation “she can understand that it is the daughter’s perspective”. The idea is to try to use the utterance as an entranceway to understanding the assumptions and beliefs from which it springs.

B. Stage 2 – Expansion of Observations

The objective of the second stage is to expand the observations made in the first stage beyond their original form until their implications and possibilities are more fully played out. Then the observations are related back to the original text. When this is complete the observations can then be examined in relation to other observations, not only in terms of similarities but also with regards to contradictions. Continuing

\(^4\) Utterances are the respondent’s words that the investigator finds interesting, descriptive, notable, or meaningful in the transcript text.
with the above example, I then scanned through the transcript and found that being
able to understand different perspectives beyond her own was a common phenomenon
in her narrative, and that she appreciated this ability for multiple perspective-taking in
others. Recalling the literature and cultural review I came up with the following”
observation: “Self-honesty – realizing that it is her point of view and not her
mother’s”. Scanning through the transcript in this manner, using the same procedure
observations will be developed, first by themselves, secondly, according to the
evidence in the transcripts, and thirdly, according to previous literature and cultural
categories, I was then ready to move on to the next step.

C. Comparison of Observations

At this stage of the analysis the expanded observations are systematically
compared, looking for organizing concepts, contradictions, similarities, and
interconnection. Examining the interconnections between different observations made
I could then come to a higher stage conclusion. Using the example above, this “self-
honesty” was found to be related to her capacity for empathy, enabling her to take
different perspectives albeit contrary to her own apparent self-interest. I could then
conclude that there was a relationship between “self-honesty, empathy, and ability to
take a multiple perspective that go beyond the apparent truth (her own feelings,
interests or mores of society). Continuing in this way with the rest of the transcript
and the other transcripts I was then able to move towards the development of certain
themes.
D. Stage 4 – Theme Development

At this point most of the data reduction takes place, and it is a time to make judgement on the interrelationship of themes. I had to choose the best formulation of interrelationships and trim down the redundant themes. However, it was also important to go through these residual themes both to check for contradictions, and possibly use them for ‘negative case analysis’, or in order to highlight the importance of more dominant themes. In terms of the above example, it became clear that empathy was one of the central mechanisms of girls’ sense of self, reasoning, and morality, which then became the organising theme, or the theme which continuously emerged from the narratives. With a few organising themes (such as relationships, empathy, connection, care, mutuality, interrelatedness) I was able to move on to the final stage.

E. Stage 5 – Comparison of Different Interview Themes

At this stage a review of stage-four conclusions, a comparison of different themes and patterns takes place. The focus is no longer on the particulars of individual girls’ experiences but on the general thought and action of girls in the present study. The focus shifts from how the respondents see the world to how this world appears to the analyst (McCraken, 1988). Thus I finally took the themes from each interview and looked at how they could be brought together. For example, I had to see whether empathy was a common theme among all different girls and see whether this was what made girls responsive to others. I then grouped related themes like ‘empathy’ under a more general theme such as “Self, Relationship, and Morality”. The final product of this lengthy data analysis is the three major themes presented in the three chapters that follow. In the remaining part of this chapter I will discuss the various
trustworthiness criteria of the constructivist qualitative mode of inquiry. I hope that after the present chapter the reader will be in a position to judge the trustworthiness I have established in the present study.

III. Establishing Trustworthiness of the Research

The credibility of the work of naturalistic-qualitative researchers is often questioned and criticised for lacking in vigour, for being unsystematic, and undisciplined. With this accusation, the naturalistic-qualitative researcher is perhaps even more concerned with establishing credibility for their research. Trustworthiness in conventional/quantitative research is achieved by using techniques that give 'truth value' through internal validity, applicability through external validity, consistency through reliability, and neutrality through objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandsou, 1993). However, the criteria used to demonstrate trustworthiness in one paradigm, such as the positivistic/postpositivistic paradigm, show their inappropriateness when used to judge the actions taken based on another paradigm, such as the naturalistic paradigm, since the ontological and epistemological orientations are essentially different. Such inappropriateness prompted Lincoln and Guba (1985) to formulate alternative techniques developed to correspond with its philosophical framework, so as to both show the inappropriateness of the conventional criteria, and also to provide acceptable alternative criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Part III will focus on how trustworthiness is established in qualitative studies, and specifically in the present study. I will use the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who have long been advocates of the naturalistic inquiry. They suggest an alternative framework of criteria on which to judge trustworthiness of studies that fall
within the naturalistic/qualitative paradigm. Essentially, they replace the four criteria of positivistic/postpositivistic inclinations with “credibility”, “transferability”, “dependability”, and “confirmability”. The following table outlines the criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative studies that correspond with conventional research, which shows that conventional and naturalistic studies must be judged according to their own criteria in order to achieve a useful assessment of the findings. It is my intention to demonstrate, with reference to Lincoln and Guba’s framework the measures I have taken to safeguard the trustworthiness of the present research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Conventional Term</th>
<th>Naturalistic Term</th>
<th>Naturalistic Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth value</td>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Prolonged engagement, Persistent Observation, Triangulation, Referential adequacy, Peer Debriefing, Member checks, Reflexive journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Thick description, Purposive sampling, Reflexive journal, Dependability audit, Reflexive journal, Confirmability audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>Reflexive journal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Establishing Trustworthiness: A Comparison of Conventional and Naturalistic Inquiry. Adapted from Lincoln & Cuba, 1985.

3.1 Credibility of the Research

Contrary to the assumption that there is one single, tangible truth that is to be unearthed by the investigator, the naturalistic researcher will not buy into such naïve realism (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, reality is seen as a multiple set of mental
constructions, with the aim to look for multiple truths. Reality is a mental construction made by human beings that take multiple forms – in order to demonstrate the “truth value” of the reality under study, a qualitative investigator must show that the multiple constructions of reality have been addressed adequately. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that there are several types of activities/techniques that can be employed to enhance credibility of the research as outlined in the table above. In the following sections I will describe these criteria for establishing credibility in the context of the present research.

3.1.1 Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement provides the foundation for credibility that allows the researcher to learn the culture of a social setting over an extended period of time that tempers potential distortions that may arise from the newness of the researcher and respondents to each other’s presence. It also helps to build trust, which is essential for more intimate interaction to occur between the respondents and the researcher. After the initial sampling of the respondents, which was done by the school Vice-Principal, I met with the respondents for the first time when they came in to give their consent to participate directly to me and learn in more detail about the study. Therefore the first meeting with the girls took place in group-form, from which I could understand that most of them knew each other. My first impression was that they were eager to participate, and I was able to arrange an interview time with all of them at that first meeting. The first interview then took place within the next two weeks with the first starting already the following morning. I was stunned by the amount of rich data that it was possible to collect within such a short period of time, and later on by the long arduous task of transcribing the interviews, which had all been audiotape-recorded.
During this period of approximately two weeks I took the time to chat with teachers and asked them for more detailed information about the school, although that was not my main area of investigation. After the first interviews, the transcription and the initial categorisation of data, I also talked to respondents on the phone, asking them how they were doing, trying to engage them in friendly talk, and then arranged for a second interview, which took place approximately 3 months after the first interview. I had initially thought that the first interview would mainly focus on establishing rapport, but they seemed very open and easily volunteered information. Although they had shown, what appeared to me, confidence in telling me more intimate details about themselves, the second interview became even more open. This was probably because they knew more what to expect as well as the person who were interviewing them. Thus two interviews were conducted with each respondent, which serves as the main source of primary data. Moreover, after the second interview I also talked with some of them to confirm interpretations and ask further questions. Some of them also emailed me and volunteered ‘friendship’ and more information. I also emailed a few of them to explore what the response would be from such an exchange. Although I would have liked to continue to explore further, considering the scope of an MPhil study and the time limits involved, the data I had collected with these methods seemed sufficient for the scope and research questions of the present study.

‘Distortions’ are something that concerns the qualitative researcher as least as much as the quantitative researcher. Distortions may be caused by events that occur during a particular time span. In terms of timing in the present study, the interviews took place at a time of greatest ‘normalcy’. That is, they took place a few months after the first semester, so that respondents had gotten into a routine of their new life as A-level students, and the second interview was after they had taken their first term tests.
and before and after the one-week winter break, which seemed a time where they were not under particular stress brought about by examinations. It could be that had the interviews taken place closer to the start of an examination period or at the very beginning or ending of a term, or in their last year of their A-level the information may have differed. (Or indeed it may have been more difficult to find respondents.)

Other distortions may be introduced by either respondents or the researcher unintentionally. They may include personal biases of the researcher that favour a particular worldview, or because of attentions given to individuals during the research. Since all interviews and contact with the respondents took place individually, no ‘favouritism’, which may occur in a group situation (however unintentionally), could have caused them to react differently. However, distortions could have occurred because of respondents wanting to please the researcher, or because they wanted to deceive the researcher. I had no impression of deliberate deception as such. Moreover, my role was not really to question the ‘truth’ of respondents’ utterances, but to infer what their perceptions tell about their worldview etc. For example, a few of them mentioned a teacher who they disliked because of his perceived negative behaviour towards students. My role was not to investigate the ‘truth’ of the teacher’s ‘good’ or ‘bad’ behaviour. Even if I had I chosen to do so, I do not believe it would have influenced the research process since, again, my aim was not to test to what extent they were telling me the ‘truth’, but to discover their perception of the situation.

Before the first interview with each girl I had no preconception of what they might be like, and I consciously attempted to draw out their own ‘story’. However, with one girl, I was aware of my own ‘preconceptions’ as I had heard from a previous interviewee that this girl tended to exaggerate. Thus I was conscious of stopping myself from letting this preconception influence the questions and responses taken
place during the interview. Such self-reflection, which will be described elsewhere, is absolutely necessary to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research. In the second interview with another respondent I found myself putting a question to her that would make her question her own reasoning. Although such ‘awakening’ is considered part of feminist research methods, I stopped myself from doing so since my aim was not to raise awareness but to elicit the respondents’ perspective. When I asked respondents at the end of the interviews what they thought about the questions they had been asked, most of them expressed notions of starting to think of new ways of looking at something. Some said they had never thought about these things consciously before since such phenomena were ‘just’ everyday events. Thus some kind of influence has occurred which fortunately they all commented on positively. This again reinforce the fact that what has taken place may not be replicable.

However, most important of prolonged engagement is establishing trust. It is important to make the respondents feel at ease by not appearing judgmental when they explain their situation so as to facilitate the ‘discovery’ of their perspective. Most respondents seemed confident about revealing their point of view even during the first interview. One girl, however, occasionally checked whether she was giving the ‘right’ answer or not by asking “Is this answering the question?” However, that occurred only a couple of times in the beginning of the first interview, and I tried to reassure her that there were no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. Because of her seeming lack of self-confidence, I was pleased to discover that she felt more comfortable during the second interview as she openly started criticizing some of the issues she was talking about, and became more frank in revealing what she was thinking. I also noticed with two other girls that frankness increased with the second interview, and another girl told me she had never talked to anyone about what she had just told me, and hugged me at the
end of the interview, which I all took as a sign of having established trust. Thus the
data collected from two interviews with each respondent, and occasional follow up
questions over the phone, seemed sufficient for the purpose and scope of the present
study.

3.1.2 Persistent Observation

In the last section we saw how prolonged engagement provides a wider scope for
understanding more facets of the respondents' life experience. Persistent observation
will ensure more in-depth understanding. Lincoln and Guba (1985) say that

If the purpose of prolonged engagement is to render the inquirer open to the
multiple influences – the natural shapers and contextual factors – that impinge
upon the phenomenon being studied, the purpose of persistent observation is
to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most
relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail.
If prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides
depth. (p. 304).

Persistent observation refers to integrating different perspectives to deepen
understanding, or refuting an observation that may be apparent from one observation
but not from another. By this I mean interview/other engagement that occurred at least
twice. By persistent observation the investigator is able to identify those elements in a
situation that are most relevant to the issue at hand and focus on them in more detail.
Therefore the naturalistic investigator is continuously engaged in a tentative labelling
process, and then exploring those salient factors to the point where the issue at hand is

56
shown to be anything from erroneous to highly significant. The most significant issues must thereafter be chosen.

Persistent observation in light of the present study, that is, mainly through the two interviews conducted with each respondent, allowed me to pursue themes that emerged. In creating the time of an hour and a half of uninterrupted time spent with each respondent during each interview, it was possible to make repeated inquiries to satisfy meaning and significance of utterances. For instance, during the first interview, which was more open-ended than the second since the aim was to discover what was significant in the lives of the respondents, a variety of themes emerged. Further questions, or prompts, were then used to ensure elaboration and clarification on a variety of answers, which provided a more in-depth search for more articulate answers to the issues at hand. During the second interview, further clarification and elaboration could then be sought, as well as inquiring about themes that had emerged from the first interview and their significance to the respondents. Persistent observation, which through this inquiring process calls for a certain scepticism that helps to intensify understanding, level of significance, and determine the dismissal of lesser significant themes which may at first have appeared significant, ensures a higher level of avoiding misinterpretations, and lies or deceit on the part of respondents. However, what was continuously kept in mind was the precaution of preventing the danger of premature closure. Because of the time constraints of the present research, it could be that further engagement and observation could have ensured the inclusion of further issues and a more in-depth understanding. However, with prolonged engagement and persistent observation conducted in the present research, I can ensure the accuracy of the findings has been guaranteed.
3.1.3 Triangulation

Triangulation leads to credibility by drawing on multiple sources of data such as time, location, or person, methods such as interviews, observations, popular films, other documents, investigator(s), or theory, which could take multiple perspectives of analysis (Denzin, 1978; cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In terms of time, two interviews took place with each participant, as well as several telephone and email conversations over a period of six months, which provide some measure of making ‘observations’ at different times. The location of the interviews, however, was consistent, that is they always took place at the school, which meant I did not have the opportunity to observe the girls in different locations except for two girls who were in a play that I went to see. However, talking to the girls over the phone was done when they were at home and during times that suited them, i.e. when it was convenient for them to talk both in terms of privacy and time. In terms of methodological triangulation, interviews were the primary source of data collection, but written testimonies (in forms of e-mails) were also included. I also communicated with some of the teachers about their impression of the girls as well as the school environment. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), each piece of information should be expanded by at least another source, such as a second interview or another method. Moreover, apart from a thorough literature review, I also employed less informal sources such as watching films and plays, reading novels about and for adolescent girls, as well as going to a youth club to watch the performance of some other teenage friends.

Investigator triangulation refers to employing multiple as opposed to a singular investigator, which is normally not difficult with a team of investigators. In a study as this (a dissertation), however, the investigation is usually done by one main investigator, which may cause biases in the observations. However, while interpreting
the data my supervisor functioned as a second investigator to try to come to convergent conclusions. This functioned as intra-team communication (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and we would work separately on analysing a given narrative and then compare the analysis. At places of both agreement and disagreement we would discuss the process of arriving at a point or issue. Theoretical triangulation was only attempted to a limited degree. As this was a study that calls for alternative interpretations of female experience and development, indications of traditional interpretations, such as interpreting female moral development as inferior, naturally came out at appropriate places, but there was no direct application of multiple theories.

3.1.4 Referential Adequacy Materials

Referential adequacy was first proposed by Eisner (1975; cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) who suggested the use of video or film recording to capture data that could then later be re-examined to satisfy sceptics not associated with the inquiry process. Although the need for electronically recorded data may be both obtrusive, inconvenient and expensive, the idea that to ensure referential adequacy, the investigator needs to store a portion of the data to be utilised as a later check against data analysis, will mean that parts of data will have to be excluded and only recalled when tentative findings have been reached. This enables different investigators to use the data to see if different analyses can reach the same conclusions.

Although storing such raw data can provide an opportunity for demonstrating credibility of naturalistic data, it also comes at the price of having to keep portions of precious data ‘untouched’. For the scope of the present study, this was not a practical solution. However, keeping records of raw data and emerging categories can also be used to test the validity of conclusions. Thus for reference, audiotapes have been kept
of all interviews as well as transcripts of the raw data, and notes on analyses of emerging categories. This can be used for checking the validity of conclusions.

3.1.5 Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing helps to build credibility by allowing a peer who is a professional outside the context and who has some general knowledge of the study to help analyse the data and test working hypotheses. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), peer debriefing is

a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer . . . for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind (p. 308).

This helps to keep the investigator ‘honest’ by exploring biases, meanings, assumptions, and interpretations. Also issues of methodology and maintaining ethical standards will be under scrutiny of this peer debriefing process. Such peer briefing session often took place informally when during analyses I would ask fellow MPhil and PhD students for their opinion on a particular issue or what they thought the respondents meant by a particular utterance. I would also discuss with other friends who work, on both a voluntary and professional basis, with girls and young women for their opinion about emerging categories. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the debriefer should be the inquirer’s peer and not a person in an authority relationship with the researcher. However, I found that the most important, critical and constructive peer debriefing sessions took place weekly with my dissertation supervisor. Perhaps because the supervisor retains particular ‘academic interest’ as
well as moral obligation to pay attention to the work of the student investigator, my personal experience is that my dissertation supervisor functioned as the best peer debriefer during these two years of investigation. Through these many hours of discussion during which my supervisor sometimes played the role of 'the devil’s advocate', or became a sympathetic listener, or a critical 'eye-opener', or a fellow investigator, the credibility of the present study has been much enhanced.

3.1.6 Member Checking

Member checking provides credibility by allowing stakeholders to test categories, interpretations, and conclusions. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this is considered the most important technique for establishing data credibility. Member checking is conducted continuously both informally and formally. The members of the stakeholding group in this study were mainly the girls, but also sometimes the teachers and the Vice-Principal who provided the opportunity for checking more general impressions and observations. Member checking with the respondents was done particularly at the end of the interview, and sometimes during the interview as I checked for meaning of utterances, and then presented a general impression of certain issues that had been brought up during the interview. The respondents would then offer further elaboration and feedback. On a few occasions respondents found my questions somewhat superfluous. However, in explaining that I just wanted to check the correctness of my own interpretation of what they had said, they happily elaborated. I hope that also in this way the respondents were reassured of my interest in presenting their views as accurately as possible.

Moreover, before or after interviews, I would often talk with teachers or the Vice-Principal informally, and inquire about general impressions and observations, and
moreover, ask about the general situation in the school concerning a particular issue. At the beginning of the next interview, and also over the phone both before and after the second interview, I would also check general findings and themes that had emerged and ask them to comment. This was also done with some of the girls over the e-mail, where they were invited to elaborate further on some issues/themes with reference to their personal experience. My intention was not to check the accuracy of the data but rather to examine the relevance of the analytical categories I had come up with. From the process of member checking I believe the credibility of the data has been much enhanced and can work "toward convincing the readers and critics of the authenticity of the work". (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:314)

3.2 Transferability

It has already been stated that generalization is not the goal of naturalistic/qualitative research. Instead, for the qualitative researcher generalisability is replaced with transferability. Transferability depends on the similarity between the sending (the conditions under which the research was done) and receiving (the conditions of future research) contexts. It is therefore important to describe in great detail the contexts under which the study was carried out. Such "thick description" provides for transferability by describing multiple entrances from which the data has derived and on which judgment of transferability can be made. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest "description must specify everything that a reader may need to know in order to understand the findings" (p. 125). Thus the best the investigator can do for anyone who seeks to make a transfer of findings is to provide sufficient descriptive data to judge the relevance of such transfer. Erlandsou (1993) says that when reading a thick description one should be able to get a feel for the context and the interaction.
Thus the goal is to provide enough information about the context and the respondents under study to help the future applier determine transferability of findings. Acting upon the notion that the original inquirer has the responsibility to enable the reader to decide on issues of transferability by providing thick description whenever and wherever necessary, I have throughout the report attempted to do this by giving the most relevant data about the context and respondents at hopefully the most appropriate length. For easy reference tables and diagrams have been used alternatively to literal descriptions. Appendixes 4 and 5 also describe in more detail the background information of the ten respondents. It is hoped that these descriptions will give the reader enough details to be able to make appropriate judgment about transferability.

With regards to sampling, the merits and appropriateness of purposive sampling for this particular study have already been discussed in the previous section. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) “The object of the game is not to focus on the similarities that can be developed into generalisations, but to detail the many specifics that give the context its unique flavor”. (p. 210) Actually this issue was raised when I presented the proposal of the present study to the Vice-Principle who inquired as to whether I was going to “distribute questionnaires”. However, in explaining the purpose of the research she immediately understood, and offered to help with recruiting research participants. The aim is not to suppress deviant cases but to allow the uncovering of multiple realities. Awareness of sampling will also help the reader make appropriate judgment on transferability.
3.3 Dependability

In the conventional paradigm the criterion of 'reliability' is demonstrated by replication. However, following the rejection of a single tangible reality that exists 'out there' waiting to be discovered, the naturalistic inquirer rejects the claim that a research process can be replicated, since replicability depends on the existence of such an unchanging tangible reality. In order to assure reliability, the naturalistic inquirer seeks to demonstrate dependability. Although dependability should be guaranteed in practice if the right steps are taken to assure credibility, it is, however, important to also demonstrate so in principle, especially for the benefit of those unfamiliar with qualitative methods. Dependability is in many ways similar to triangulation ("overlapping methods") although triangulation is usually used to demonstrate validity. Another way to demonstrate dependability is to have two independent inquiry teams. This may, however, be better suited within the conventional paradigm with a detailed research design that both teams can follow independently. Since the naturalistic design is emergent, the two teams could therefore easily decide to divert from the originally chosen direction since it depends on the findings. To overcome such problems, Guba (1985) has suggested "extraordinary provision for communication". While such a method may be feasible in a multi person inquiry team, for a single investigator, such as that of an MPhil dissertation, that would be quite impossible. Moreover, it may also be quite superfluous (and some would argue utterly destroy the condition of independent inquiry) to embark on such a cumbersome line of inquiry since other techniques exist that are far less problematic.

One such other technique is the inquiry audit (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), which is most relevant for the present study. An inquiry audit requires that an 'auditor' is
present to review the research process, the data and data analysis, and to authenticate findings. This means that the investigator must keep a careful record of data collection and the analysis process. This will be described in more detail in the section on confirmability. The main auditor of the present study has been my dissertation supervisor who has reviewed, monitored, and finally authenticated the findings. In this way, every step of the research process has been made ‘visible’ and ‘accountable’ to my supervisor, who although not checking every detail of this audit trail has periodically scrutinised the details of the research process, data collection, and data analysis. With such records and the scrutiny of my supervisor, the dependability of my research can be guaranteed.

3.4 Confirmability

The last of the four criteria for establishing trustworthiness suggested by the naturalistic researcher is the ability to authenticate, corroborate, and substantiate findings. The audit trail leads to dependability and confirmability by allowing an auditor access to the research process. An audit trail is built by keeping records that can authenticate the findings. Lincoln and Cuba (1985:319-320) have set up six categories of the audit trail which are (1) raw data (interview guides, notes, documents), (2) data reduction and analysis products (peer debriefing notes etc.), (3) data reconstruction and synthesis products (in this study that refers to the Long Interview Method), (4) process notes (journal), (5) materials relating to intentions and dispositions (inquiry process, journal, peer debriefing notes), (6) information relative to any instrument developed. In response to these criteria I have kept, and periodically presented to the auditor, records that provide a thick description of both the inquiry context and inquiry process. This entails a record of inquiry plans, respondents under
study, an account of decisions, actions, thoughts and feelings, as well as structural considerations such as keeping a filing system, cross-references, indexes, and dates. It also includes the complete set of raw data, such as audio-taped interviews, transcribed interview materials and field notes, as well as notes made during the literature review, which contains initial hunches and observations. Parts of this audit trail have been subject to scrutiny by the auditor (dissertation supervisor) and the peer debriefers. On top of showing dependability and confirmability to the outside viewer, this audit trail has allowed me to keep track of detailed thoughts, ideas, frustrations, processes and so forth that would otherwise have easily been forgotten. It thus helps the researcher to be conscientious, as well as serving as a record for future ideas and research. The following table summarises the techniques for establishing trustworthiness.

3.5 A Personal Note on the Researcher’s Participation

As the qualitative researcher argues against the ontological position of the objective observer of the positivistic paradigm, I find it germane to here insert a brief, more personal account of my participation in the research process.

Without accounting for other possible less honourable motivations, I believe that why a researcher chooses a particular topic is because of a sense of wanting to elaborate on something that is seen as either unexplored or overlooked, or even suppressed. It is a sense that something is missing or is askew, that needs to be included or put right to give a fuller account of the particular subject under study.

In my own case, it is my fundamental disposition towards the nature of patriarchal human relations and social structures, which in my eyes account for the enormous human catastrophes that face most communities, albeit in different ways. It is the unbelievable amount of suffering caused by one human being to another, and how that
is related to gender development, which fundamentally drives me to speak out against
the traditional celebration of the paradigm of separation. It is my own experience of
both a sense of care and a sense of justice that makes me recognize the two themes of
equality and attachment as fundamental to human experience.

Moreover, it is through my more than eleven years of Buddhist practice and study
that I can see the ‘truth’ of this essential process of finding a balance between
responding to self and other, between what is destructive and what is constructive
human behaviour, of what it means to be self-centered and centered-in-self. Having
been through the process of developing my initial rather abstract understanding of
care and equality of wanting equality and eradication of poverty of people in Africa
(for example) to include a much deeper understanding that these are themes we deal
with in our daily lives all the time.

Thus I do not intend to deny my own personal interest in exploring gender
development as part of a process to achieve a more equal and caring world in which
human development can move beyond the prism of patriarchy; a world in which the
development of empathy with a sense of social justice are looked up to as signs of
development.

However, although I am passionate about improving the pervasiveness of the
negative elements of the individualistic paradigm in Western social and
developmental psychology, and more generally to combat this pervasive discourse, I
found that during the interview itself it is quite possible to be open enough to respond
to the respondents in a way that does not necessarily include one’s own disposition
and deliberations. This was important to me since my aim was to ‘discover’ the
respondents’ worldview. How a researcher frames questions, responds to those
questions, interprets the data and decides on what constitutes important categories and
so on of course is influenced by a researcher’s particular ontological position as discussed earlier, however, being aware of one’s own disposition also, paradoxically perhaps, facilitates greater objectivity towards what the respondent is saying. I also found that the literature review helps to become aware of cultural categories that exist in both the life of the researcher and respondents. Thus the whole process of the present research, the literature review, the data collection, the analysis and the write up facilitated new discoveries of the culture in which I live and my own cultural ‘indoctrination’. This has been a very enlightening experience, in which I have also learned from the respondents. This in itself, to me, is also part of doing qualitative/feminist research, of refraining from being the one who has something to teach, or the one who has the right answer, to being someone who has something to learn from the respondents. Although I of course has the last word in what is going to account for what is knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged engagement</td>
<td>Build trust</td>
<td>Length of time in the field</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop rapport</td>
<td>Avoiding premature closing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Obtain wide scope of data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Obtain accurate data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persistent</td>
<td>Obtain in-depth data</td>
<td>Purposeful, assertive, investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>Sort relevancies from irrelevancies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recognising deceits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Verify data</td>
<td>Using different/multiple sources (interview notes, videotapes,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>photos, and documents, methods, or investigators</td>
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<td>Absence of data</td>
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<td>Unobtrusive measures (collecting information from teachers),</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>obtrusive measures (audio recording interviews)</td>
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Referential adequacy: Provide a “slice of life”
Peer debriefing  
Testing working hypotheses  
Find alternative explanations  
Exploring emergent design and hypotheses  
Formal or informal discussion with a peer

Member checking  
Test categories, interpretations, or conclusions (constructions)  
Continuous, formal or informal checking of data with stakeholders

Reflexive Journal  
Document researcher’s decisions  
Daily or weekly written diary

Thick Description  
Provide data base for transferability judgments  
Provide a vicarious experience for the reader

Purposive sampling  
Generate data for emergent design and emergent hypotheses  
Maximum variation sampling that provides the broadest range of information based on relevance

Audit trail  
Allow auditor to determine trustworthiness of study  
Interview guides, notes, documents, peer debriefing, notes, journal

Table 2.3 Summary of Techniques for Establishing Trustworthiness (Adapted from Lincoln & Cuba, 1985)

IV. Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented McCracken’s Four-step model called the Long Interview Method, and discussed its relevance and how it has been used in the present study. I have detailed the implementation of this method in terms of the four steps: Review of the Analytic Categories, Review of the Cultural Categories, Discovery of the Cultural Categories, and Discovery of the Analytic Categories. The trustworthiness of the present study was also discussed in light of the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985): Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability. I hope that with such measures taken to assure trustworthiness, the reader is able to appraise the value of the present study as well as the appropriateness of its transferability (not generalisability) to other similar contexts.
CHAPTER THREE

GIRLS’ EXPERIENCE IN ADOLESCENCE: TO BE FEMININE OR INDEPENDENT?

I. Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss some of the major developmental milestones girls face in adolescence. There are many theories in line with traditional modes of masculinity and femininity that prescribe the type of development that is to occur during adolescence for males and females, as proclaimed in Chapter One. This chapter questions the desirability of seeing development in such dichotomous notions, and makes suggestions on whether a blend of the two modes serves to bring out more positive qualities, which in turn would support a more wholesome understanding of what constitutes human development to the model presently upheld by dominant theories. Firstly, I will describe how traditional theories hinge adolescence on the achievement of ‘independence’, what the nature of that independence is, and how girls face conflicting messages of either becoming ‘independent’ or feminine. Secondly, I will bring in alternative theories based on the Relational paradigm that demonstrate a different route to autonomy and independence based on a relational orientation. I will furthermore, describe the struggles and dilemmas they encounter and how they resolve them. I will discuss how girls articulate their version of autonomy and independence, and how they renegotiate such concepts with reference to their own experience. This discussion will be carried out in light of the major themes of the Relational paradigm of “connection”, “permeability”, and “mutuality”.
II. Dominant Theories and Discourses on Adolescent Development

Stage theories on human development espoused by Freud and Erikson have taken a dominant position within theories on human development, and are commonly taught psychological theories among social workers, psychologists and other related professionals. These theories have succeeded in establishing a tradition that influences the fundamental direction of many scholars, researchers and professionals who work with young people. They therefore provide a good starting point for exploring the development of adolescence. In the following I will highlight the view of development they promulgate, and how they have been central to popular views on male and female adolescent development.

2.1 Psychosexual Development

Classical Psychoanalytic theory postulates that a child needs to go through five stages of psychosexual development before it achieves the status of an adult, equipped with ‘normal’ sexuality (Stevens, 1983). Whether the child successfully makes it through these stages hinges largely on the successful resolution of the so-called “Oedipus Complex”. During this phase the child experiences sexual feelings towards the parent of the opposite sex and anxiety-provoking envy and jealousy towards the parent of the same sex. For the boy, the original attachment to the mother turns into sexual desires and rivalry with even the wish to kill his father. Both desires are short-lived as he starts to feel the fear of castration imposed by his father. This fear is reinforced by the fact that girls do not have a penis, which makes the boy believe that girls must already have suffered the consequences of such desires. To defend himself against these anxieties he detaches himself from the mother and identifies with the father. His successful resolution of the Oedipus Complex results in a strong superego
and correct gender identity as a ‘real’ man (Mitchell, 1974). These sexual feelings, however, do not disappear, but resurges in adolescence after a period of calm, the “Latency” period. After this stage of ‘Latency’ comes the “Genital” period, which is characterized by sexual urges that become so violent and threatening that the boy must once and for all ‘leave’ the mother and seek love attachment outside the family. ‘Successful’ detachment from the mother then equals development.

Freud had more difficulty with describing development for girls. He postulated that as she realizes she ‘lacks’ a penis, a girl immediately acknowledges the superiority of the male sex, and from then on falls victim to jealousy and envy. This ‘penis envy’ is the girl’s Oedipus Complex. The girl starts to blame her mother for depriving her of the precious penis and turns to her father for his love as compensation. As she turns away from her mother, and as a result of a hatred caused by both the lack of a penis and the impossibility of having her mother as a love object, she makes the father her love object. She sees her mother as a competitor for the father’s love. However, since she cannot take on the role of the father and does not fear castration, she does not need to identify with the father and his values, which halts the development of a strong superego. Instead, she needs to identify with and be like her mother, someone she simultaneously hates. In the Freudian tradition, mother-daughter conflict is typically perceived in this light of fighting over the father, which is seen as essentially becoming a fight over all men (Mitchell, 1974), thereby undermining the potential for any solidarity/real friendship between women.

Freud’s explanation of female sexuality and identity, and his assumption that upon the discovery of her sex she is traumatised to such proportion that it haunts a woman her whole life, means that the psychology of women is built upon the original tragic

2.2 Psychosocial Development

Building on the critical resolution of the Oedipus complex, Erikson describes adolescence as the time for developing a clear sense of ‘personal identity’, which becomes the ‘blueprint’ for future beliefs, directions and goals (Stevens, 1983). To develop this personal identity, the adolescent sees him/herself increasingly as a separate individual, who is different from others, and goes through a process of individuation where a clear sense of personal ‘boundary’ gradually evolves (Newman & Murrey, 1983, cited in Ting, 1997). For Erikson, the crucial developmental task in adolescence is autonomy (Erikson, 1971).

The establishment of a healthy identity is here equated with the development of a separate, independent, and autonomous self. This reflects the ideal prototype of Euro-American culture (Russo, 1996). Successful outcome of adolescence guarantees the ego quality of fidelity. However, whereas young men find their identity in autonomy, and complete their identity formation at the end of adolescence (Stevens, 1983), young women can only achieve a full sense of identity through a relationship with a man. Thus Erikson believed that a women’s identity is defined by the man she marries and the children she mothers. Erikson’s views, like Freud’s, reflect the social and cultural position of women at his time, whose lives were in many ways dependent on and defined by men (Mitchell, 1974). He concluded that while men’s identity is based on intrapersonal patterns, which was regarded as a ‘higher’ form for human development, reflecting the public/private split, women’s identity constituted ‘only’ interpersonal patterns. Erikson suggests that since a girl’s identity is more relational,
she will only define her ‘identity’ when she meets someone, who will help her make sense of herself, which means her individuality is just a borrowed one (Apter, 1990).

Competition with others is also a central aspect of Erikson’s model. The crisis in the initial state of infancy (“trust versus mistrust”) is the only stage that anchors development in the experience of relationships. The rest of the states are concerned with individuation and competition. It has been suggested that competition, a central feature of capitalistic societies, is a vital element for corporate success (Lerner, 1986), and thus highly valued in such societies.

2.3 The Dominant Discourse Surrounding Adolescence

‘Independence’ has been seen as being achieved best through a process of increasing detachment. Such detachment from interpersonal relationships regards independence as being able to transcend any ‘restrictions’ that are imposed by others’ demands or needs. This particular view of self-development as occurring in developing capacity for detachment has given rise to certain legacies surrounding adolescence, the period traditionally regarded as the time of establishing ‘personal identity’, which greatly influence the assessment of this period in life.

2.3.1 Self-differentiation Through Separation

As described above, Freud postulates that it is only through ‘separating’ from the mother and identifying with the father that the boy successfully resolves the Oedipus Complex. If the boy is unable to achieve this separation during the first five years of his life, he will meet the same dilemmas just in intensified form during adolescence. Blos (1969) has termed this the ‘second individuation’. By this he refers to the threat caused by sexual urges, which become so strong that the boy ‘cuts off’ all former
attachments to his parents. This legacy therefore implies the necessity of a complete
disengagement from interpersonal connection to fulfil the process of self-
differentiation in adolescence. This has been termed “loosening of affectionate ties”,
“emotional disengagement” and “severing” of family bonds (cited in Ting, 1997). In
line with these ideas of development, adolescent girls have been regarded as ‘unable
to separate’, having ‘problems with dependency’, being ‘immature’, and failing to
become ‘autonomous and independent’ because they were unable to detach
themselves first from their mother and then because of their relational orientation.
Freud saw this as women’s fundamental developmental failure. The separate mode of
being, propounded as the epitome of human development, not only left notions of the
inferiority of women, but of all people different from the White, middle-class,
heterosexual (Connell, 1987) male engaged in self-actualisation. Those of a different
gender, race, cultural practices, social circumstances, or sexual orientation, are all at
risk of being classified ‘inferior’ because of their perceived ‘difference’ and ‘inferior’
rationalities in the name of this dominant line of development, which has been
equated with ‘civilization’. This also indicates that exerting one’s difference and
superiority is seen as enhancing personal growth.

2.3.2 Development of Firm Self-boundaries

The desired end product of adolescence, according to Erikson, is to attain a
distinct separated self, with firmly defined delineations between self and others. Since
social mores propound that the adolescent decides who and what s/he wants to be, a
clear definition of the ‘differences’ between oneself and others must be articulated.
Erikson thus prescribes the necessity of establishing ‘boundaries’ between self and
others in order to attain a ‘personal identity’ that is based on difference. Like Freud,
seemingly without considering the enforcement of social and cultural arrangement of women, he believed that since women are unable to establish such firm self-demarcations they are unable to establish a personal identity without the help of a man to define it for them. Women were essentially seen as having too permeable self-boundaries, which ‘naturally’ better equip them to be nurturers, caretakers, and helpmates. These have indeed been women’s traditional roles; roles that are typically devalued in a society that stresses ‘independence’ from others as a sign of maturity such as most capitalistic societies with ‘free’ market economies. Such societies celebrate competition, profit, heterosexuality (Connell, 1987), and ‘rational economic man’ as the model for human beings who are thought to be essentially concerned with maximising their own benefits (Henderson, 1996). In these societies, caring, empathy and altruistic activities are typically regarded as backward, naïve, and somewhat childish because these activities are seen as restricting autonomy, independence and rationality. Moreover, in the midst of such social Darwinist notions, empathy has been regarded as mysterious, irrational and an expression of the lack of firm self-boundaries. Empathy and caring have been regarded as sentiments for mothers, a ‘job’ traditionally not done by men/‘developed’ adults.

2.3.3 The Normalcy of Storm and Stress

Conflicting parent-adolescent relationship is widely seen as normal, even necessary if the adolescent is to achieve the crucial formation of a ‘personal’ identity. During this process the adolescent turns “spiteful, vengeful, oppositional, and unpredictable” (Freud, 1958, cited in Ting, 1997). However, if a more harmonious relationship with parents characterizes the adolescent years, the adolescent may be labelled “intrapsychically immature” (Steinberg, 1990).
Such images of adolescence as a phase of 'storm and stress', rebellion, a struggle for emancipation from parents, and as a time of resisting dependence on parents for guidance, approval, or their company, with the aim of 'depending' only on himself (Bandura, 1964; cited in Hudson, 1984) are alive and flourishing both at a personal and at the societal level. The adolescent is prescribed a model of human behaviour that is competitive and aggressive, fighting for status and limited resources or power (Jordan, 1997) in the world. Since these characteristics are considered masculine and not feminine, adolescence becomes essentially equated with masculinity. The existence of a discourse on adolescence shaped in terms of conflict and trouble and perpetuated by psychiatric and psychoanalytical authorities, means people, especially those dealing with adolescents directly such as teachers, social workers, the media and parents, are constantly expecting trouble. These expectations, however, change somewhat when considering female adolescents. Take for example, a girl playing rugby or football, who is loud, outspoken, does not take particular interest in her appearance, does not defer to boys or other 'authorities' etc. Although this describes 'normal' behaviour for adolescent boys, it is seen as crude and un-feminine behaviour when displayed by a girl. At best she may be called a 'tomboy', that is, a girl behaving like a boy. This talks the plain truth that adolescent girls are prescribed another 'discourse', e.g. the discourse of femininity.

2.4 Discourse on Femininity

The theories of Freud and Erikson both prescribe and uphold a particular discourse on adolescent development, which depends on certain dualities that are sought in men and women, shaping the discourse on femininity in relation to patriarchal standards of masculinity. Patriarchy is characterized by hierarchical
notions of human traits where valued and devalued aspects are allocated to different
groups in society, and most fundamentally to men and women (Lerner, 1986). The
discourse on femininity reveals certain ways of behaving (‘emphasised’ femininity,
Connell, 1987\(^1\)) that are expected of women. This discourse tells women to be
nurturing, selfless, passive, and dependent.

Jean Baker Miller (1976, 1986) postulates that women have learned to feel
’selfish’ when they feel they are not being nurturing enough. To be nurturing is to be
caring, listening, sensitive to others’ needs, responsive and giving, and putting others
before oneself. This is prescribed as attributes of ‘perfect’ women, and something
they do ‘naturally’, which means that when they are not nurturing women look
‘unnatural’. Nurturing has usually taken the form of caring for children and husband,
or elderly in the ‘private’ domain of the family setting. This kind of work, however, is
both regarded as different from ‘real’ work, that is paid work, as well as not of any
real importance in capitalistic and patriarchal societies that make a distinction
between “public and private” and “cognitive and affective”. This fits in well with the
ideology of capitalism where the value of activities are judged in terms of the
monetary reward they bring. Tied in with women’s ‘natural’ position as nurturer, is
the idea that women’s real desire is to be mothers. Other desires, such as for a career,
are essentially secondary to the desire for motherhood. Women are quickly regarded
as ‘unnatural’ and ‘selfish’ if they spent ‘too’ much time in their job, or have other
interests outside their family. The display of such selflessness is related to a notion of
‘passivity’. Women are not supposed to be too self-assertive or too outspoken, which

\(^1\) Connell (1987) talks about “hegemonic masculinity” and “emphasized femininity” to describe two
modes of being that are not necessarily expressed by all males and females but which are dominant and
often aspired to among other forms for masculinity and femininity.
conflict with their nurturing role. In this sense, 'imperfect' women are those who focus on themselves, or who are not always putting themselves second.

Moreover, Orenstein (1994) found the cultural stereotypes of dependence/independence very much alive in the lives of adolescent boys and girls. Boys were found to still dislike girls appearing 'cleverer' than they, and that girls would tell boys they got Cs instead of As to prevent boys from feeling inferior. The idea that girls are not supposed to do academically better than boys, implies that women also should not be seen as too 'independent' of men. Femininity portrays the 'desirability' and 'naturalness' of 'depending' on a man for support, for intelligence, for strength etc. This indicates that women are not seen of equal standing as men, and therefore are not supposed to be competitive with men. Simultaneously, women are often portrayed as competing over men, as for example Freud postulated, not because of her own sexual pleasure but for her 'security'. Female sexuality is seen as passive, and satisfaction comes from giving pleasure to a man, or from receiving his protection. Irvine's (1994) findings echo this perspective as she found attractive appearance to be the most important female feature according to both girls and boys. Girls were supposed to be 'passive objects', waiting to be chosen, and not 'use' their attractiveness to actively go after boys (Irvine, 1994; see also Walkerdine, 1984). Furthermore, Orenstein (1994) also discovered that there was enormous pressure on girls to be sexually attractive to boys and simultaneously deny their own sexual desires. Her findings are similar to other studies (see Lees, 1986, 1993; Thorne, 1986; Ting, 1997).

Thus a whole range of 'shoulds' and 'should nots' emerges from the discourse on femininity that prescribes a particular model for what it means to be female. What makes it feasible to speak of femininity as a discourse is the set of beliefs that are upheld about what a 'real' woman is through authorities in society such as educators,
psychologists, social workers, the police, the government, the courts and so forth, and today perhaps more than any other ‘disseminator’ of femininity by the mass media. Analyses of the mass media (McRobbie, 1984, 1991; Walkerdine, 1984; McNair, 1996) show that they play a crucial role in perpetuating traditional notions of femininity. For example, notions of the passiveness of female sexuality and the importance of ‘looks’ to attract men: ‘look sexy but without any sexual desires herself’ is still a dominant image in popular magazines (McRobbie, 1984, 1991), or ‘waiting to be rescued by the man who will give life meaning’ (Walkerdine, 1984), as is also described by Erikson. This is echoed in Lees’ (1993) study who also found that girls who take the initiative in courting a boy, or are sexually active risk being labelled ‘sluts’ or ‘slags’. Boys who do the same are seen as heroes and ‘manly’. A male’s ‘rite of passage’ is typically equated with sexual intercourse, whereas sexual intercourse for a girl means ‘losing’ her virginity, her symbol of purity and defence against being named a ‘slut’.

Furthermore, women who possess power over men or reach positions of power in society are portrayed as dangerous (see for instance the films “Fatal Attraction”, 1987; “Disclosure”, 1994). With such dominant discourses it is hardly surprising that in a patriarchal culture, gender stereotypes have been found to go to the root of our reality that work to influence our sense of self at a fundamental level (Friedan, 1963; McClelland, 1975; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982,1993; Apter, 1990; Bem, 1993; Thorne, 1993, 1997; Irvine, 1994; Mann, 1994). The ideal of the selfless women, which is directly opposite to our concept of adulthood/masculinity, sometimes results in what Betty Friedan (1963) called ‘the illness with no name’, Dana Crowley Jack (1991) describes as ‘silencing the self’, and Gilligan (1996) suggests is the effect of a
distorted worldview in which genuine connection, mutual support, and empowerment fail.

2.5 Conflicting Messages: Exposing the Dilemmas Girls Face by two Rivalling Discourses

The above discussion prescribes the meaning of being female in patriarchy. Since the ideal of the 'perfect' woman is seen as being giving and selfless, women have a tendency to end up feeling 'selfish' when responding to their own needs because their own wishes are seen as less important than or secondary to those of others. The internalisation of a submissive role of females, however, is immanent to the preservation of the dominant culture, tradition and history (Lerner, 1986). Masculine and feminine stereotypes suggest a splitting of work and love, of the cognitive and the affective, in which instrumental capacities are relegated to men and expressive capacities to women. These notions reflect an unbalanced conception of the human condition and the inability to reach higher levels of human development (Gilligan, 1993). In fact, what it means to be a man is often opposite to femininity (Johnson, 1993). Masculinity is seen to be typically associated with being independent, autonomous, self-confident, self-assertive, ambitious, and competitive, which are attributes that are virtually opposites to those of femininity. Furthermore, these ideals are achieved, according to such authorities as Freud and Erikson, by severing relational ties, which again conflict with femininity. And most importantly, these ideals of masculinity are ideals that are valorised and aspired to as the 'norm', and equated with 'successful' adulthood in mainstream capitalistic society. This means that since women are socialized to think that adhering to femininity is being a 'good'
woman, they face an obvious conflict between womanhood and adulthood (Hudson, 1984; Gilligan, 1993). If she complies with femininity she may not consider herself an independent ‘adult’, but if she adheres to adulthood she loses her sense of femininity and cannot be a ‘real’ woman.

Such dichotomies become increasingly apparent in adolescence, which is a time where thinking becomes self-consciously interpretive, and cultural scripts impinge directly on perception and judgment which makes adolescent thinking conventional (Bem, 1993; Gilligan, 1996; Russo, 1996). Since the time of adolescence is seen as a time to grow physically and psychologically, and to establish a separate, self-assertive, competitive sense of self, the adolescent is spurred on to deny feelings of dependence, relational needs, and emotions generally. However, since the concept of femininity encourages girls to become responsive, not too assertive, listening and so forth, a girl who displays qualities considered masculine may be regarded as too assertive, too dominant, or too independent and risk societal sanction which means loss of femininity, and an experience of shame and being wrong. For instance, a girl who is outspoken, assertive and actively engaged in sports, is often seen as disruptive, bossy, controlling, or a tomboy (Apter, 1990; Lees, 1993; Orenstein, 1994). Because the scripts of femininity become increasingly apparent when girls enter puberty, adolescence has been exposed to be a time of relational impasse or crisis (Gilligan et al. 1990), and many girls, who in preadolescence demonstrated a solid self begin in adolescence to ‘disavow’ that self (Stern, 1990). Following puberty girls become less outspoken, less likely to disagree in public, unsure of themselves, and school achievements tend to drop. Research (Stern, 1990; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Pipher, 1994; Brown, 1998) shows that at puberty girls face enormous cultural pressure to

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2 This is what Connell (1987) describes as hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity.
abandon their authentic self and take on the ‘good’ girl image, the self that does not speak her mind. It has also been suggested that they become more accommodating and take on a second-class status (Orenstein, 1994).

The traditional theories of human development and views of popular culture outlined above have been criticised and disputed by many such as Miller, 1976; Gilligan, 1982, 1987, 1992; Hudson, 1984; Noddings, 1984; Lerner, 1986; Jordan et al. (eds.) 1991, 1993, 1996; Mann, 1994; Hekman, 1995; and many others, for depicting human development in ideals of a White, Western, heterosexual male self. In fact Gilligan (1993) has said that at the core of her work was the realisation that within psychology and society at large, values had been taken as facts. It is in light of the work of these researchers that I will elaborate below on alternative ideas to human development. This study calls for a blending of our concepts of masculinity and femininity that draws out positive aspects of both, as well as for alternative theories to be brought in to widen our concept of what constitutes successful adulthood. Surely it must be desirable to foster autonomy, individuality, and ambition without assuming a psychotic state of separate-autonomy (Gilligan, 1997), while caring for and being sensitive to others, gentle, and compassionate without sacrificing self. In short, my objective is to facilitate the development of both so-called masculine and feminine traits to substantiate wholesome individuals.

III. Alternative Theories: A Paradigm Shift

In the traditional theories described above, developmental milestones begin with greater separation from the mother (typically the primary caretaker), which increases the sense of boundedness of the individual. ‘Self’ is seen as originator of action and
intention, and development as increasing ability to use abstract and logical thought. This particular worldview of the 'self' became dominant in the 17th century with the so-called 'Enlightenment' period. Judith Jordan (1984, 1991, 1997) outlines four main reasons for the dominancy of this psychology. Firstly, dominant theories in psychology, such as those of Freud and Erikson, arise from shaping psychological theory in terms of Newtonian physics, which posits discrete, separate entities existing in space and acting upon each other in a predictable way. This view promulgated an emphasis on self as an atomistic separate entity essentially denying the interdependence of reality. Secondly, the emphasis in Western, democratic countries on the sanctity and freedom of the individual also led to a denial of the communal and deeply relational reality of human life. Thirdly, this expanded into seeing the need to wean the 'helpless' and 'dependent' child into greater self-sufficiency and independence. Such ideas of the self were greatly supported by psychological theories that emphasised "das Ich", above others, or relationship with others. Finally, the concept of seeing the self as in need of protection from interference from others 'naturally' developed from such assumptions. Freud stated "Protection against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli" (Freud, 1920/1955, p.27, cited in Jordan, 1997). This statement highlights the deep-seated fear of others that underlies the separate mode of being. This means that self development is seen as a process of internalising resources from caretakers and others to create an increasingly separate, unique and self-sufficient structure, and that self and protection of that self becomes most important.

This worldview of self in separation, however, poses problems of relation and integration (Lynd, 1958, cited in Jordan 1997). Predicated on the notion that in order to be fully individuated and autonomous, the 'self' must be given free reign of
expression, regardless of others' needs. One person's 'freedom' thereby easily becomes another's un-freedom. Taking responsibility for one's actions towards others, come to be seen as hindering freedom of the self. Lasch (1979) refers to this individuation as the "culture of narcissism". It ignores inequalities between people and the fact that not everyone can equally pursue the state of 'independence'. Because females do not fit this dominant model of adolescent development of independence through detachment, conventional theories consistently label them deficient and inferior. Obvious misunderstandings such as "penis envy", and the more pervasive and insidious application to women of such models inspired by a male culture, more often than not, provides a misleading understanding of the psychology of women. Devaluation of different ways of being, such as displayed towards other races and ethnicities different from White males have also taken place in the name of self in separation, and indeed justified such heinous acts as colonization and attempts at exterminating whole races as seen during the Second World War. It has become clear that a different paradigm of self and other is desirable, a paradigm that not only enables more accurate understanding of female experience, but also broadens our horizon in understanding human development. The theoretical underpinnings of such a paradigm will be discussed below.

3.1 Girls Develop Together With the Primary Caretaker

When women fail to develop according to the masculine mode, Freud concluded that their continuous attachment to their mothers was responsible for this developmental failure. Nancy Chodorow's (1974), a pioneer of the Relational paradigm, however, postulates another version of Object-relation psychology, and sees apparent sex-differences as a result of gender-socialization rather than anatomy.
According to Chodorow, as the boy begins to experience gender differences he shifts his primary identification to the father. Due to occupational and social arrangements in most societies, many fathers are absent emotionally and physically, with the mother remaining the primary caretaker. This absence facilitates an abstract and role-defined male identification, which means that the boy may take on the role of the other that is less particular, less affectively specific, and more generalized, which in return tends to lessen empathetic presence and capacity for immediate, affective interpersonal involvement.

Moreover, the mother also tends to experience the sex-difference between her son and herself, especially as she is likely to be under cultural pressure to affirm this difference to materialize the ‘necessary’ individuation and independence process. Fathers not only reinforce this ‘voluntary’ detachment and separation, but also tend to discourage the little boy’s wish to maintain more open and continuous attachment to his mother. This describes the psychological process that leads to the desired outcome of an ‘autonomous’ and ‘independent’ individual, postulated as the epitome of human development by traditional theories. On the contrary, the girl may feel no need to separate from her mother to the extent of negation, and continues to identify with her mother because of their same sex. Since the mother is typically the main caretaker and present in a real rather than an abstract manner, the girl defines herself in relation and connection to the mother. Mothers, who tend to see their daughters as more alike, fuse the experience of attachment with the process of identity formation. Based on these

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3 In Hong Kong it is common for the mother-role to be partly taken up by another woman such as a Filipina domestic helper (or sometimes a grandmother). This was also common among the girls in this study. Although there was typically another woman helping the mother, the mother was still seen as the main caretaker, responsible for the children and the household. Moreover, growing up with an individual who fulfills the mother role but who is from a different race and culture, and who they see as their mother, may help to broaden their view of themselves. Several of the girls voiced their strong
notions, Chodorow argues that instead of seeing girls as having weaker ego boundaries like psychoanalytic theory suggests, "girls emerge from this period with the basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not" (cited in Gilligan 1982:8). It thus becomes apparent that a separate mode of being (Gilligan, Ward, and Taylor, 1988) is not the dominant voice present in many females.

Moreover, Chodorow also believes that for boys and men, separation and individuation intertwine with gender identity. For girls and women, a feminine identity does not depend on such achievement of separation because femininity is defined through attachment. Therefore we see in our society a tendency for men to feel threatened by intimacy, and for women to feel threatened by separation because both aspects threaten their sense of self. Men tend to have problems with intimacy and women with individuation/separation (Gilligan, 1993). However, since Euro-centric and masculine traits of separation and detachment are favoured as a sign of development, over connection and empathy, women's unwillingness to separate becomes a 'failure' to develop (Gilligan, 1982). Reasoning through attachment or with care in society at large is not seen as a viable solution, not that it cannot be imagined, but rather because it is considered naïve and unattainable (Gilligan, 1982). Thus the Relational paradigm calls for a new understanding of human development.

3.2 The Relational Paradigm

The aim of the Relational paradigm is not just to understand women but to add new dimensions to our understanding of both male and female psychology that move attachment to their helper ("she is just like your mother") although she was from a different racial background e.g. Filipina.
away from the highly individualistic, agentic ethic of western culture, which view relationship as simply a need for self-gratification. Relational Psychologists believe that it is through describing women's experience that we can map out a full theory of human development that encompasses the interdependent nature of reality. Central aspects of relational psychology include the concepts of connection, permeability, and mutuality. These are discussed below.

3.2.1 Connection/Separation

The notion of separation and individuation indicates that the person must first disconnect from relationship to form a separate, articulated sense of self, which means intimacy, empathy, and relatedness is experienced as threats to autonomy, agency, and self-determination. However, Surrey (1991) suggests that just as Newtonian physics has given way to quantum theory that emphasizes flow, waves, and interconnections, separation-individuation should be replaced with connection-differentiation. This new model emphasizes the contextual, approximate, responsive, and process factors in experience. Connection means a desire to understand, and ability to relate to the other based on empathy. Differentiation here refers to a "dynamic process that encompasses increasing levels of complexity, structure, and articulation within the context of human bonds and attachments" (Surrey, 1991, p. 36). Females' feelings of 'oneness', or 'we-ness', and a sense of continuity in the relationship with the mother is the source of their capacity for relatedness, a capacity that is essential to any interpersonal relationship. Lytle et al. (1997) has also found that while men have continued to develop an intrapersonal identity, women develop both intra- and interpersonal aspects as basis for their identity. This reflects the general sentiment prescribed by the Relational Psychologists of the importance of
finding a balance between attending to self and other. Gilligan (1988) suggests that seeing ‘separation’ as the key to development is a rather unattainable and distorted view of reality, and of the complexity of self and relationships.

Empathy has been found to be central to connection and the ability for relating to others (Jordan et al. 1991; Surrey, 1991). Empathy is built on self-awareness. The more open persons are to their emotions, the more skilled they are in reading others’ subjective state (Goleman, 1996). However, empathy in traditional theories has often been regarded as some mysterious state, even as threatening to the establishment of an independent self. To boys who are encouraged to be effective competitors, seek individual mastery of tasks, and to contain affect, empathy and need of other may imply fear of loss of self, or inability to act on one’s own. Jordan (1991) observes that young girls are encouraged to express their feelings, learning to attend to others’ affective states, and to develop perceptual acuity in reading others’ reactions to themselves. Growing up in such a climate, girls tend to develop the ability for empathy. For Jordan, without empathy there can be no intimacy, and no real appreciation of the paradox of separateness within connection.

3.2.2 Permeability/Self-Boundaries

To a rigidly demarcated self that is perceived as separate, alone, and in need of being in ‘control’, others will be perceived as potential competitors, dangerous intruders, or objects to be used for self-enhancement. However, since the Relational Paradigm postulates the centrality of relationship to female (and healthy) psychological growth, rigid or inflexible self-boundaries are viewed as obstacles to development. Instead, the Relational Paradigm portrays a connected sense of self in which self-boundaries are characterized by permeability. The self is conceived as
contextual and relational, and the other is seen as taking part in this process of relationship. It is also a more permeable self that facilitates connection and mutuality. Contrary to traditional theories, which see more permeable boundaries as threats to self, the Relational paradigm sees the possibility for inclusiveness, understanding, and self-expansion through being able to include another’s subjective state. Moreover, a person with rigid self-boundaries will also feel ‘vulnerable’ about telling others intimate feelings and thoughts because this indicates neediness and thereby ‘dependence’. Adapting and accepting difference or ambiguity may be difficult for a strongly demarcated and closed self since such ‘difference’ is likely to be looked upon with feelings ranging from incomprehension, indifference, arrogance or even contempt all notions essentially based on fear of the unknown. To a self in relation, however, the sharing of inner feelings and thoughts, that is authenticity, helps develop connection and thereby relationship.

Empathy here is also central to the possibility for developing permeable self-boundaries, and enhances the potential for seeing, accepting and learning from another’s subjective reality. The paradox is that empathy and over-lapping self-other representations and identification lead to a clearer appreciation and articulation of the other as a separate being (Jordan, 1991). The idea that permeable self-boundaries will somehow lead to a ‘fusion’ or a ‘confusion’ of the difference between self and other is quite an inaccurate description. On the contrary, individuals with rigid self-boundaries have expressed their lack of understanding of the ‘separateness’ of others by feeling justified in committing acts of discrimination, rejection or even the desire to eliminate others who are seen as ‘different’. Twentieth century history is a telling story of individuals with rigid self-boundaries based on a self in separation that paradoxically fail to respect the individuality of the other. Thus it is postulated here, that it is only
through a connected self that one can learn to truly see the separateness as well as the connectedness of the other.

### 3.2.3 Mutuality and Autonomy

Autonomy in traditional theories on human development elaborates on the process of expanding personal power. This traditional sense of autonomy (ego-autonomy) regards other as an essential competitor who is seen working for self-maximisation. People are then seen as if equal with the same intentions, socio-economic advantages, and a shared social conscience. Ego-autonomy is bound to have serious implications for the symbiotic communal living, or mutuality between people. According to the Relational paradigm, mutuality is the foundation for all healthy interpersonal interaction. Mutuality does not exclude autonomy, but redefines it as a way of being in relationship where all participants are free to present their perceptions, feelings, and thoughts even when they are different from the other. Mutuality in relationship includes mutual engagement, mutual empathy, and mutual empowerment (Surrey, 1984). Mutual engagement refers to a willingness to share personal feelings, thoughts, interests etc. with others. This does also include what may appear as more negative feelings such as anger, frustration, or depression. In fact, the expression of both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ feelings reveals an unwillingness to separate and a desire to ‘stay on’, to ‘remain in connection’ and engaged in the relationship (Surrey, 1993). Lack of engagement may indicate lack of care and indifference. Mutual empathy indicates an affective-cognitive experience of understanding another person from their subjective frame of reference. Such intersubjectivity could be viewed as a relational frame of reference within which empathy is most likely to occur (Jordan, 1991). Empathy, as discussed above, is central to understanding the aspect of self that
involves ‘we-ness’, that transcends the separate, disconnected self. Mutual empowerment refers to the capacity for being in a relationship where both participants feel they can influence the other and the relationship to move towards a direction of authentic connection (Surrey, 1993). Authentic connection is being able to express how you really feel and think, and being able to listen to and act upon how the other person really feels and thinks.⁴

In conjunction with the development of such mutuality, Gilligan (1992, 1996) speaks of a shift in perspective from being “self-centred” to being “centred-in-self”. This describes the process of intersubjectivity, of including others’ perspectives and concerns in seeing and experiencing, and making decisions about the world. Without diminishing the significance of the development of competency, agency, or initiative, Surrey (1991) suggests that women develop such attributes in a relational context rather than in the process of separation and negation. She says, “for women at all life stages, relational needs are primary, and that healthy, dynamic relationships are the motivating force that propels psychological growth” (1991:37). With the idea of the ideal of dynamic relationships, autonomy takes on new meaning and indicates a desire to respond both to self and other in the best perceivable way. Rather than autonomy that is directed by egocentrism, one becomes autonomous to the extent that one is capable of seeing one’s own egocentrism, responding to and empowering others, and to move towards more authentic connection. Such self-autonomy is a requisite for mutuality. Whereas a self in separation sees others as competitors, and people of ‘difference’ as ‘inferior’, the Relational paradigm provides a psychological framework that shows the psychological growth of self and other in relationships.

⁴ These three aspects of mutuality will receive further elaboration in light of more evidence from the data in Chapter Four.
IV. Remaining in Connection While Striving for Independence

The search for psychological connection in girls’ interaction with their friends and family paints a different picture to the image of the rebellious teenager, whose search for independence lies in severing relational ties. Being able to create empowering relationships reflects a healthy development of a self-other relational orientation that seems fundamental to girls’ psychological growth. This requires flexibility, openness, and the ability for inclusion, all characteristics of permeable self-boundaries. Such permeable self-boundaries foster more openness to others’ subjectivities, and enhance empathy and understanding. Having developed healthy permeable self-boundaries means trust has been developed, which allows openness to inner thoughts and feelings, and the capacity to respond empathetically to others.\(^5\)

Within a relational process we find a rather different understanding of what it means to be ‘independent’. It is not independence per se that is sought but an internal strengthening of a relational self that is independent enough to relate to, include and also empower others (Surrey, 1991). This transcends bipolar notions of seeing ‘dependence’ as in opposition to independence, which is seen as not needing others, and a sign of masculinity. ‘Dependence’, or ‘needing’ others, in the Relational paradigm is not seen as a sign of weakness, but as a desire for human connection, and also as a resistance to the separate mode of being.

Moreover, the relational development described in the previous discussion ties in with an increased sense of responsibility. Responsibility here is based on this self-other orientation. This means that autonomy is associated with taking responsibility for self and how that self is in relation to others. Such ‘self-responsibility’ has

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\(^5\) This capacity may further develop within close friendship which will be discussed in Chapter Four.
typically been viewed as a potential constraint on autonomy and independence in western philosophy. Since self is seen in separation, including others’ needs is ultimately considered a sacrifice to self. However, in the Relational paradigm, taking self-responsibility is not seen as an obstruction to independence, but rather as an opportunity for expanding understanding and developing relationship. Thus responsibility is not seen as demanding a choice between attending to the needs of others over and above oneself. Rather the concepts of independence and responsibility are seen as mutually enhancing.

In this section I will discuss how girls’ relational orientation is displayed in their relationship with their mother and friends, whom they tended to be closest to, as well as in their experience of growing up in a multicultural environment. Close relationships, however, did not mean relationships free of conflict. On the contrary, conflicts especially with their mother were frequent. Conflicts in the traditional literature have been seen as a sign of striving for separation and pointed towards a ‘healthy’ severing of relational ties. Here I will discuss whether autonomy and independence are to be found in severing relational ties from family and friends, or whether girls have a different understanding of these concepts, as suggested above. And if so, how are they different? I will also touch upon the respondents’ ability to go beyond the categorical rejection of others who are ‘different’. The Relational paradigm indicates that if one’s self is based on self in relation, one should be able to go beneath such stereotypes of race and ethnicity to be able to judge people on their personal attributes/or lack thereof.
4.1 Adolescence as a Time for Developing Connection

Girls in this study show how they treasure the relationship with their parents, especially their mother. In the following excerpt EM remembers how she appreciated her mother’s concern for her when she was at summer camp.

I never cry in camps, I never get homesick, but that night it was really cold and my mum came in . . . all the way just to give me a jacket — I was like crying, and she was like, ‘did someone bully you or something?’ But I was just like so touched — and then when I was sick in camp, I called her, and she sounded really worried, and then I started crying . . . cause I get all this care . . .

I cry for them sometimes, just because I may not say I love my parents a lot but enough to realize that I do. (Nov. 1999)

EM shows how deeply she feels about her parents, especially when she feels how much her mother cares for her, and how she enjoys “all this care”, which indicates a relationship unlike to the ‘storm and stress’ model typified in traditional literature. Instead, EM portrays a feeling of connection and appreciation towards her parents, and her mother in particular. This connectedness is elaborated on by HN who says that “it’s the mother-daughter bond or something”, when she describes how well her mother knows exactly what she is thinking (when she was trying to convince her mother to let her stay over at a friend’s house with the possibility that they may go out beyond the time of her curfew). Apart from her mother ‘knowing’ HN’s intention, which she finds more impressive and somehow comforting rather than oppressive, HN also talks about the closeness she feels with her mother in being able to talk to her.
One of my friends got pregnant... and I didn’t know what to do. So I told my mum. And she told me ‘you gotta do this’, and I can trust that they [parents] wouldn’t tell anyone... and I think my mum, my mum especially does that with me, like if she’s got a problem she won’t actually come up and ask me, but she’ll bring it into the conversation and see what I have to say about it, because you know, even though I’m sixteen I still experience a lot of things, and she might need help coz she teaches people. So I’ll give sort of my opinion, and she’ll say like ‘but don’t you tell anyone’. So we have a good understanding... I can have serious conversations with my mum (compared to her father), and talk about boys or something stupid like that. (Nov. 1999)

First, we can detect from this account that she trusts her mother enough to ask for her advise, and secondly that she feels good about trusting and being trusted by her mother. She feels empowered, perhaps, from thinking that she has something worthwhile to offer her mother. This mutual ‘advise seeking’ indicates a connection they share (“a good understanding”), and it is not only about her friends’ problems she is able to talk to her mother about but also her own (“serious conversations”). When talking about the relationship with her teachers NH, also refers to this same feeling of empowerment she gets from being treated as a person who can be trusted.

We are quite good friends and we talk about - I mean the conventional rules have all broken down, and we talk about all sort of stuff. We always have a laugh just about little things that you wouldn’t expect student-teacher would do. It’s like we have conversations about, not about lessons, but about our lives, and what we do and everything – we just get to know each other really
well. Not all my teachers but many of my teachers, and they just like trust me, and they give me responsibility – they give me so much independence that they trust [that I] do my homework [even] if I haven’t got it in one day they’ll be ‘fine next week’ (Nov. 1999).

Because she feels treated “decently and humanely” she can establish a close relationship with her teachers. She feels they “trust” her because they let her hand in her homework late, and give her “responsibility”, and she indicates that they can talk about more personal things. This to her is proof that they have a qualitatively better relationship where connection and understanding is enhanced (“we are quite good friends” etc.).

Another aspect of their psychology that shows that they are not engaged in a process of separation or detachment is the sensitivity they show towards others. In the following excerpt, AL shows how concerned she is about her mother’s feelings. She explains:

Once I was going out for dinner with some friends who she also knows . . . so mum said ‘I’ll take you and come along if you want’, and I said ‘that’s probably not a good idea’, coz Sarah who was younger than me, she won’t be comfortable around my mum. Later on I felt really, really guilty, and I wanted to ring her up and tell her I am really sorry I hope I didn’t offend you or anything. (Nov. 1999)

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6 I have chosen to use NH’s example here, but interestingly, another girl, YD, saw teachers who were not strict with homework deadlines and who would say “fine next week” as not really caring about the students, rather than as an act of treating them like responsible ‘adults’. However, many of the girls comment on the increased sense of feeling that they are being treated more as ‘adults’ this year by teachers, which they appreciate.
From this we can see how attuned she is to both how her friend may be feeling and how her mother may feel at this rejection. However, it is the sensitivity to her mother's feelings that really stands out, the concern with having hurt her mother's feelings. This concern or sensitivity on the part of the child towards their parents has not received any attention in traditional theories, where especially the mother is usually seen as an object to be used for the development of the child, or has been interpreted as failure to separate. According to the Relational paradigm, however, such sensitivity is necessary to develop a balanced self-other orientation that supports the development of healthy psychological growth. However, one could also be inclined to conclude that since AL is so sensitive to how her mother feels she cannot express her own authentic feelings in case they may hurt her mother.

This was not found to be the case, however, as the girls illustrate that the mother-daughter relationship was also the relationship in which the girls have most regular and frequent disputes. While AL has just shown how she cares about her mother's feelings, in the following she explains how she loves her mother, but also that it is in this relationship that she can show her more 'unpleasant' feelings.

My mum is the only person I get angry at which I think is quite funny coz I love her so much. But I think she knows, she understands that I need to express that I am angry ... I know she knows I love her that much. My dad is ... away a lot, but it doesn't bother me whether he is there or not, it doesn't affect me as much as if my mum wasn't there (AL, Nov. 1999)
From this excerpt, and other statements throughout the interviews with AL, it is clear that the one she can show her true feelings to, is also her mother whom she trusts will stay despite a display of her authentic (in this case angry feelings) feelings. Although conflicts have traditionally been interpreted as the process of ‘storm and stress’, AL does not indicate any desire to separate from her mother. Rather, AL knows that with her father and her brother her ‘voice’ is not always listened to or understood, and that she needs to know that her opinion is heard, that someone recognizes her thoughts and feelings. It is the relationship with her mother that allows her to do that.

The search for psychological connection was also clearly demonstrated in the participants’ friendship with close friends. All the girls highlighted the importance of friends and friendship. Since friendship was found to be one of the most important aspects of girls’ life (contrary to Erikson’s postulations), Chapter Four is devoted to discussing the nature of their friendship in more detail. Here, I will therefore simply use a few examples to highlight that girls do not seek to ‘separate’ or distinguish themselves in a competitive or hierarchical way as has been reported in research on adolescence (Lever, 1976, cited in Gilligan, 1982; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Lees, 1993; Orenstein, 1994), and as necessitated by a self in separation. Instead, through the favourite activity of talking, girls seek deeper understanding and develop psychological connection. Moreover, if others are seen as competitors, as suggested by the traditional view of human relationships, and the dominant mode of being is one of competition (Jordan, 1996) it becomes difficult to develop relational capacities such as listening, being empathetic, understanding, etc. that are required for establishing closeness and connection. In the following excerpt NH shows how she dislikes individuals who speak badly about others, or who are competitive to make themselves appear better.
Competitiveness . . . I can’t stand it . . . trying to belittle you, goes out of their way to patronise you . . . someone who is not genuine who talks behind your back (Nov. 1999)

This is how most of the girls characterize someone with whom they cannot establish a close relationship because of untrustworthiness. Competitiveness, or ‘self-promotion’, was highly disliked by girls. Teasing and joking, however, was a big part of girls’ interaction with each other, but it was done to enhance the sense of togetherness: “to make someone laugh . . . someone you can have fun with, who you can laugh with” (NH, Nov. 1999), not at the expense of belittling someone/or to make someone look ‘stupid’. Instead they show how much they treasure closeness, trust, and connection with their close friends, even when they are joking. NS, who is best friend with NH, describes the nature of their relationship: “we are pretty honest with each other all the time . . . we just know each other inside out” (Nov. 1999), which indicates the closeness of girls’ friendship and how they are able to be honest with and relate to each other, and thereby develop a more authentic relationship. The girls’ narratives indicate that girls grow through connection, through having other people know them in an authentic way, not through separation, detachment and competition.

4.2 Expanding Self Through Developing Permeable Self-boundaries

Ability to be open, responsive, and empathically understanding were reported as signs of self-confidence. In their self-description, they frequently described themselves in these terms, in their ability or lack thereof to manifest such relational capacities. Self-centredness, lack of responsiveness, and inability to communicate
well and be comfortable with other people were seen as a reflection of lack of development both on their own part and on others’. Thus self-confidence was often measured by being able to talk and relate, being open and outgoing, and in being both responsive and assertive. These complex and seemingly contradictory ways of reasoning are highlighted by NS below.

I can easily change myself, stay true to myself yet change my behaviour in a way so that the other person feels comfortable or is interested in what I am saying . . . I think adap[t]ion is quite an important thing . . . [however] if I have a different perspective, I am not afraid of giving it even if someone else in the room is saying they don’t think so . . . I’m very much the person I am, I don’t change for others, when I was younger of course that was the case but as I’ve gotten older it’s not (Nov. 1999).

Contradictions seem to exist in this statement. On the one hand, NS does “not change for others”, on the other hand, she thinks “adaptation” is very important. She is able to stay true to herself, yet change “so that the other person feels comfortable”. Conventional theories would likely interpret this apparently ambiguous statement as a reflection of an inconsistent and indecisive personality. However, not only in the above excerpt but also throughout both interviews NS gives an impression of a highly sensitive and articulate person, attuned to the intricate complexities of human psychology. Her strong personality, yet flexible self-boundaries provide the opportunity for inclusiveness as well as a rich exchange between people. Her relational framework is a model example of someone whose psychology is healthily

7 The importance of humour, joking, laughing together will be discussed in Chapter Four.
built in a web of relationships, as she is able to manifest capacity for relational responsiveness while staying connected to self. This reflects a self-other orientation.

NS's best friend, NH, also describes this relational 'puzzle' of having flexible boundaries but also a strong self in elaborating on the differences between her and her older sister who grew up at boarding school while NH stayed in Hong Kong.

I'm a lot more open with people, out of the two of us I probably get on with people a lot more . . . she keeps her character strong she won't go down or up to their level . . . I kind of alter what I want to say for the purpose of getting on with someone, I mean I won't be false but you know I alter my knowledge to make it easier in a way (Nov. 1999)

To NH paying attention to context – who she is talking with – is important in order to get along with people and being able to relate. She believes that this can be done without necessarily losing her sense of herself ("without being false"). This reflects the importance of people and relationships to girls, and their flexible self-boundaries. As will be mentioned in Chapter Four, there was no evidence of feelings of indifference to others, not caring about how others feel, or needing to keep up rigid self-boundaries. All girls directly expressed dislike for individuals who are "two-faced", who are competitive to show off, or who are manipulative to their own self-advancement.

Tolerance of different cultures indicates another sign of flexible self-boundaries. The ability to include and accept others who are 'different' was manifested in and undoubtedly enhanced by their multicultural environment. NH explains the effect of growing up in Hong Kong.
You are kind of exposed to multiculturalism and different nationalities, races and cultures all sort of blend, so you basically got a little world for you to see, so you have got much more of an outlook, a broader view . . . I feel more confident about other people, so I feel that I can speak before them, or I can express my opinion . . . I get this impression from English kids that their views are very much their parents' views and it all sort of fitting in with each other, and how your next door neighbour thinks the same as you. I mean in Hong Kong you can have a completely different life, culture, rationality from someone living next door to you . . . you also learn to adapt coz you are made to . . . many different types of people is the norm. . . I found it quite bewildering to be around English people [when at boarding school] because that was just one way of life, one view, one perspective . . . though everyone [in Hong Kong] has their own perspective they are willing to accept people, you can adapt to people . . . relate and get on with people (Feb. 2000).

NH shows how growing up in Hong Kong has made her more flexible and understanding. She has developed an ability to relate and adapt, which simultaneously makes her more self-confident. According to her, one expands psychologically by being around people from different races and ethnicities as one learns to include and accept different perspectives. Such relational orientation is seen as a clear strength, especially when she compares herself to her counterparts in England. Moreover, it seems that it is through her encounter with their one-sided views that she comes to appreciate the expansiveness of her own multicultural world. However, to develop such abilities for inclusiveness and appreciation of others' difference it is necessary to have flexible self-boundaries. To a self in separation, with rigid self-boundaries, and
self in essential competition with others, such a multicultural environment has the potential to turn human interaction into hierarchical notions of who is 'better', by attempting to prove one's 'difference' as superior. For a self in separation a notion of hierarchy is maintained, which easily escalates into discrimination. There was no sign of this in the present study, but only an acceptance and enrichment of life experience through living in a multicultural society. However, we shall see in Chapter Four that sometimes they also struggle with accepting, not so much people whose cultural practices are very different from their own, but rather individuals' narrow-mindedness and ego-centrism, just as NH found her English counterparts unacceptably narrow-minded.

4.3 Autonomy Developed in Mutuality

Aspects of mutuality (mutual engagement, empathy and empowerment) will be discussed further in Chapter Four in relation to friendship. Here I will focus on the relationship between mutuality and autonomy. Autonomy traditionally means being able to follow one's 'own' mind. On the contrary, a fundamental aspect of mutuality is empathetic understanding, which fosters understanding and action based on more than one point of view, and the ability to go beyond one's own opinion or immediate experience. Empathetic understanding is also typically found within the realm of femininity, which has been seen as restricting autonomy. The question then is whether autonomy still can be upheld in mutuality? NS answers this question for us when revealing her thoughts and feelings about her mother to a friend of her mother's:
It put mum in quite a bad perspective, but that was how I was feeling at the time. And it was all very true, but I mean being a mother herself, I'm sure she can understand that it is the daughter's perspective (Feb. 2000).

Without invalidating her own experience and while holding on to how she feels, she is still able to realize that although she may feel her mother is being very 'unfair', there is still another side to it. Thus she admits that her subjectivity, although very real and with no intention of denying it, is just one perspective from which the situation can be viewed. NS gives another clear example of how she is able to switch perspectives and look at the situation from different angles. Being a representative for her school of an international human rights organization, she speculates on the dilemmas she faces when deciding whether to support someone who is being persecuted in his own country but who may also be a terrorist. Although she does not agree with what he is doing, i.e. killing, she can understand that he believes that

he will go straight to Heaven, and they believe that . . . dying . . . for your religion is such an amazing thing to do, so if they haven't been good their whole life then committing Jihad is the best way to get into Heaven (Feb. 2000).

Although she does not lose her autonomous standpoint (against killing) she can still understand why someone would be able to commit such a heinous act, and this is despite his cultural beliefs being completely different from her own. However, this obviously only complicates the decision whether to support this man or not as "you don't know what to do because either way you are probably gonna be wrong". Thus
for NS including others’ subjective reality does not interfere with her autonomy but rather highlights an ability to reflect on a reality that constitutes multiple subjectivities.

The above examples highlight how mutuality and autonomy blend in together. Mutuality and autonomy seem at first contradictory and have been portrayed as such in dominant theories that see healthy human development as dichotomised into realms of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’. However, in this study, and as suggested by the Relational paradigm, the two seemingly opposite modes of being, can work in an integrative way that expands the complexity of reasoning to be able to include ambiguity, contradictory opinions and ‘difference’. Instead, as autonomy is found within mutuality there is a possibility that all voices will be included. However, learning to include others’ perspective does not necessarily take place without a struggle. To continue the example of NS, how she develops the ability for understanding multiple realities and to land on the side of a relational orientation, she had to go through all kinds of different arguments about all different things. And then my dad said ‘well you have to apologize for what happened before you left’, and I just thought ‘oh for God’s sake, you know, just forget about the past, can’t we just act, you know, as if it’s ok?’ But I had to apologize. So anyway, me and my mum had a huge row, and we got it out of our systems, and basically we just didn’t like the way each other was and that, so now it’s much better, and we are trying to work out everything . . . [but] I felt like, ‘my mum is so bad’ even though you don’t mean it, you just get kind of wrapped up in you own problems . . . [but] I just realized what the problem was, and I think she must
have done the same. ... we just got so different views on how life should be conducted ... [but] home-life just seems much better now (Feb. 2000)

Thus although she at first vehemently sticks to her own perspective, her ability for empathy makes her realize the different way her mother thinks. Thus how she feels and thinks undergo several processes of change: she lingers between her point of view, her mother’s point of view, what her father thinks, and then concludes that they all have their own reasons for acting in a particular way, their own interests and their own point of view, which does not result in inability to get along but rather enhances their life-experience ("home-life just seems much better now"). Through this example, we can see that her sense of self is based on connection, since she is able to be autonomous (stay connected to her own perspective) while also recognizing others’ autonomy (stay/become connected to the subjective state of others). This illustrates how autonomy is possible for both self and other and how it is found within relationships of authenticity and mutuality.

4.4 The Myth of Storm and Stress

As NS indicated in the last section, conflict was a means to improve the quality of relationship and establish better understanding, and not a means for separation and detachment. The pervasiveness of the awareness of the discourse on storm and stress among the participants is therefore even more notable. They relay how expectations of them to become this “horrible kid who would hate everyone” were already present in preadolescence. AL sums up the general complaint raised by the girls in this study about the dominancy of this discourse.
When I was ten or eleven I didn’t want to be a teenager because . . . you’re put into this stereotype . . . ‘you are a teenager and you’re difficult’, you’re are always wrong . . . ‘you’re just angry because you are a teenager’, ‘you are over-reacting and you don’t understand that you shouldn’t have a disagreement’ (Nov. 1999).

However, as NS described in the last section, they did experience conflicts, but conflicts or disagreements were not an attempt at ‘freeing’ themselves from parents, or as part of a process of detachment and separation. Nobody seemed to have such a poor relationship with their parents that it could be classified as ‘storm and stress’ with the wish for cutting relational ties. Instead with the awareness that they were supposed to ‘hit the storm and stress’ period, some of the girls reported feeling “lucky” with their parents when they did not experience this. Girls described their relationship with parents as better than that of their peers (“I get on with her [mother] a lot better than some of my friends” (HN, Nov, 1999).

Dominant theories on human development pose a dichotomy between separation and interpersonal connection, which means that adolescents must pull away from their parents to form a differentiated self. However, the present study confirms findings of Relational psychologists that girls do not generally see childhood dependence as constraining and involving pulling away from parents. None of these daughters felt smothered or trapped, struggling to get free to go their own way. By contrast, some of them mentioned how they missed their parents when on a school trip and could not wait to get home, or, as mentioned earlier, how touched they were by their mother’s concern and care. Or when a period of having no time to talk with their mother felt like they were missing some “nutritional self” (YD, Nov. 1999). Most of them saw
themselves as getting on well with their parents, and enjoying their company. AL, whose relationship with her mother was described earlier as both caring and authentic, in the following shows us how she appreciates her mother.

I also would not be where I am today without her as she has stood up for me, assisted me and advised me so much. I guess the time I enjoy the most with my mum is when I am alone with her, when we are doing something together, even if it is just driving. I also love it when I am with her and grandma, her mum. Or when I am doing something that makes her happy and proud of me.

(Sept. 2000)

This excerpt is in sharp contrast with the 'storm and stress' teenager who is supposed to be eager to cut relational ties. As described earlier, this is not meant to indicate that relationships were all 'blue skies', but rather that conflicts within relationships of connection were not characterized by indifference, withdrawal, or power plays. Conflicts came across as a way of enhancing the continuity of connection to significant others (Kaplan, Gleason, Klein, 1991) and to improve the relationship. One exception, however, is BA’s relationship with her parents, which recently deteriorated when she told her mother about her friend YK’s pregnancy and having a daughter (YK is also a participant in this study).

A few days ago I told my mum about Melissa [YK’s daughter] and now she thinks I am sleeping with everyone. At first she thought I had slept with someone [when she was away for the summer], and I was pregnant, then the other night I stayed at Paul’s house, she accused me of sleeping with him. My
dad also is mad at me smoking. I keep doing it to make him angry, although I
don't even like it. My dad doesn't know about Melissa. I think he would be a
really horrible man if he did, he would be prejudice and hate YK . . . There is a
large gap between me and my parents. I am looking forward to leaving them
and living alone. (Oct. 2000)

It seems that real communication has broken down due to the parents' 'lack' of
understanding, and the sudden mistrust that the situation has brought about.
Accusations and mistrust have created 'disconnection' in the relationship, and a "large
gap" is present. It is this gap, or disconnection, BA, who previously described her
relationship with her parents as "getting along", feels towards her parents that makes
her wish for 'separation'. This is created by the feeling that if she told her father the
real 'story' he would turn into a "horrible man [who] would be prejudice and hate
YK". This assumption about her father and the display of distrust by her mother who
already knows about YK's daughter fuel her feelings of alienation, and we can see
that the reaction is quite different from NH's mother's whose advise was sought about
the same issue, i.e. pregnancy. However, at her mother's reaction of mistrust, BA
starts to give up attempts at connection and instead withdraws, at least temporarily,
with perhaps feeble attempts of protest by making her father mad at her for smoking.

The image of the "difficult" teenager and the dominant discourse on storm and
stress, which on one hand seem to have a somewhat positive effect on their perception
of their own daughter-parent relationship, on the other hand, also have a pervasive
influence on how they think adults relate to them.3 The respondents in this study

3 Having stereotypical expectations may be the way many adults do relate to adolescents, which is
illustrated by BA's mother's reaction, i.e. that BA will just behave in the same 'undesirable' way as
YK.
question why it is that some adults cannot treat teenagers as also having something important to say. Several of them mention overcoming age-discrimination as part of achieving equality (both for the young and the elderly), and making adults see that they are not just rebellious, offensive, and argumentative “brats” who have nothing to say worth listening to. NS protests against this dominant discourse on ‘storm and stress’.

There’s this whole thing, people just don’t realize that some teenagers can be as interesting as adults, you can learn just as much from them as other people, they have opinions that aren’t only ‘up to making everyone’s life a nightmare or whatever’, there’s a lot more to them than people think (Feb. 2000)

She feels the misconceptions/expectations of some adults around her of how she is supposed to behave because she is an adolescent. There is therefore a definite presence of the awareness of this dominant discourse despite their experience to the contrary. In being able to go beneath this discourse they also display resistance to it. Although in a different context, the root of BA’s problem is similar to the stereotyping of adolescents described by NS. It is lack of understanding, stereotyping and lack of a desire to understand or include the girls’ subjectivities that create a ‘generation gap’.

4.5 Independence Developed with Taking Responsibility

Traditionally, autonomy in adolescence has been seen as ‘cutting’ relational ties or ‘loosing’ self-control as an indicator of ‘freedom’; through doing as one pleases one gains ‘independence’. The girls in this study point to a different kind of autonomy and
independence. For example, NH makes a comparison between “kids who are allowed all hours” and “kids who are like more censored” that illustrates different types of autonomy. She describes “kids” who are seemingly freer and more autonomous, but who also take drugs, do not take pride in themselves, and as a consequence of this ‘freedom’ are also “not quite confident” even “miserable” (Feb. 2000). These adolescents she is describing, although seemingly ‘independent’ (because they are able to do as they please), are also perceived as having little real confidence. NH goes on to describe the group of girls she belongs to, whose “parents make a fuss about” their whereabouts and give them curfews, and who they argue with about more time allowed out, but who they simultaneously recognize for being parents who care about their children, who want the best for them, and who the girls beneath the protest respect for being strict with them. However, this conclusion is not arrived at without struggle. NH elaborates on her recent escapades, when she had been lying to her parents to save herself from things she should not have done (such as being late for her curfew), as well as the realisations that came with that.

I try not to antagonize my parents too much for it just kind of keeps a burden on me and I feel really bad. They are strict. Like lots of people are allowed to come in at all hours in the morning but I’m not. But then you realize that — I realized on Friday, coz my parents were away, and I came in around 3:30 [she has 12 am curfew], and my stuff had gotten stolen, and I was in a place I shouldn’t have been, at an hour I shouldn’t have been there, and I just thought this has paid me back [because she had her purse stolen], I shouldn’t have been there, and you just realize that — my parents will say to me ‘hey, we are
not trying to be nasty to you this is for you interest’, and it just kills me to
figure our that they are right, coz you know I had my own opinion. (Feb. 2000)

Although NH dislikes and struggles with her parents’ strictness and control of her
whereabouts, she comes to realize that she also appreciates that they are trying to do
what they think is best for her. And especially when she realizes that what they think
is best for her may be, after all, better for her than how she at first thought she would
want it to be (i.e. “be allowed out at all hours in the morning”).

Many of the respondents in this study comment on their ‘conclusion’ that although
they do not always like it and rebel against it, they realize that their parents’ strictness
is needed to make them improve. Although they argue for more time out with their
friends and protest against parental control of choice of clothing, for instance, they do
not see that as a major obstacle to their sense of independence. For example, how girls
negotiate cultural scripts of femininity (Bem, 1993), of which they were all succinctly
aware⁴, prescribes for them a way of being that could prove contradictory to their
sense of independence. For most girls, these struggles with self and what they believe
are “shoulds” emerge positively with more awareness of self and other. KA says that

as you get older you start to realize that it doesn’t really matter what other
people think – even though sometimes it might bother you, but you basically
try to convince yourself it doesn’t really matter what other people think. It’s
what’s important to you that’s important. (Feb. 2000)

⁴ I will not give any examples here as plenty will be cited in Chapter Four.
Although “what’s important to you” may at first glance seem “self-centred” or autonomous in the conventional sense, a closer look at what is important to her reveals quite another mode of being. As discussed in part III, becoming “centred-in-self” is a psychological process of becoming increasingly connected, that is, more accurately attuned to the feeling and knowledge states of both oneself and others. KA, while stressing the importance of “feeling who you are” and listening to “what’s important to you”, shows that taking responsibility for how the ‘world’ is ‘shaped’ is important to her as a person as well.

There should be kindness in this world – it’s important in keeping people really happy and secure . . . you have to feel compassion and be nice, and people who have no compassion are almost not human. (Feb.2000)

She says that while “it’s what’s important to you that’s important”, caring for others is what makes you “human”. This portrays a relational orientation and indicates that for her independence is linked to taking responsibility. At the same time, she is not deprived of her independence by being ‘compassionate’, but rather gains her ‘humanity’. BA sums up how independence and responsibility are intertwined for these girls.

Outgoing, care for other people, can’t be selfish . . . have a direction in life . . . people should not be spaced out, they should have something going for them, should be motivated” (Jan. 2000)
Thus self-development ("have something going for them") is important just as 'other-
development' ("care for other people") is necessary. Underlying this excerpt is a
strong sense of self-reliance and self-control. It does not indicate any sign of 'letting
go' or 'freeing' yourself from responsibility to others ("can't be selfish") or to oneself
("should be motivated"). Traditional notions of femininity, such as "care for other",
"can't be selfish", shows her sense of responsibility to others, which does not become
an obstruction to independence, but rather blends the two as inseparable as one is just
as important as the other. This reflects a view of reality as interdependent, and that
according to these girls independence is linked to taking responsibility.

Another aspect associated with responsibility and independence is acting on self-
reflection. The amount of self-reflection these girls show (for example, NS and NH
cited earlier), and their ability and willingness to indulge the wider context around
them also reflects a mode of being "centred-in-self". Such self-reflection polishes
qualitative aspects of being "human" (see Chapter Four), which means having
"compassion for other people". Self-reflection and compassion are also some of the
fundamental aspects deemed necessary for psychological growth by major religions
such as Buddhism. Self-reflection and compassion are seen as necessary to any higher
level of self/moral development and authentic living and actions. It is striking that
such aspects are seldom mentioned as attributes in theories on human development,
and that they have not become part of the major developmental milestones in
traditional theories. But perhaps this is hardly surprising, since self-reflection and
compassion work against traditional notions of individuation and autonomy as
understood in the 'self in separation paradigm', and against becoming an effective
competitor so highly praised especially in the capitalistic ethic.
Furthermore, that independence and responsibility intertwine is also reflected in girls' future aspirations. YK profoundly describes such sentiments when she relays why she wants to be a paediatrician.

When I was little I was around doctors a lot ... sort of I'd do it for other people what they'd done for me (Mar. 2000).

In remembering and not taking for granted what other people ("doctors") have done for her as a child, she summons forth a sense of wanting to 'repay her debt of gratitude'. But there is no sign that taking such responsibility means losing independence or sacrificing self. Taking responsibility for doing something for 'humanity', or with people, was common among the girls in this study, which may have been enhanced by an ability to reflect upon their own fortunate circumstances. 'Fortunate' social and economic circumstances may to an individual in the separate mode of being serve to aggrandize the self as superior to others less 'fortunate', and be used to see others as 'inferior'. Another example of this is EM who wants to take up a career that is related to helping children whether it is the medical field, which is what her parents want her to do, being a teacher, or going off to developing countries. The underlying motivation is that

I enjoy helping people ... going off to foreign countries and helping children who really need help ... if their parents had died ... [not just] health but ... mentally they need more help (Feb. 2000).
The respondents’ sense of care and responsibility is reflected in wanting to do something for others, “with people”, “to change the world”. Doing something for others is, as described earlier, a central feature of the construct of femininity. However, there was no sign of ‘giving up self’, and they seem to be able to blend caring for others with independence. Moreover, like the Relational paradigm I also found that developing a sense of responsibility is associated with a strong sense of continuity between present and future selves. All of the girls show that they believe it is hard work that will enable them to achieve their dreams (not a future husband). How they develop such sense of direction is most likely fostered by a supportive school environment, and parents who themselves are mainly professionals with expectations of their daughters to establish a career. They all take for granted that they will go to university, and see themselves as the protagonists in their own life, not passive victims of circumstances waiting for things to happen to them, as viewed by Erikson. There was no evidence of anyone seeing herself as needing to be ‘rescued’ from the responsibility of making choices about her future. Thus the underlying sentiment was that through taking responsibility for one’s life by working at what one wants to do, while making such actions include consideration for their effect on others, one achieves independence. The findings of this study point towards a transcendence of the dichotomous notions of either femininity or independence, and instead reveal them to be two functions that are mutually enhancing. The ideal is finding the balance between responding to and working at both one’s own desires and needs, as well as those of others in order to reflect the reality of interdependence. Staying in connection with self reveals a resistance to traditional notions of femininity that means loss of ‘self’, while staying in connection with others means resisting the separate mode of being independent.
V. Conclusion

In this chapter I have traced how girls experience independence while staying connected with and taking responsibility in relationship to both self and others. Traditionally, little focus has been put on the positive functions of a relational orientation, such as being a tool for overcoming attachment to ‘difference’ or avoiding the negative outcome of fostering a rigidly bounded sense of self for example. It can come as little surprise that attributing positive emphasis to types of independence and maturity that is found in the separate mode of being will cause continuous negative conflicts both between males and females as well as between different races and ethnicities. This chapter has looked at how girls develop in relationships of connection, and how autonomy and independence do not exist in the process of separation achieved through detachment from others. Instead, autonomy and independence are achieved and defined within relationship characterized by connection, permeable self-boundaries, and mutuality. The findings of this chapter support the call for transforming traditional Western notions of binary opposites such as independence versus dependence, autonomy versus responsibility to others, self-control versus lack of freedom. Quite to the contrary, autonomy was found in taking responsibility, which meant having self-control, which again was a sign of self-confidence, which meant independence. It becomes important to transform the traditional notions that see responsibility as restricting individuality and freedom. This points towards the importance of a Relational framework where ‘self’ develops to be able to include others’ subjectivity to achieve a revival of our concept of the human-to-human relationship.
CHAPTER FOUR

ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND FRIENDSHIP

I. Introduction

As has been discussed at length in Chapter Three, the Relational paradigm stresses the importance of relationship in the development and growth of human beings. It is generally accepted that we develop our sense of who we are through 'significant others'. However, psychologists have typically neglected friends as significant others for girls. What has seldom been understood is that behind a confident girl is an intricate circle of complex relationships with close friends whom she trusts and shares much of her inner life with. Female friendship has largely been ignored in social sciences, and those that have acknowledged it have tended to trivialize its significance. Recently female friendship has received renewed interest as the link between friendship and psychological health has been made. The 1990s have seen an increase in ethnographic studies of girls’ friendship (Gilligan, Lyons, and Hammer, 1990; Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Thorne, 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Hey, 1997; Apter, 1998; Rosenzweig, 1999), which look carefully at the significance of such relationships in the life experience of adolescent girls.

In this chapter I will discuss adolescent girls and their friendship in terms of the underlying themes of connection and mutuality. I will outline the main attributes the participants treasure in their friendship situation, and discuss how the development and maintenance of close friendship require highly intricate relational capacities. I will divide the analysis of their friendship into two main parts, namely qualities found
in the relationship developed between girls, and the significance of verbal communication. Both relational capacities and the ability to have dialogue foster psychological connection and mutuality, which means a deepening of the friendship. In section 5.4 I will conceptualise the mutually reinforcing relationship of friendship and talk, and postulate the significance of such mutuality between people to the growth of both individuals, and society. I will also bring in examples of how self, based on a relational mode fosters a sense of connection and understanding that enables girls to transcend racial and ethnic diversity.

II. Female Friendship and Relationship in Patriarchy

Western culture has traditionally dismissed female friendship as shallow, insincere, temporary and insignificant, and portrayed women as incapable of strong and loyal attachments to each other (Rosenzweig, 1999). Moreover, its purpose is said to be simply to provide the groundwork for the overall and most significant relationship that is to come and give women their sense of fulfillment and identity, i.e. the relationship with their future husband (Erikson, 1968; McRobbie, 1988, Griffins, 1985; Less, 1993; Griffiths, 1995). Through discussing the relations between psychic production of feminine desire and cultural forms of practices, Walkerdine (1991) talks about how girls are prepared for romantic fulfillment of heterosexual practices. Such social discourses also expound that a woman is only really fulfilled through having a relationship with a man. Since this relationship is the most important, it makes women incapable of developing true friendship with other women as they are essentially engaged in competition for men (Ward, 1976).

Although Western culture has emphasized the significance of friendship since Plato and Aristotle, it has been construed in terms of male experience, primarily in the
public realm, and often celebrated in formal ceremonies and declarations. Since relationships are defined within the public realm of masculinity in patriarchy, they are more likely to be portrayed according to individuals whose psychology is based on self in separation. Hence such an understanding of friendship is inadequate to interpret female experience, or perhaps any close friendship undertaken outside those parameters. As discussed in Chapter Three, self in separation impinges more stringent notions of the division and hierarchy of self and other. Under such a ‘regime’, understanding and acceptance of ‘differences’ of race and ethnicity is difficult. ‘Difference’ is easily turned into ‘inferiority’, and used to enhance a sense of superiority of self. The self in separation may fear that others will ‘take over’, invade, or be better than self. Derived from a lack of connection with others, this fear can become the basis for inferiorising individuals from different races and ethnicities. To ‘protect’ the ‘self’, stringent self-boundaries are necessary, preventing others from having an emotional impact on self. This may lead to a categorical rejection, even discrimination of the ‘other’. Unfortunately, such notions are not difficult to discover in any national defence and foreign policy agenda. Until recently, psychoanalytical theories still promulgated healthy and more mature development with modes of functioning predicated on greater separation of self from others (Jordan, 1997). I see the development of self in separation as the root of self-centeredness, arrogance, narrow-mindedness, stereotyping, racism and intolerance.

Moreover, since the discourse on masculinity objectifies women, men are not portrayed as being interested in having platonic relationships. This has to do with the way sexuality is portrayed in patriarchy. Sexuality is seen as an ‘unsteerable’ drive in men that proves their masculinity, linking sexual virility with power and manhood. On the other hand, sexuality in women has been portrayed as non-existent as she is
simply seen as the receiver and nurturer of the male seed, not an active sexual subject. Affection that may exist between male-female friends is channelled into sex. This objectification of females has been shown to be in tune with boys' sense of self. For boys the crystallization of a gendered identity involves abdication of anything 'female', which means they often defend their identities with strong self-boundaries. This process of individuation and separation starts abruptly when boys enter school (around the age of five) and the culture of masculinity, which diminishes acceptance of expressions of vulnerability and powerlessness, concepts that are simultaneously associated with being a girl and therefore devalued (Pollack, 1998). Thus males with a gendered identity may feel threatened by platonic relationships with girls in front of other males who may accuse him of being a 'sissy' (Lees, 1993). These ideas are still prevalent among adolescents today and promulgate a worldview that denies that males and females are capable of having close relationships that go beyond the sexual kind. Contrary to these traditional postulations, in the following we shall see how the Relational paradigm portrays friendship and the dynamics of qualitative relationships.

III. Psychological Development in the Relational Paradigm

Although Relational psychologists have not focused specifically on the dynamics between adolescent girls and their friends, I still find the Relational paradigm useful in understanding the psychological dynamics of female friendship. Since friendship is always a highly relational affair, which never involves less than two people, to understand the dynamics between people and the ideal of healthy relationships, it is important to look at a person's conception of self and other.
As has been discussed at length in Chapter Three, the Relational paradigm puts relationship central to the growth and development of human beings, and females in particular. The Relational paradigm offers an alternative explanation of human development to the traditional theories, and postulates the central aspect of human development to be ‘connection-differentiation’. It views human development as growing through and towards, rather than away from and out of, relationship (Jordan, 1989). Chodorow (1978) describes girls emerging from the mother-daughter relationship with the ability for greater relational concerns and capacities. This idea of growth in relationship was further expanded by Relational psychologists (Gilligan, Brown, Surrey, 1991; Jordan, 1991) who found that many women emerge with empathy as the centralizing aspect of their sense of self. This may be why women tend to find it easier to be nurturing in relationships, and why friendships with women in fact have been found to be more satisfying and ‘real’ than friendships with males/partners who may be much less inclined to respond empathically. Relational psychologists’ definition of ‘self-in-relationship’, further puts forward three developmental steps as basic elements of ‘connection’ and ‘mutuality’ (Ting, 1997): “mutual sensitivity”, “mutual empathy”, “mutual empowerment”.

The first, ‘mutual sensitivity’, refers to a psychological experience of self-enhancement through “being seen” and “feeling seen” by the other and “seeing the other” and sensing the other “feeling seen” (Surrey, 1991). This indicates an emotional connection and ability to identify with the other. Through such mutual sensitivity and sharing of experience an active interest in the other as different and unique is developed, which fosters the capacity for the second aspect, ‘mutual empathy’. Mutual empathy provides a base for a sense of responsibility towards the well-being of others. Jordan (1991) describes acting on mutual sensitivity and
responsibility as follows: "Growth occurs because as I stretch to match or understand your experience, something new is acknowledged or grows in me." (p. 89) Thus when there is mutual empathy and caring, one can experience an intense affirmation of self, which paradoxically transcends the (ego) self\(^1\) and has a sense of self as being part of a larger unit (without implying some kind of merging or loss of distinctiveness of self) (Jordan, 1985).\(^2\) This is when the third element of 'mutual empowerment' is possible. Mutual empowerment is the energizing force of real relationships, which is based on the expression of authenticity of voice/experience/knowledge. This can be said to be the basis for the psychological process of true respect for individuality since authenticity is what characterizes the relationship. By this I do not mean a passive or indifferent form for acceptance of difference but rather as authenticity implies, I am referring to what has been termed "active tolerance" (Makiguchi, 1989), which highlights an active engagement in mutual learning from the other that enriches all parties involved. This basic structure of growth in relationship also highlights the focus in traditional western psychology on the other mainly as an object to be used for 'self', which discourages respect and egalitarianism in the relationship, elements that are essential to 'real' relationships, and an egalitarian society.

Unlike boys, girls form their distinct gendered selves without the need for such defensive self-boundaries or need for separation. In fact girls often confirm their sense of self through connecting with others (Belenky et al, 1986; Gilligan, 1982). The psychology of separation, however, overlooks psychological growth that occurs only

\(^1\) In his Peace Proposal to the United Nations (1994), the renowned Buddhist scholar and peace activist, Daisaku Ikeda, refers to transcending the ego-self and bringing out the universal self as the essential path to bringing about a symbiotic society.

\(^2\) Recent infant research suggests that the notion of primitive merging may not provide an accurate description of early mother-infant experience, as patterns of differentiation of self and other exist almost from birth (Sander, 1963; Stern, 1983,1986 quoted in Jordan, 1991)
in relationship with others, and denies the interdependence of reality. Girls, based on a self in relation, have been found to enter friendship with a stronger emotional readiness, and they are quick to talk, inquire and empathize (Apter, 1998) thus allowing them to be in more real relationships than would be allowed in a competitive masculine culture.

The above in brief highlights traditional notions of female friendship and outlines the major theoretical considerations of this chapter. In the following, I will explore the nature of girls’ friendships, the importance of talk, and the potential for overcoming racial/cultural and gender barriers. It is postulated here that individuals adhering to a relational orientation will be able to not only overcome but also expand upon notions of self in developing friendship, and relationships with individuals even from different racial/cultural or gender backgrounds.

IV. Girls’ Friendship: a Possible Model for Connection and Mutuality

In the following sections I will outline the different friendship circles and discuss the attributes of close friends as reported by the respondents in this study. I will also describe what barriers there may be in terms of race and gender, and whether close friendship is confined to friendship between girls only. Moreover, what makes some friends develop into close friends, while others stay at the level of more common friends will also be discussed. I will end by postulating that the psychological framework of the Relational paradigm found in this study provides a possible model for developing peaceful and mutually empowering relationships among people.

Clarification of some terms: I will use the description “public and private” domains to distinguish between what takes place in the eyes of other peers and peer
culture where stereotypes are more rampant (the public), and what occurs at the personal level of relationship outside the dominant peer culture (the private) where individuality is better displayed. Moreover, I will use the term ‘race’ to refer to genetically transmitted differences such as those that characterize Indians, Chinese, Caucasian (the main groups that were referred to by the respondents), and I will use the term ethnicity to refer to social and cultural forms of identification. Thus someone could be Chinese in terms of race, but not in terms of ethnicity.

4.1 Friendship Circles

Friendship is a broad term that includes different levels of acquainted individuals with certain mutual attachment between them. In order to indicate the different levels of quality in friendship, in this section I will focus on describing two broad categories of friendship that stand out in the data. I will refer to these as ‘loosely knit’ friendship circles and ‘closely knit’ friendship circles.

Respondents describe their loosely knit friendship circles as networks consisting of various groups of peers such as classmates, PE team-mates, school project team-mates, peers they engage in extracurricular activities with, as well as same racial friendship groups. Most individuals intermingle during the course of the day and their school activities, but tend to group into their own more defined friendship group determined mostly by race, such as the Indian group, the Chinese group, the Gwailo group (usually meaning Caucasians), and gender during recess or the break for lunch. However, both the respondents and the teachers comment on the few conflicts caused by race or ethnicity. ‘Race’ as a genetic determinant did not seem to influence divisions as much as cultural/religious practices those races carried with them. Moreover, cultural/religious ‘restrictions’ by parents were seen as a major dividing
factor, and in a few cases they found certain cultural practices unacceptable. These
groups that are largely determined by race/culture were then again divided according
to gender.

Closely knit friendship circles were more personal and less influenced by racial,
ethnic or gender issues. By personal I mean, individuals were seen more in terms of
their individual attributes rather than the stereotypes that dominant discourses on race
and gender bring. Also more developed relational capacities were expected of close
friends, and stricter boundaries were set.

4.1.1 Loosely Knit Friendship Circles

As described above, factors that dominate divisions of loosely knit friendship
circles are race/culture and gender. Within those, further divisions are made according
to interests. However, here I will focus on race/culture divisions. NH describes this
situation of loosely knit friendship circles as follows:

The Chinese will tend to stick together - for two reasons basically: they can
speak the same language . . . and they share different interests . . . the
foreigners - not like all White people but the English and the Australians . . .
are more like outgoing, more interested in arts, drama, obviously a lot louder
and we do more sports . . . and then some of the Indian crowd stick together -
but I mean we all mingle (NH, Nov. 1999).

In describing how loosely knit circles of friends mingle, NH also tells us that there are
divisions determined by race, and that race is furthermore marked by typicality of
interests, as well as personality characteristics ("outgoing", "loud"). However,
although NH indicates a split because of race, rather than racial appearance, it is cultural differences that become the deciding factor, such as language that draws the line in loosely knit friendship groups. SO agrees with NH, and further explains the importance of cultural differences rather than simply the appearance a particular race brings. In the following she differentiates between Chinese from overseas and Chinese from Hong Kong.

You have some Chinese people who are brought up in Hong Kong who are Chinese, and then you have some people who lived in America, or lived in England, Canada — so they are of Chinese origin but they speak English with an English accent — then there's the cultural behind. *(So they are different?)*

Maybe more open than the Chinese from Hong Kong. *(Feb. 2000)*

She indicates that it is not simply race that causes particular group formation, but rather the influence of culture and language. Both respondents direct our attention to the importance of language and the more “outgoing” and “open” nature of those from a Western culture (whether they are Chinese or Caucasian). As postulated by NH and SO above, as well as by other girls, being able to communicate in the same language is a fundamental requisite to forming loosely knit friendship groups. YE (who is Chinese) highlights this by stating that language is a barrier to form friendship. She says, “I don’t get their jokes” *(Nov. 1999)*, which makes it difficult for her to be in a group of English people, and which may be why Chinese people who “have an English accent” find it easier to be in groups with peers whose first language is English, and perhaps therefore are able to be as “open” and “outspoken” as others whose first language is English. *(However, YE’s best friend was still a Caucasian*
from Canada but her friend was part of 'her' Chinese group of friends. NH in the following elaborates on the language and cultural commonalities that bind particular individuals together.

We kind of stay together and also because we don't speak Cantonese . . . and then some of the Indian crowd stick together - but I mean, we all mingle - Indians and all other people mingle together but they share a lot of things in common . . . everyone is friends but if you have to divide them, the Chinese groups definitely - I mean, I'm friends with a lot of Indians but the Chinese groups definitely stick together more. Our year is just like basically Chinese and everyone else really coz there's such a mixture of people - eh - and we have all been brought up to be around different cultures so it's easy for us to get along. (Nov. 1999)

While stressing how they mingle and get along, divisions are still largely influenced by language and cultural commonalities. Since most Indians speak English fluently, what made Indians group together had more to do with cultural factors than language. Other girls postulate that interest is linked to race as they comment that they see more Indians who do business subjects, but also contextualise this phenomenon by suggesting that it is probably because of their family background in business rather than simply because they belong to the Indian 'race', and the Chinese being better in mathematics and science subjects while the English are better at art and humanities (teachers also comment on this as very typical). But again they all believe it has more to do with upbringing rather than race. AL describes a similar situation of division by culture rather than race, but also shows that these divisions can be transcended at the
personal level, or in the private domain, where dominant discourses on race/cultural practices become less pervasive.

I would say a lot of separate groups ... the Chinese group, ... the Gwailo group, ... the Indian group ... so there's a lot of groups and I did have a finger in each group since I had an Indian best friend, but I found that I couldn't socialise with them coz they were all Indian. I went to her birthday party and I was the only non-Indian in there, which is difficult because the culture (Nov. 1999).

AL here describes the more loosely knit circle of Indian people she would have to associate with to be with her friend at a birthday party. We can see how Indian "culture" is accentuated in the public domain, such as a birthday party, which makes the display of their friendship more difficult. This is not because of race but because of the dominant stereotypes race brings in the public domain. That AL's best friend is Indian indicates the importance of closeness in overcoming racial/cultural barriers. Close friendship between different races existed, but only flourished in the private domain. This aspect of friendship will be discussed in section 4.2 when closely knit circles of friends are described.

Parental influences are most likely the context where traditional cultural practices are transmitted most strongly. This was mentioned as another determining factor in the formation of loosely knit friendship circles. NH continues in the following excerpt to outline how child-rearing practices influences who they mix with.
Also parents like the Koreans meet Indians counterparts, so they get together, cause the Koreans sometimes have to go to school on Saturday because their parents are very, very strict, and the Indians have other matters - how to bring up children. So in a way parents kind of divides us cause ... the reason for why I'm so good friends with my friends is because our parents think in the same way we are allowed to do the same thing. So you kind - if you are allowed to go to different things you may go with different people, so you're more like the people you are likely to be around. (Nov. 1999)

NH's opinion is that friendship is contextual: parents' child rearing practices, and the different cultural practices they bring to a large degree determine who are the individuals they mix with, and what they are allowed to do. In this section, I have focused on three main reasons that critically influence the formation of loosely knit friendship circles: language, culture, and parental practices. This indicates that rather than biological factors of race, it is the cultural differences practiced by these races that influence the formation of loosely knit friendship groups. All these loosely knit groups of peers make up the multicultural climate that is the norm for the participants in this study. NH describes this beautifully:

They are just cultures ... you have an impression of something that's sort of different but to me they are just something that's there it's not something that's different, it's just that people are different in respect of hair-colour ... I mean it's just something that's genetic, it's just there, I doesn't mean anything, it's a unique quality not necessarily something that has to be degraded or interesting but it's not something I'd see as different. (Feb. 2000)
Thus racial differences are not differences to be "degraded or interesting" but just the norm. This difference constitutes social life to her.

### 4.1.2 Cultural Barriers to the Formation of Close Friendship

The pressure from cultural ‘differences’, however, may increase with age. Stereotypes become more prominent in the public domain, which make it more difficult to maintain close cross-racial friendship. AL continues to illustrate how such cultural pressure increases with age and causes a devolution of a friendship with a previous best friend:

> We knew that if we ever had problems, any falling outs we’d always be there for each other . . . but we have sort of grown apart and developed other friendships . . . she has gone to her Indian group, and I am part of mine. (AL, Nov. 1999)

The effect of cultural pressure to join one’s own group, especially with very traditional ethnic groups such as this Indian girl was part of, affects the friendship as she is drawn into her own cultural practices of which AL may not take part. The closeness is affected ("we have sort of grown apart"), which reduces the quality of the friendship and demotes the friend to the level of a more common friend.

SO also explains in the following that when cultural traditions are very strict, establishing friendship can become increasingly difficult. Here she describes the only situation she has ever come across where she could not accept someone because of cultural differences.
There was once a girl in my class, she was Mormon, she was completely
different and it takes getting used to . . . I found her really strange . . . her
beliefs and things I couldn’t match up with them . . . I watched this TV
programme which is her religion, and there was one man, this Mormon who
has six wives and twenty-nine children, an he thinks that’s ok, because the
more wives you have the higher status you would be in heaven or something. I
can’t really think how that would be possible so that’s completely different.
But at least in Hong Kong you’ll get exposed to different types of people, and
different strange religions. (Feb. 2000)

What we can see here is not an inability to accept this individual because of any
genetic differences (which she does not mention at all) but an inability to come to
terms with the other girl’s cultural/religious practices, which do not make sense to her.
She finds herself unable to accept the apparent gender inequality and the practice of
polygamy. However, even more than that, as she goes on to explain the situation, we
see that it is the girl’s narrow-mindedness and inflexible attitude, which makes it more
difficult to be close friends with her.

I couldn’t really accept – like I don’t really understand her religion – but I still
talked to her . . . but I could never be like best friend with her – because we
don’t have common interest I suppose. (How did she behave differently?) I
think she preferred to talk to the teachers than talk to the students, she didn’t
like sports and religious study, she would only think that her religion was right.
She was stubborn, I mean in her way, you couldn’t present new ideas – very
talkative on the subjects which she believed in (Feb. 2000).
From this we can see that it is not simply the girl’s religious/cultural differences that are unacceptable, but rather that such practices seem to increase the girl’s inability to be open and flexible towards the ideas of others, which then prohibits her from going beyond her own perspective. Thus what SO finds most unacceptable is her narrow-mindedness manifested in refusing (“stubborn”) to listen to others’ opinion (“think that her religion was right”) and only being “talkative on the subjects she believed in”. This makes SO subsequently rule out being “best friend with her” although this does not mean she will try to exclude her (“but I would still talk to her”). As we shall see in part V. ability to take another perspective is a major prerequisite for establishing close friendship for girls.

4.1.3 Gender as Barrier in Boy-Girl Friendship

Like ethnic differences, gender can also be a barrier at the loosely knit level of friendship. The respondents all voice clear awareness of expected behaviour that dictates what it means to be a boy or a girl, and how this affects the quality of interaction with male friends in the public domain. YK elaborates on this issue when she describes femininity and social pressure to conform.

“Pink... girl... how [a girl] should be... It depends on who you are with, if you are with a group of boys that prefer feminine women and they hate women who are trying to be - like men, then I suppose there’s a bit of pressure - to be more feminine. (Mar. 2000)
The influence of dominant discourses on expected gender behaviour has been repeatedly reported on by for example Connell (1987), who describes how “hegemonic masculinity” and “emphasised femininity” ‘reign’ the public world of boys and girls and exert pressure on especially boys to disassociate themselves from anything regarded feminine to prove their masculinity. Thus what it means to be a ‘boy’ and a ‘girl’ in the public domain of peer culture exerts pressure on adolescents to behave in socially expected ways. Since part of the dominant discourse on gender is that boy-girl close relationship is only of a sexual kind, barriers may be created that inhibit boys and girls from manifesting close friendship in the public domain. AL clearly illustrates this when she says

You gotta be careful what you say with male people, and the way you act . . . I mean with females you can do and say anything, but if you say something with a male friend they might think ‘AH NO SHE LIKES HIM’. so you gotta be careful. (AL, Nov. 1999)

Displaying closeness in boy-girl friendship may therefore be inhibited by dominant gender expectations that dictate what the nature of that boy-girl relationship is supposed to be. In section, 4.2.2 I will describe how such barriers can possibly be overcome.

As described above, girls in this study report that their loosely knit circles of friends manifest definite signs of divisions determined by race/culture and gender in the public domain, but that at the same time there is no hostility and people generally get along and cross in and out of these circles. In the next section I will focus on what makes closely knit friendship circles different from these wider circles of friends.
4.2 Closely Knit Friendship Circles

On top of engaging in these wider friendship circles of peers, each girl talks about her own core, or closely knit circle of friends. This group typically consist of 4 to 5 or 6 individuals usually of the same sex. And within that group there is usually one individual that is considered ‘best’ friend, although the ‘best friend’ status is not sharply demarcated. Individuals in the closely knit circle of friends are individuals who the respondents click with, who they consider trustworthy, and feel they can be more authentic with, who they enjoy most spending time with, and who they will always look out for. With these close friends they spend most of their leisure time; they listen to and talk to each others’ joys and sorrows, give each other advise, they can both joke and have fun together, but also be serious and rely on each other to be there when needed. Engaging in all these relational activities is what spins the fabric and builds the foundation for close friendship. Having developed and manifesting such relational capacities are typically a prerequisite for the formation, continuation and further development of the friendship, which means developing further closeness. The closeness, or psychological connection that is developed distinguishes the closely knit circle of friends from the more loosely knit friendship networks. AL describes this phenomenon. “My core group of friends would be LG, BA, KC, and CY . . . it’s so good to have that close friendship” (Nov. 1999).

The individuals in one’s “core” friendship group are the people that the respondents will seek out among other peers during school breaks, free lessons, after school, during the weekends and so forth. Closely knit friendship circles, however, were also part of the more loosely knit circle of friends, and none of the core groups were isolated from the rest of the peer groups. They also had close friends outside this immediate core group whom other members of the group may not necessarily be close
with. For example, one girl reports having a close friend who she takes that same school bus with, another having close friends from other schools, or friends whose parents are friends of the family. There are two girls in the study who have boyfriends, and one of them reports her boyfriend to be her best friend. In fact, the reason for why he is her boyfriend is the level of closeness in the relationship; she feels she can be authentic and talk to him about her problems.

What I would like to explore in this section are the characteristics of such close friendship, and what makes its development possible.

4.2.1 Treasured Attributes in Girls’ Close Friendship

EM captures succinctly what girls treasure in their friendship by saying that friends are people “who notice each other” (EM, Nov. 1999). To “notice each other” means to be sensitive to the experience of the other. This sensitivity NH describes as awareness of the other’s experience and to act on this awareness by giving support and encouragement. In the following, she describes a process of mutual engagement with her best friend NS.

It’s so nice to have someone like her, you know, to come back after an athletic meet and say something like ‘how was it?’, to ask about it as an outsider. And if she’s just like done an art competition and she wants an outside eye to look at her artwork and say ‘oh I really like that’. And - for her to like look at a medal of mine and say ‘well done’... support and understanding, you don’t want someone who’s criticizing you (Nov. 1999).
Thus NH appreciates her friend's understanding and support, as well as encouragement in what she is doing. In the following, NH further elaborates on how important understanding is to her. She stresses the value she places on understanding in friendship by comparing the lack of empathy she feels her sister displays compared to NS.

She couldn't really empathize with what I was trying to do, but as soon as I talked to NS . . . she could put everything into perspective . . . and if she's really stressed then I can sort of turn it round (Nov. 1999).

Such mutual engagement and understanding requires the presence of the other person. Availability of friends/companionship was another treasured aspect of friendship in this study. The respondents comment on the importance of the availability of friends by saying that a close friend is "someone who will always be there for you and help you when you need help" (SO, Nov. 1999). Frequent contact also enhances the opportunity for getting to know people better. The importance of authentic relationships is illustrated by KA who shows how she respects and treasures individuality by "feeling comfortable" herself in friendship and "letting [other people] feel who they are" (Nov. 1999). There is a search for authenticity and individuality, through which they can establish closer connection by letting each other know who they are, as well as learning who the other is. Contrary to traditional theories, such individuality and connection do not stand in opposition to each other as further expanded on by NS who emphasises the importance of "having people know who you really are" by paying attention to relational concerns between friends, which to her means not only respecting individuality but also learning from such idiosyncrasies.
My biggest fear in life is like dying and not having people know you, know who you were, and not knowing exactly all about you. Coz I think it's so interesting to learn about other people and what they are like, and what other problems they have, if they are like yours or not (Nov. 1999).

NS here shows how authentic friendship is important to her, which means being understood by the other, a wish to/ability to empathise with them, to feel and understand what another person feels and thinks, also/especially when they are from a different ethnic background.

Trust was also found to be a fundamental building block, and an appreciated aspect of close friendship. NH succinctly describes this when she tells us that “definitely number one someone you can trust . . . you just feel totally at ease all the time” (Nov. 1999). She points out, as do all respondents, that trust is a prerequisite for fostering any close friendship; and is something that is a prerequisite for close friends as part of their personal integrity. Trust is part of a cluster of relational capacities that foster friendship and healthy psychological growth. This will be discussed further in part V.

Thus treasured aspects in girls' close friendship were the support and encouragement they give each other, empathetic understanding, companionship, and how they were able to be authentic, be an individual in those relationships. Trust was the most fundamental aspect that both developed in relationship but also became the foundation for the formation and continuation of the friendship. How such attributes were expressed was overwhelmingly through verbal communication, i.e. talk, which was found to be the most frequent and treasured activity among the respondents. Talk will be discussed in part V. In the next section, however, I will discuss how relational
capacities provide the possibility for transcending gender barriers in close friendship circles.

4.2.2 Crossing Gender Barriers in Close Friendship in the Private Domain

As described in section 4.1.3, respondents voiced observations of certain masculine behaviour of boys that were seen as originating from group pressure in the public domain of male peer culture. There were many examples where the respondents describe boys in the company of other boys as “fighting over stupid things”, “aggressive” towards each other, bullying other boys, and impossible to talk to because of their “stupid comments”. BA sums up the general sentiment among girls.

Girls respond emotionally and guys don’t want to show emotions they want to show image of them of this macho man . . . it’s just that there they’ll say bitch and afterwards they’ll sit down and talk about soppy things maybe even for hours (Nov. 1999).

From the girls’ account a clear picture of a masculine ideal prevalent in the public domain emerges, which is in line with other findings (Connell, 1987; Pollack, 1998). NS elaborates on the influence of ‘public masculinity’, or hegemonic masculinity as described by Connell.

I just really can’t be bothered to deal with their stupid comments all the time, I just go ‘shut up’ you know – I don’t really get along with the guys in my year – but I mean we have joking talks and stuff but none of the guys in our
year are like friends material, boyfriend material for that either - they are never the ones to have like a decent conversation (NS Nov. 1999).

What makes boys non- “friendship material” is their inability to have “a decent conversation”. Much research point towards boys finding it more difficult to authenticate their inner feelings and thoughts through verbal communication, which girls, on the contrary, find a prerequisite for building friendship. Perhaps this is less surprising when considering that public standards of masculinity do not include talking, listening, understanding - all qualities symbolically seen as feminine and therefore in conflict with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987; Pollack, 1998). NS further shows her resistance to masculine dominance in describing what femininity means to her.

Being attractive to males really . . . I’m probably not considered feminine because for example say today towards the end of school, I was sitting with these two boys – [I was] talking, but I’m quite loud and outspoken compared to other females, and I don’t think that’s seen as a feminine quality, coz the guys are kind of ‘oh go away, stop bothering us, we are trying to work’, and I said ‘yes, shut up, I got here first, you know, if you are really bothered by me you’d move’, and you know, things like that, that’s not considered feminine. (Feb. 2000)

Her resistance is outspokenness, which she seems to have no difficulty with despite her own awareness that speaking out against boys is not what is seen as feminine. She further asserts that for males to have feminine qualities “is almost seen as what is
more attractive by women because they feel they can relate" also indicates her ability to go beyond the gender divide. Furthermore, despite strong comments of their dislike for public masculinity, both BA and NS have also had the experience of boys behaving more according to girls' standards of interaction. They demonstrate that there are also boys who overcome, or are able to go beneath such stereotypical and sometimes destructive masculine behaviour, and respond to people/girls in a more personal manner. BA and NS both outline the 'exception to the rule'.

He's really weird - he actually gets along with girls better- because he's quite mature . . . because he lived in South Arabia . . . he says he never actually interacted with any guys like punching and male-bonding, playing football and stuff . . . it was just his parents and grandparents there, he had to grow up quite quickly . . . he says that he can relate to girls coz we make sense and guys don't - if he talks to them they'll punch each other and that's it (BA, Nov.1999).

BA also stresses the importance of being able to "relate", which indicates that boys who can relate to girls can become "friendship material". Relating means being psychologically connected and understanding. BA conceptualises the reasons for his "maturity" as having 'escaped' the male peer culture of male-bonding and football etc. Male-bonding, usually understood as boys attempting to get closer through punching and grabbing each other in fun, may be the only way that are culturally accepted for males to seek closeness and connection. Girls, on the other hand, more

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3 Again here by personal I mean being able to go beneath stereotypes, in this case those of masculinity.
4 A recent study on the overwhelming dominance of male sports to female sports has shown how it reinforces hegemonic masculinity both at a personal as well as societal level ( ).

142
confidently display both physical and psychological closeness without being afraid of appearing ‘weak’ for doing so. In fact, cultural expectations ‘allow’ girls to openly talk with their friends, whereas if boys talk too intimately with someone in front of other boys it is seen as ‘feminine’, that is, anti-masculine, and they may be subject to homophobic comments (Connell, 1987; Lees, 1986; Pollack, 1998).

Although the boy described above appears to be an exception in having the confidence to be able to manifest a more relational orientation in front of male peers, the findings of this study reveal that the private domain outside the watchful eyes of public standards of masculinity can provide the space necessary for boys and girls to transcend the gender divide. Only recently was the possibility of platonic close boy-girl friendship commented on by other studies (Pollack, 1998) as both possible as well as occurring not infrequently. Friendship with boys in the present study also did not only occur but was relatively common. Such male friends were, as expected, outside the immediate peer culture (from another school, the school-bus, or a friend of the family) and thus part of the more private domain. NS here mentions two close male friends of hers. The first one, a long-time friend from the school bus: “he’s a boy and we talk a lot, our friendship isn’t really different from a girl’s relationship, we can talk about everything really”, and about another male friend she says “we talk all the time on the phone and stuff – we can talk for ages it’s really nice” (Nov. 1999). Getting to know each other outside the dominant peer culture, coupled with boys who manifest certain relational capacities, such as emotional understanding and ability to ‘talk’ and relate, delivers a chance for boys and girls to develop close friendship. This was an encouraging sign. It was also encouraging to see that girls did not seem to have lost

5 By talk I mean what is expressed by NS as a “decent conversation”, which means being able to relate, and talk about more serious and personal matters, and in an authentic voice compared to simply joking and showing off.
(or at least had regained) what Annie Rogers has termed "ordinary courage" (cited in Gilligan, 1993) in their relationship with boys in the public domain. However, the lack of emphasis on and acceptance of relational capacities in the public domain points to the continued predominance of seeing male experience as human experience (Gilligan, 1982, 1993; Lerner, 1986) and masculinity as king of the public domain.

The following section will expand on the various movements between the two main circles of friendship and discuss the increase or decrease of closeness and its consequences.

4.2.3 Movements Between Loosely Knit and Closely Knit Friendship Circles

The development of relational capacities in accordance with specific others is what determines the quality of friendship and the level of closeness, as well as serving as the mechanisms that facilitate growth from the more loosely knit friendship circle to the closely knit circle of friendship, or in other words, what turns a common friend into a close friend. In line with the Relational paradigm, it is postulated that the development of deeper psychological connection and mutuality simultaneously enhances life experience and makes the formation of close friendships more meaningful to girls. Higher levels of closeness create the environment for potential disclosure of increasingly more intimate thoughts and feelings, and thereby the disclosure of a more authentic self. Three girls BA, AL and YK illustrate this. BA and AL who are close friends had recently "got closer" with YK. YK decided to tell something she had kept secret from most people, namely that she had got pregnant and had a daughter when at boarding school and away from Hong Kong. Despite knowing AL as a strong believer in "no sex before marriage", YK having "realized
that we wouldn’t mind knowing about it” decides to “why not just tell them”. AL empathetically comments on this disclosure.

It must have been pretty bad for her to keep something like that for a secret, so I feel bad for her – it’s not something she should hide from her close friends. Because it’s part of her life, and if we are part of her life then it would be uncomfortable if she didn’t tell us . . . I’m glad she did. (Mar. 2000)

Through increased levels of closeness YK can reveal more of her private life, which in return is received in a supportive and accepting way although in principle AL does not agree with premarital sex. This acceptance of YK creates further closeness and trust, and the relationship moves to a deeper level of closeness, connection and authenticity. However, it is not without an internal struggle that AL finally lands on the side of a more relational orientation of accepting something that she is initially against. Having struggled with this issue of rightness or wrongness of premarital sex, and oscillating between

reprimand[ing] [YK] to her face – but should I decide what she shouldn’t have done – should she [not] be free to make her own choices (Mar. 2000),

AL not only accepts her friend but also expands her own understanding of the complexities of ‘real’ life and respect for individuality. Through this struggle with herself, AL’s understanding of reality expands and so does their relationship. AL now relates six months later:
YK and my friendship changed, we grew much closer and are now planning to backpack around France and Italy together when school finishes” (Sept. 2000).

The process of developing such closeness and connection to a state where “you just feel totally at ease all the time” is the process of building of trust through continuous testing of the relationship by testing the quality of reciprocal interaction and engagement.

The above example shows how the movement from the level of a more common friend to a close friend occurs through increasing levels of closeness and trust by disclosing increasingly more authentic experience. However, the reverse also occurred, namely through either ‘abandonment’ or break of trust. SO, whose closely knit friendship group consists of six girls (two Chinese, two Caucasians, and two Eurasian including herself), shows how they have established a sense of trust where they are able to even tell secrets about themselves “because it only gets out there and no one else outside our group will know it” (Nov. 1999). However, the sudden abandonment of companionship from a seventh friend who had more recently joined their group caused a demotion in the friendship. Upon the return of her previous best friend, this ‘temporary’ close friend greatly lessened the time she spent with SO’s group. This made the girls in the group feel

kind of sad because - it was as if she just came and spent time with us, and then when her friend came back she just forgot about us ... at first we were really mad at her, but then we realized that people do change ... then we

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6 She does not report any ‘racial’ problems at all with this combination of different race friends.
thought oh it doesn’t matter - we are still a group, we are still close friends

(Nov. 1999).

Upon such abandonment the level of closeness will decrease and the quality of the friendship will suffer. Whereas SO and her friends in the above example experience feelings of abandonment as a group as a whole, this paradoxically seems to strengthen their own friendship (“we are still a group, we are still close friends”) however obviously not without struggle (“at first we were really mad at her”).

Another example shows how YK found disloyal behaviour difficult to handle. Upon the discovery that her ‘best’ friend had been saying things about her behind her back, YK in response wrote her friend a long letter requiring an explanation. A few months later YK told me that they were friends again, but that they had become “just ok friends”. When asked to elaborate on “ok” she said “not as close as before, just a friend”. Thus an obvious demotion in the quality of their friendship had taken place as trust had been broken and the level of closeness had decreased. Later on the friendship deteriorated further and YK also started to develop her relationship with AL. Thus the breaking of trust among close friends may not be easy to repair once it has been broken, especially if the person who broke the trust does not repent on her action as was the case in YK’s situation.

What can be seen from these two examples is that such demotion of friends causes dismissal from the inner group of friends to the more loosely knit friendship circles. Boundaries at this level of friendship are more permeable and relational ‘requirements’ such as trust and empathetic engagement are ‘looser’. On the other hand, closely knit friendship circles have less diffused boundaries, and more developed relational capacities are required. Thus what girls treasure in their
relationship with close friends are mutual sensitivity and understanding, support and trust, and mutual engagement, which provide the environment for continuous deepening of psychological connection and growth. This section has focused on the closeness and connection which girls treasure in their relationship with close friends; in the next section I will discuss how such closeness and connection is established.

V. The Importance of Talk and Friendship

When YE says friends are people “who notice each other”, she also indicates the importance of voice in the relationship, of being noticed and noticing the other through talking, through inquiring about the other’s situation. Gilligan (1993) says that

Relationship requires connection. It depends not only on the capacity for empathy or the ability to listen to others and learn their language or take their point of view, but also on having a voice and a language. (pp.xix-xx)

Gilligan is here describing the importance of being able to listen to others’ voices and having a voice in establishing relationships of connection. Verbal communicating was found to be the most frequent, as well as treasured, activity among girls in this study. Many other studies with female adolescents (Johnson and Aries, 1983; Yourniss and Smoller, 1985; Lange, 1988; Lees, 1986,1993; Gilligan et al., 1990; Mann, 1993; Griffiths, 1995, Ting; 1997) also confirm the centralizing aspect of talk, of being able to talk/make one’s voice heard in girls’ friendship. Moreover, talking was permeated
with laughing and joking, which was perceived as enhancing the enjoyment of friendship and life in general.

In the present study, I found that talk takes place at different levels, and can be classified into 'non-intimate talk', and 'intimate talk' (Yourniss and Smoller, 1985), or 'ordinary talk' and 'confiding talk' (Griffiths, 1995). The difference in the talk lies at the level of closeness of the friendship, as described in part IV. Although non-intimate talk occurs both with close and common friends, intimate talk only takes place among close friends, again supporting findings of other studies. Part V. will focus on talk among close friends. I will discuss how talk is a frequent activity among girls, how girls' talk has typically been portrayed in traditional literature, and the qualitative nature of their talk. In section 5.4 I will conceptualise the significance of talk to the quality of friendship, as well as the mutually reinforcing relationship between talk and friendship.

5.1 Girls' Most Treasured Activity: Verbal Communication Characterized by Openness, Authenticity, and Humour.

Girls do various things together with their close friends, such as sports, listening to music, going to the cinema, school projects, etc. However, talking was found to be the most frequent, most important, and most enjoyable activity. Talking takes place at different levels depending on the closeness of the friendship, as the following example shows. YE explains that a close friend is

someone I can talk to [common friends are] people who you may just say hi’ to and talk about homework and stuff. That’s the main difference (Nov. 1999).
YE here outlines a general finding that quality talk characterizes close friendship between girls.

Moreover, talking with friends was often fused with joking and laughing together. All the girls stressed the importance of having a sense of humour. NS describes one of the reasons for being best friends with NH.

I really like to laugh, that's why I'm best friends with NH coz she's really funny . . . it's really funny because we make each other laugh - and we laugh all the time at everything, and eh it's good because I think if you don't laugh a lot you can't really enjoy things so much (NS. Nov. 1999).

Joking and laughing was imbued in girls' talk with each other. Section 5.2. will focus on how talk between girls has been portrayed in traditional literature, and discuss possible reasons for why talk has received relatively little attention or been dismissed as unimportant in traditional studies on human development.

5.2 Traditional Portrayal of Girls' Talk

'Girls' talk' has historically been dismissed as gossip, or portrayed as silly and unimportant (Gilligan, 1982; McRobbie & Nava, 1983; Lees, 1986; Walkerdine, 1990; Gilligan, Lyons, Hanmer, 1990, Apter, 1990; Gilligan, Rogers, Tolman (eds), 1991; Lees, 1986, 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Thorne, 1997). The dominance of this stereotype and the lack of research on girls' experience may have undermined the understanding of the importance attributed to dialogue by girls, and how such verbal communication is the most vital aspect of girls' friendship. Ward (1976) conducted studies on adolescent girls, and found 'verbal' communication characterized these girls'
interaction with each other (cited in Ting, 1997). The frequency and the possible beneficial aspect of talking became of further interest with the appearance of the so-called second wave of feminism in the 1970s.

With more studies of female adolescents (McRobbie & Nava, 1983; Lees, 1986; Orbach; Walkerdine, 1990; Gilligan, Lyons, Hanmer, 1990, Apter, 1990; Gilligan, Rogers, Tolman (eds), 1991; Mann, 1993) it has become clear that research on adolescence has reflected a male bias that has been deeply entwined with western philosophy, a history of patriarchy, and specific social and cultural arrangements of gender roles, which have tended to ignore female experience and different gender subjectivities (Mens-Verhulst et al., 1993). Girls’ tendency to laugh a lot as the quote above indicates has funnily enough often been regarded as part of girls’ silliness in comparison to boys, or seen as disliked interruptive behaviour (Thorne, 1993, 1997).

In the next section, I will discuss the qualitative nature of talk in girls’ friendship, and the importance girls attribute to being able to ‘talk’.

5.3 The Qualitative Nature of Talk in Girls’ Friendship

Respondents point towards the qualitative nature that characterizes their talk such as understanding, empathetic listening, mutual encouragement, being able to talk about inner, personal thoughts and feelings, and humour. The ability to have such ‘expansive’ and authentic dialogue is described by NH.

We are really, really close we just talk about anything . . . if we have problems with our families she’ll (NS) be the one that I talk to . . . she can put

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7 When referring to ‘talk’, it is not just bragging, boasting, bullying that occurs. Such ‘talk’ implies a hierarchical and competitive conception of seeing oneself in relation to others, and may be inferred as ways of asserting one’s status in the group (Pollack, 1998).
everything into perspective . . . and if she's really stressed then I can sort of
turn it round (NH. Nov. 1999).

Closeness means that friends can talk openly even about “problems”. NS echoes this
(in a separate interview) by saying:

she’s my best friend . . . because we can have serious conversations . . . we
just know each other inside out . . . she can’t do anything without me realizing
exactly what she means or the same with me. (Nov. 1999)

At the same time, authentic talk does not only include pleasant, confiding talk, but
also sometimes directly telling a friend her ‘weak’ points. NS describes how she one
day, after a long internal struggle of whether she should ‘talk’ to her friend or not, sat
down NH to have a ‘serious talk’ with her about how she felt her friend was becoming
too concerned about her body image and behaving in certain “showing off” ways on
Friday nights.

I sat down and told her ‘you know people like you so much more if you just
act the way you are’, so she’s done that now (Nov.1999).

Although they do not enjoy doing this, girls may thus go to the trouble of directly
‘advising’ a close friend. This seems to be done out of care for the friend. EM agrees
with this and thinks that understanding what ‘care’ means is the reasons for acting;
even though she knows being direct and reaching out may invite unpleasantness, she
still chooses to get involved.
Although you may get shouted at... you should still go up to them and ask
coz you care about them... selfish are those who just tend to stand back from
others' situations. (Nov. 1999)

This willingness for engagement and responsiveness to friends with problems shown
by talking to them openly, even at the risk of being “shouted at” demonstrates the
qualitative aspect of both their talk and their relationships. It also points to the
possible relationship between care and courage, because she cares about her friends
she has the courage to reach out even at the cost of being shouted at. Her definition of
care thus not only includes being ‘nice’ but also acting on her knowledge of friends’
wrong doings/‘suffering’ with the aim of amending the situation.

Being able to communicate with such authenticity and without losing their ‘voice’
(Gilligan, 1989) is also what Youniss and Smoller (1985), Griffiths (1995), and Ting
(1997) found to be a treasured and important aspect of girls’ talk with close friends.
KA describes this as being able to “feel who they are” (Nov. 1999). As outlined in
section 4.1 and indicated by the excerpts above, authentic talk increases with
increasing amounts of closeness in the relationship, while talk enhances the closeness
of the relationship.

Furthermore, joking and laughing also play a major part in girls’ verbal interaction
with each other. But it is laughing with someone rather than laughing at someone. NH
elaborates on the fact that joking and laughing is not being done at the expense of
others, or seen as “stupid jokes” (as was commented on as typical for boys’ jokes) by
saying that
humour . . . to make someone laugh is very, very - content-worthy . . . it makes you feel happy if you make someone else happy . . . someone you can have fun with, who you can laugh with that’s definitely number one priority. (Nov. 1999, Feb 2000)

Thus making others “happy” through laughing together is a highly commendable qualitative aspect of girls talk. Griffiths (1995) found that often what girls laugh about is past memories created over long periods of time suddenly brought out by external events in the present. She stresses the continuous, frequent and informal contact of girls to maintain and enhance their friendship that consists of talking and laughing about shared experience, which is also what I found in this study.

In section 4.3 I will discuss the mutually reinforcing process of friendship and talk, and the significance of such qualitative capacities of talk to the development of friendship. I will also suggest the benefits of such mutuality for improving human relations on a wider societal level as suggested by peace scholars.

5.4 Significance of Talk and Friendship

Trust, authenticity, understanding and encouragement, openness and making others “happy” are the crucial elements that emerge from talk. All these qualities are interrelated and serve to mutually reinforce each other, which in turn both further friendship and the quality of talk. It is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter to delve into the intricate and highly complex relationship between them. Rather I have focused on how the manifestation of such qualities in talk results in developing deeper friendship. As girls build up closeness and trust through increasing openness in their verbal interaction with each other they deepen their friendship, which simultaneously
further increases the openness and authenticity in their talk, and a mutually reinforcing cycle emerges evolving around talk and friendship.

On the other hand, an inability to communicate authentically may be a reflection of lack of other qualities that emerges through talk and friendship such as trust as suggested by AL below who points out the difficulty of engaging in such mutually enriching talk and friendship. AL shows how lack of trust, perhaps because of past experiences of break of such trust, does not allow her to be authentic in her talk and let other people "know the real me".

Yes out of all my friends she's the closest, but I don't tell her very personal things. I don't tell anyone very personal things . . . maybe because I'm afraid they would tell other people which has happened before, and I don't trust people very easily . . . I still feel that they never get to know the real me (AL. Nov. 1999).

AL gives us an example of how lack of trust impairs her motivation for self-disclosure, which lessens psychological connection, authenticity and the deepening of friendship. Thus lack of development of such qualities as trust may impair the potential for a mutually reinforcing process of talk and friendship, which results in a more superficial interaction where one's 'real' voice is not brought into the relationship.

However, through the nature of girls' friendship their talk manifests as particularly dialogical, that is, it is egalitarian, inclusive and empathetic; a two-way communication process. The creative picture that emerges from such relationships and verbal communication may serve to question why such dialogue and relational way of being is not seen in dominant theories on psychology development, as well as
the psychology dominant in society as a whole? Are such relational voices being
‘privatised’ because ‘public’ discourses dominating social institutions are still
permeated by patriarchal/hierarchical ideas of human relations to each other? Is it
possible that this relational model can be used to serve as model or at least to question
the idea of how human beings, institutions and authorities in general interact and
operate in the ‘public’ domain?

Some people certainly think so. Writing on the issues of peace, Daisaku Ikeda, as
part of proposed principles to guide cultural exchanges and interactions on an
international level (but which takes a very personal stand), has the following to say on
mutuality.

Both parties should approach the interaction with a sense of learning from
each other. It should never be a one-way street. This means that exchanges
must be rooted in a sense of fundamental respect and equality. We must all
open ourselves to the fact that we can learn from other cultures and traditions.
The arrogant assumption that one has something to teach but nothing to learn
must be abandoned” (cited in Living Buddhism, June issue, 2000).

It is interesting to note that although Ikeda is talking about ‘bigger’ issues such as
world peace, he turns peace into the process of building relationships based on
personal interaction characterized by mutuality between people. Does this mean that,
although girls’ interaction are undoubtedly not always based on such a highly
perceptual mode of interaction, their perception of themselves and others, and their
search for connection and mutuality provide profound examples of ideals of

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at the relationship between friendship and talk, describing how talk is essential to female close friendship, and how close friendship enhances the quality of verbal communication. This is a dynamic, creative and mutually reinforcing process. Through this process of building trust and connection, improving the quality of verbal communication, and enhancing the relationship, I can infer that further relational capacities are developed and psychological growth occurs.

Respondents showed that their active engagement with others stems from a connected and empathetic mode of reasoning, and how true respect for individuality lies within this empathetic mode of caring for friends. Mutuality was also found within such empathetic interaction. As outlined in section III, mutuality is a highly perceptual process in which participants in a relationship are attuned and reciprocal to their own as well as others' inner experience. Also their ability to go beyond stereotypes of 'difference' promulgated by the separate mode of being indicated their relational orientation and highlighted the possibility for mutuality even in relationships where individuals come from different racial and cultural backgrounds.

The relational orientation of friendship in this study was congruent with the Relational paradigm, which possibly outlines a psychological framework useful for building a culture of peace. It is interesting to note that many of the most prominent thinkers of our time stress dialogue and mutuality as the way forward to overcome various social ills facing us today, which makes girls' way of interacting and how
they see their relationship with their friends/others highly relevant to various issues facing humanity today.
CHAPTER FIVE

SELF, RELATIONSHIPS, AND MORALITY

I. Introduction

Chapter Three and Four described how a connected mode of being in relationships contributed significantly to girls’ sense of self as pointed out by Relational psychologists. Although discussing the qualities and centrality of relationship to girls, the previous chapters purposely left out a discussion on girls’ perception and resolution of moral dilemmas. To undertake a more thorough consideration of this theme, a detailed discussion within a relevant theoretical framework seems required so as to facilitate a proper appraisal of adolescent girls’ moral reasoning. In this chapter, therefore, I would like to address the question of morality by first outlining traditional notions of this contested domain, and then widen the scope by resorting to alternative theories in order to comprehend and explain the moral dilemmas the girls in this study face. Part II of this chapter will describe key features of Kohlberg’s theory on moral development, as well as its assumption with regards to self and the moral domain. Then Gilligan’s theory, which challenges Kohlberg’s theory, will be presented. Gilligan’s theory has itself gone through an evolutionary process, and it is the later version of the theory which will be used here. Her and her colleagues’ work will serve as the theoretical guide for understanding and analyzing the subsequent relational dilemmas that girls in this study experience. I will focus on articulating what constitute moral dilemmas for girls, as well as the ‘moral orientations’ from which these dilemmas are being assessed and resolved. Ultimately the idea that self,
relationships and morality can be considered separate domains of human development will be disputed.

II. Kohlberg’s Theory on Moral Development

Just as Freudian and Eriksonian theories on human development equated ‘detachment, autonomy and separation’ with the epitome of human development, so moral maturation has been seen as grappling with abstract principles of justice, equality, reciprocity and fairness. In the following, I will outline and discuss Lawrence Kohlberg’s three levels, six stages moral theory, and assess his theory in light of alternatives brought forward by Carol Gilligan and her colleagues.

2.1 Moral Development as Abstract Universal Principles

In the study of contemporary moral theory a good place to start is Lawrence Kohlberg’s influential stage theory on moral development (Blum, 1988, 1993), which is generally understood to be a succession and an expansion of the Piagetian tradition. I will therefore start with a brief outline of Piaget’s fundamental ideas of the nature of human cognitive development which has implications for moral development.

Piaget (1967) described human development, from when the child was born to middle adolescence, as progressing from spontaneous movements and natural reflexes to what he termed the “Formal Operational” stage, where an individual develops an ability for hypothetical reasoning which enables him/her to test hypotheses and engage in ‘logical’ thinking. Piaget postulated that the “Formal Operational” stage begins at age eleven during which the capacity for abstract thinking begins to emerge. At this stage adolescents reason much like a scientist searching for solutions in the
laboratory. "Concrete Operational" children (7-11) can 'only' "operate on reality", but Formal Operational adolescents can "operate on operations". In other words, things and events are no longer required as objects of thought. Instead adolescents come up with new, more general logical rules through internal reflection. The kind of 'reflection' and 'logic' that Piaget refers to is what started to emerge in Western philosophical thought in the seventeenth century and that promulgates typical Western dualistic and hierarchical notions of reality. This means seeing reason and emotions, mind and body, objectivity and subjectivity, as essentially in opposition with the elevation of 'reason', mind, and 'objectivity' over emotions, body and subjectivity. Piaget's theory equates mature identity with autonomy and independence in judgement and action based on abstract thinking and emotional detachment.

Kohlberg (1969; Kroger, 1996), who builds on Piaget's theory of the superiority of detached cognitive reasoning, also postulates that human beings' moral development is hierarchical, invariant, and sequential, and that it culminates in impartiality, impersonality, and justice (Blum, 1988, 1993). Kohlberg derived his theory from studies done with White, educated, male participants who were asked about the famous 'Heinz' dilemma. In essence, Kohlberg asked the participants what Heinz should do when faced with his dying wife's need for a medicine crucial to her survival but which Heinz could not afford. Should he steal it, although knowing that it is wrong to steal? The question was seen as representing a conflict between life and property. Based on the answers to this question he formulated a theory of moral development. He postulates that there are three levels of moral development, the Preconventional Level, the Conventional Level, and the Postconventional Level, of which each are divided into two stages.
At the Preconventional Level, the individual shows strict adherence to authority, and responds to labels of culturally defined concepts of good and bad, right and wrong. However, interpretations are focused on fulfilling self-interests. At ‘stage one’ of this level, morality is judged solely in terms of consequences of actions, that is, the aim is to avoid punishment and achieve self-gratification. This stage characterizes children aged four to ten. At stage two, the ‘instrumental relativist’ is able to show a ‘one-way’ concern with the other’s value but only to the extent that it gratifies the self. Kohlberg describes this stage as ‘limited principle of reciprocity’. The prime focus is self-gratification with occasional inclusion of other’s needs if it benefits self (Kohlberg, 1969). Thus at stage two, morality is judged in terms of what satisfies the person’s own needs or those of others (naive and hedonistic orientation).

At the Conventional Level morality is seen as the wish to maintain and satisfy societal expectations in terms of family, social relationships or institutions. These expectations are fulfilled not according to self-gratification or to avoid punishment but for their own sake. Kohlberg (1969) postulates that this level of moral reasoning dominates pre-adolescents’, adolescents’, and many adults’ thinking. This level is then divided into two stages. At stage three, the moral concern is with conformity and a strong desire to please others, to become the ‘good boy’ or ‘nice girl’, hence its name “the good boy-nice girl” orientation. At this stage there is a deliberate adherence to prevailing norms or mores. At stage four, however, an individual’s moral reasoning is driven by a sense of duty to maintain social order for its own sake. The individual therefore shows high respect for authority and a commitment to maintain a given social order (social-order-maintaining orientation) (Kohlberg, 1969). Thus it becomes more important to maintain social order for its own sake than for the sake of the people.
The ‘highest’ level, the Post-conventional Level, or the Principled Level, is characterized by an internalisation of an individual’s moral reasoning, and he/she is able to disassociate moral values/intentions etc. from the prevailing moral or legalistic framework, although that is not necessarily done. One may still identify with the prevailing system of thoughts, but it is now considered relative to other possible frameworks. The stage five moral ‘agent’ is defined in terms of the ‘social-contract legalistic orientation’, that is, in terms of human rights, which may transcend laws. Individuals can envision alternatives to the existing social order, and are able to separate moral values/attitudes from conventional or the prevailing social or legal order when defining moral values. Moreover, at stage five the subject is able to go beyond maintaining social order for its own sake as postulated as a characteristic of stage four. At the final stage of his theory Kohlberg portrays morality as judged in terms of self-chosen ethical principles (universal ethical principle orientation), where the moral agent is capable of transcending personal interests and the opinion of others, or the force of legal conventions, and adhere to self-chosen universal principles, such as justice, reciprocity, and respect for the dignity of the individual. This means that morality is underscored by principles based on concerns of equality and dignity of human beings. This then becomes the primary force for conceptualising moral justice (Kohlberg, 1969).

Thus Kohlberg conceptualises a hierarchy of moral judgement that captures the dominant values of a society where the capacity to solve problems through abstraction and distancing from others is more highly valued than are solutions achieved through care and responsiveness to others. Kohlberg concluded that the ideal of such an ‘impartial’ and abstract morality is difficult for women to attain. He found women’s morality to be based on concern for interpersonal approval and maintaining positive
relationships, which results in moral reasoning seldom elevating to any higher level than stage three. Although Kohlberg has since retracted this statement by saying that when women are engaged in the 'public' affairs of society they should be just as likely to achieve moral reasoning at the 'highest' level. The theory, however, maintains that since measurement for morality is based on impartiality and detachment, those who respond 'relationally' are relegated to a lower developmental stage. This view of human development corresponds with other dominant theories discussed in previous chapters. The worldview underpinning a morality of rights/or justice emerged from a particular historical background that became more dominant in the seventeenth century, as already touched upon in the Introduction Chapter and Chapter Three.

2.2 Reassessing the Universality of Kohlberg's Morality

Although Kohlberg's theory has attracted criticisms for problems found in its methodology and its conceptual foundation (Ting, 1997), it is the systematic bias against women's development in the domain of morality that prompted one of Kohlberg's students, Carol Gilligan, to question whether this theory (promulgating abstract moral principles) was capable of capturing women's moral experience. Certainly none of the participants of Kohlberg's twenty years study were female, and with its postulation that most women were unlikely to reach 'higher' than stage three or four left a notion that something was amiss. Gilligan (1977) thus started her own research, which resulted in questioning the universality of Kohlberg's claims to moral reasoning. She concluded that care and responsibility within relationship constitute important elements of morality distinct from a morality of impartiality. Other researchers, such as Adelson (1980), also concluded that adolescent girls simply have
not been studied much and, called attention to the masculine bias in such accepted concepts as "morality" and "identity" (cited in Lyons, 1990). Both Adelson and Gilligan suggest that exclusion of girls in theory building results in the lack of inclusion of such important aspects as relationships, intimacy, and empathy. They suggest that rather than women being somehow deficient as postulated by Freud, Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg, it was the methodology and the paradigm that were askew.

The fundamental 'fault' of Kohlberg was therefore his exclusion of women in knowledge building, which led to the exclusion of women's experience from the moral agenda, and its subsequent devaluation when they did not fit into the prescribed theory. Gilligan (1977, 1982, 1993) concluded that this general devaluation of women's moral development was another example of values being taken for facts. Since then research has shown that it is not an inability for abstract reasoning that represents women to not reason at the higher levels of the Kohlbergian scale. Instead, hypothetical reasoning may not be the preferred choice for women, since it requires detachment from reality and thereby conflict with what they know to be true. Gilligan et al. (1990) found that girls are aware of morality as defined by Kohlberg in terms of rules, principles, standards that guide the self, but that this "impartial" morality is something external that is taught in school, by parents, and by 'society' in general, which does not correspond with real life and their own knowledge of moral dilemmas. It was found that impartial morality excludes concerns with care and attention to others that pervade the stories of adolescent girls. Since morality is defined and transmitted by culture, girls understand the definition of morality as seen by the dominant culture, and express a clear and readily available language to talk about "impartial" morality (Blum, 1987, cited in Brown, 1990). However, since the moral
dilemmas they face in their daily life are different from how it is defined by the culture in which they live, girls cast doubt on their own knowledge of seeing relational dilemmas as moral dilemmas. This phenomenon is a reflection of the general idea expressed by Kohlberg that the ‘personal’ is not termed moral. Brown and Gilligan (1990) found that in a cultural climate dominated by impartial morality where personal relationships are seen as less important or devalued, girls tend to devalue and de-emphasise their own knowledge of the relationship, which is derived from their own observations and personal experience. Goldstein (1987) also says that when a moral dilemma is framed between two ‘goods’ or two ‘rights’ (not between ‘good’ or ‘bad’, or ‘right’ or ‘wrong’) the dilemma is confounded by the awareness of the ‘rightness’ of such metamorality,1 because it promotes an either-or situation.

Gilligan concludes that Kohlberg’s theory promotes a particular perspective or ‘voice’, e.g. the voice of justice. She illustrates that the theory expounds the age-old split between thinking and feeling, justice and mercy, that underlies so many clichés and stereotypes about the sexes, and which originates in the public/private split. Gilligan’s concern has been to readdress the dichotomy in the moral domain between impartiality and responsiveness, and develop a more wholesome and encompassing theory of human development. She outlines her concerns below.

The confrontations reveal two modes of judging, two different constructions of the moral domain – one traditionally associated with masculinity and the public world of social power, and the other with femininity and the privacy of domestic interchange (1982, 1993:69)

1 Goldstein defines metamorality as the morality in which a person is (1) if worth anything is able to come to an either or solution in a rational manner, (2) able to reach a painless and pragmatic solution (1987:184). Metamorality therefore corresponds to the morality of rights/justice.
Therefore the systematic separation of the two moral domains, originates, according to Gilligan, largely in the social and cultural arrangement of men and women, which highlight some of the reasons for the tendency for men to adopt a justice mode of reasoning, and thus score higher on Kohlberg’s scale. Gilligan has shown that women/or individuals with stronger relational concerns may experience different moral dilemmas than those that can be captured within the framework of rights and justice. Much research also finds that women’s moral concerns are predominantly with real life problems rather than hypothetical situations (Haan, 1975; Holstein, 1976, cited in Gilligan, 1982).

III. Bringing in a Different Voice

Throughout the previous chapters, we could see how connection and relationships are central to female adolescents’ life experience, and that conflict did not imply a desire for detachment or separation but for establishing authentic relationships. For Kohlberg, however, detachment is crucial to reaching higher levels of morality. Appraising female adolescent experience simply within the scope of traditional theories on cognitive and moral development, therefore, makes it impossible to capture the nature of girls’ moral dilemmas. As cited above, because Kohlberg excluded females from his original study and took the predominance of the justice perspective in the public domain as the realm of morality, he captured one particular type of experience that was then judged ‘moral’ in line with dominant cultural ideals. Had Kohlberg been able to recognize his own subjective stance, he may have avoided proclaiming universality of this moral experience. In protest to Kohlberg’s ‘universal’ findings, Gilligan (1977, 1982), after interviewing 29 women, aged 15-33, about their
concerns when deciding on a real life moral issue, i.e. whether to have an abortion or not, discerned another moral framework. This was the groundwork for her rewriting and expanding on the traditional moral domain, and will be discussed in section 3.1. Gilligan’s theory, however, has also evolved, and it is the later work of Gilligan’s model of moral reasoning that I will use in this chapter. This will be discussed in section 3.2, which aims to show how ideas about self and relationships are centrally related to morality.

3.1 Background of Gilligan’s theory

Gilligan (1977) discerns three sequential levels of moral development with two transitions. The first level is concerned with self-survival, either in wanting the child for company or not wanting the child because of its perceived obstruction to self. Either way the concern is with self-survival, and the choice is self over future child. The transition to the next level occurs when the woman starts to acknowledge responsibility and realize the selfishness of her choice made in the first stage. Thus the second stage is characterized by a re-examination of the concept of responsibility towards others, and there is the association of moral goodness that comes from caring for others. This corresponds with Kohlberg’s Stage 3, where the need for approval is combined with the desire to care for others. Gilligan suggests that as these women associate self-sacrifice with being morally good, they subjugate their own need for that of others. It is the clarification of this confusion that signals the second transition. One moves beyond calculating self-sacrifice and becomes aware of personal intention and consequences. Within this personal intention is the desire to be good by being responsible to others and also by being responsible to self. At the same time there is a rejection of the conventional feminine ideal of self-abnegation as well as of the
injunction against hurting others. Based on such realizations, women are able to move into the final stage.

Reasoning at the third stage fosters a new appreciation of the concept of care, that is it is not just care for self, or the selfless care for others, but a concept of care that includes both considerations for self and for other. Thus the priority has shifted from (1) concern for survival of the self, to (2) selfless concern for others, and then to (3) an inclusion of self and others. According to Gilligan, morality is defined “in a way that combines the recognition of an interconnection between the self and others with an awareness of the self as the arbiter of moral judgement and choice” (Gilligan, 1982). Thus she ‘recovers’ the ‘voice of care’, thereby revolutionising moral theory. Her theory reflects an evolution from an egocentric perspective to becoming aware of the other's/society's position, to a development of a critical appraisal of societal standards (of femininity) and the ability to engage in autonomous, and self-reflective action. The third stage thus reflects a conception of self and other in interdependence (or truth).

However, Gilligan has been accused of falling into the same trap as traditional theorists such as Freud, Erikson and Kohlberg, by adopting the same sequential maturational voices of culturally privileged developmental stages. Gilligan has since re-examined and re-formulated her original theory. In the modified version, she replaces the first two levels with two different positions. In the first position, care is primarily concerned with self, and a rejection of the needs and concerns of others is prevalent. In the second position care indicates concern for others, and an exclusion of the need of self occurs (Gilligan, 1988). Thus the two positions are either excluding others or self. The third position reflects development of healthy relationships in that

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2 ‘Position’ is used to avoid the notion of hierarchy or development indicated by the term ‘stage’.
the person can integrate both the need of self and other in interaction and decision-making. This third position of care has a particular female resonance as women have traditionally struggled to hold on to their own perspective in a male-defined culture of femininity as other-centred, and women therefore tend to struggle with including themselves in the relationship\(^3\). Thus women’s moral dilemmas typically occur in an interpersonal context that involves exclusion or inclusion of self.

Another criticism of Gilligan’s theory has been that she seems largely to follow the same methodological ‘mistakes’ as Kohlberg in including solely a female sample. In order to correct this pitfall, the Relational Psychologists (including Gilligan) subsequent studies have engaged subjects from both sexes. Moreover, subjects have been asked to discuss real life and self-selected moral dilemmas rather than hypothetical ones. It is on these new insights to the theory of the two moral voices that I will base my analysis of relational dilemmas of the respondents in this study.

3.2 The Voice of Justice and the Voice of Care

Based on Kohlberg and her own theories of morality, Gilligan constructs a framework where she sees two basic moral orientations: the voice of justice and the voice of care, which is further articulated by Gilligan and Attanucci (1988) into a ‘justice perspective’ and a ‘care perspective’. Gilligan and Attanucci (1988) conducted a study of 80 American male and female adolescents and adults who were asked about their experience of moral conflict and choice. They found that 69% of subjects manifested considerations of both care and justice. This suggests that

\(^3\) Men may struggle to include others as masculinity prescribes self-assertion as a sign of development, and defines others as largely there for self-enhancement, which may result in seeing ‘giving’ to others as somehow detracting something from self. Responsibility to men is often seen as not doing what he wants because he is thinking of others, thus essentially detracting something from himself. This is also illustrated by Jake, in Gilligan’s (1982:35-37) “In a Different Voice” when he describes his idea of responsibility.
individuals are not confined to one single 'voice' when dealing with moral conflicts and choice. However, from the study also emerged 66% who showed the predominance of one voice over the other, which indicates that although individuals are capable of speaking in both voices they tend to prefer a particular voice. Moreover, although not all women showed a preference for the care voice, those that did were almost exclusively women. This suggests that moral orientation is gender related, but not gender specific, and that in considering moral concerns a particular set of criteria surfaces, even though individuals are capable of thinking of both. Since men displayed predominantly the 'justice focus' and women almost exclusively the 'care focus', the exclusion of women from Kohlberg's study seems to explain why the care focus almost disappeared from his theory.

However, the aim of Gilligan's theory has not been to see these voices in separation or indicate hierarchical notions of superiority of one over the other. Rather than seeing them as mutually exclusive, or simply as a response on Gilligan's part to the gender bias in moral theory, it is the inclusion of the other voice within either moral domain that carries the potential for overcoming the dangers found within both perspectives as outlined in the following excerpts from Gilligan and Attanucci.

The tension between these perspectives is suggested by the fact that detachment, which is the mark of mature moral judgement in the justice perspective, becomes the moral problem in the care perspective – the failure to attend to the needs. Conversely, attention to the particular needs and circumstances of individuals, the mark of mature moral judgement in the care

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4 Focus here indicates a predominant way of framing conflict (75% of all considerations/ideas).
perspective, becomes the moral problem in the justice perspective – failure to
treat others fairly, as equals. (1988:228)

Nona P. Lyons, in agreement with Gilligan, further elaborates that in the two
moral orientations there are distinct ways of seeing people in relations to others,
which becomes central to a conception of morality (Lyons, 1987, 1988, 1990). Her
findings reveal that there are two distinct ways of experiencing human relationships.
The table below outlines the different moral perspectives and their related concerns
and conflicts based on studies carried out to further empirically test the hypotheses
generated from Gilligan’s work. It is important to stress that this different voice is not
characterized by gender but by theme (Gilligan, 1982) (although it is likely to be
related to gender in patriarchal societies).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A morality of care/response: the “connected” self perspective, or “particular” morality</th>
<th>A morality of justice/rights: the “separate/objective” self perspective, or “impartial” morality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A moral problem</em> is seen in terms of fractures between people, or severing of ties – and conversely concerned with restoring or maintaining relationship</td>
<td><em>A moral problem</em> is seen as conflicts of obligation, duty, or commitment, stemming from different role relationship between self and other – between self and society, or one’s own values or principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Resolution</em>: restoring relationship, activities of care, ensuring good will come to others or that hurt will be stopped for others or oneself</td>
<td><em>Resolution</em>: meeting one’s obligation or duty, not violating one’s standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Evaluation of the resolution</em>: are relationships restored/maintained or not, no way to know or evaluate resolution – carries the notion that only over time can one know results</td>
<td><em>Evaluation of resolution</em>: reasons for justification, whether principles or standards were maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Perspective towards others</em>: see others in their own terms, contexts</td>
<td><em>Perspective towards others</em>: see others as one would like to be seen; in equality and reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Conception of self in relation to others</em>: interdependent in relation to others</td>
<td><em>Conception of self in relation to others</em>: autonomous/equal/independent in relations to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ideas and images of relationships</em>: attachment through response; interdependence of people in relationships; concern with responsiveness, isolation of people; relationships as webs</td>
<td><em>Ideas and images of relationships</em>: attachment through roles, obligation, duty; concern with equality and fairness in relationships; relationships as hierarchies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ways of thinking/knowing</em>: contextual; particularistic; contextual; suspended judgement; use of dialogue, discussion; goal is understanding; thinking and feeling held together</td>
<td><em>Ways of knowing/thinking</em>: objective; generalizing; abstract; rule-seeking; goal is to critique, to analyse, to answer a question, to prove; thinking and feeling seen as needed to be separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Interpersonal ideas and processes</em>: interdependent; emphasis on discussion and listening in order to understand others in their own contexts</td>
<td><em>Interpersonal ideas and processes</em>: objective; role-related; in order to maintain fairness and equality in dealing with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As pointed out by Lyons, ways of thinking about self and relationship are central to concepts of morality. The “separate/objective self” perspective sees the self as impartial, detached and objective, and assumes that equality is the ideal of
relationship. When equality is not achieved in some interpersonal relationships, such as parent-child, teacher-student relationships then fairness is seen as a conjecture. How fairness is achieved is by distancing oneself from the relationship, which is seen as thereby inviting impartial judgment and mediation. This perspective also considers others in terms of reciprocity, which implies seeing/treating others as one would like to be seen/treated oneself. Thus other is seen as the same as self. The "connected self" perspective sees care and responsiveness to others as the ideal of relationship. Since self is seen as existing in interdependence, the best way to maintain and respond to relationships is to see others in their own contexts and circumstances. This reflects the perspective that other is not simply 'equal to self' (Lyons, 1987, 1988). The "objective/separate self" was also found to be associated predominantly with the justice focus, and the "connected self" with the care focus. Furthermore, and as also discussed in Chapter Three, women tend to more often use the "connected self" when describing themselves or relationships, whereas men tend to use the "separate/objective self". However, as cited above, the "separate" mode and the "connected" mode are not gender specific (Lyons, 1987, 1988), but they are gender related. Both men and women have been found to use a mixture of both voices (Gilligan et al. 1982; Lyons, 1982, 1983; Johnston, 1985; Gilligan and Attunucci 1988).

3.3 Themes of Morality that Emerge from a Justice and a Care Perspective

These two perspectives are two ways in which one may know the moral world. They are either defined by impartial rules or obligations, or particular attachments, responding to the particular context of a dilemma or the special needs of all involved. Gilligan and Attunucci (1988) explain that the justice perspective frames inequality
and oppression as problems, and draws attention to reciprocity and equality as moral ideals. For the care perspective, problems of detachment and abandonment are central, and attention and response to others are moral ideals. Out of these two orientations two moral injunctions emerge: "not to treat others unfairly" and "not to turn away from someone in need".

"Not to treat others unfairly" is based on seeing problems in terms of inequality and oppression, and the solution lies in restoring the ideal of reciprocity and equal respect. This view of relationship is based on seeing others as one would like to be seen, which means the world is being construed in relation to oneself. One's conception of self in relation to others is one of autonomy and independence with clearly defined roles and obligations. This means self is located apart from the world. Ways of knowing separate thinking and feeling as one takes an objective and detached approach in order to critique or analyse. This results in the tendency to stand back from the relationship or the dilemma. William Perry (1970, cited in Lyons, 1988), for example, found that dualistic thinking in undergraduate college students was overcome by detachment, that is, by stepping back from the situation.

Aspects of the care voice, on the other hand, focus on problems of detachment and abandonment, and aim for the moral injunction of "not to turn away from someone in need". This is based on the view of seeing others in their own terms or contexts, and relationships as webs of self and other that exist in interdependence. This means self is located in relation to the world. Ways of knowing hold thinking and feeling together and become contextual with the goal of understanding and responding to particular needs. Thus one tends to 'move into' the situation or the moral dilemma. An example of this mode can be found in Blythe Clinchy and Claire Zimmerman's (1975, cited in Lyons, 1987) study, which found that women acted out of a desire to
understand others' perspectives, needs, and opinions. Gilligan (1977,1982) has proposed a link between concepts of self and concepts of morality for a psychology based on the care voice. Mary Field Belenky et. al. (1986, 1997) expands on this, as a link between women's ways of knowing, their understanding about themselves, and their ideas about value was found. That is, what are perceived as right and wrong, good and bad link self, morality, and epistemology.

Brown (1989) elaborates on this, and says that when speaking in a care voice, girls pay attention to not hurting others, or self, and to responding to someone in need. Hurt arises from lack of response (Gilligan, 1982), but response requires connection. Connection is of central value as a way of being towards others or thinking about self. The underlying assumption sees reality as interdependent. As discussed in Chapter Three, in the care mode, independence is redefined to mean being able to take responsibility for self, and how that self impacts on others. And as discussed in Chapter Four, independence that develops within attachment to others and transforms both, leads to a new way of being and interacting with others that rests on mutuality. Jordan (1990) (see also Lyons, 1989, 1990) has postulated that issues of holding together self and other, of staying in connection with both self and other, may be a special developmental issue during adolescence for girls. Similar to Gilligan and Belenky, Jordan (1990) concludes that issues and conflicts that girls label moral are also issues of identity since moral dilemmas are construed by ways of being in the world that are not external to self.
IV. Morality for Girls in this Study: a Care or Justice Focus?

The above discussion indicates that moral problems are problems of human relations, which raises questions about the nature of moral concerns in relationship with others. Are they questions of right or good? The two modes – justice and care – include different issues that frame moral conflict and choice. Whereas Kohlberg’s (1969, 1984) model of justice frames relationships in terms of rights and fairness, Gilligan's model of care sees concerns about interdependence as shaping issues of morality. As cited above, Lyon’s work (1988) found that although people use both moral orientations in describing their actual life conflicts, they tend to focus predominately on one orientation. This part will discuss the relational dilemmas of the girls in this study, and see whether they frame such dilemmas according to either a justice or care perspective. Table 5.2 shows the moral orientation of girls upon being asked to elaborate on what morality means to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Orientation</th>
<th>Justice Orientation</th>
<th>Mixed Orientation</th>
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<td>YE</td>
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Table 5.2 Girls’ moral orientation upon answering the question “What does morality mean to you?”

C=care, J=justice, c=notions of care also present, j=notions of justice also present
4.1 What Morality Means to Girls in this Study

As discussed, the justice perspective, defined by Western culture as the ‘only’ moral domain, creates problems of disregarding care and attention to others as part of morality. This means, individuals who frame moral dilemmas within the care perspective risk perceiving these concerns as not ‘moral’ as well as insignificant since the care voice has been ‘privatised’. Evidence of this phenomenon was present in the narratives of this study too. As the respondents elaborate on their understanding of morality, many highlight “impartial” morality as the moral domain. However, there is also evidence of validation of the care voice as essentially moral as some respondents emphasise the care voice as essentially constituting the moral domain. Girls also recognized that there is a discrepancy between societal notions of morality and what they know in reality.

SO in the following describes both a voice of justice by describing a set standard of morality, and a voice of care by including speculations about relationship with other people, thereby validating both society’s as well as her own knowledge of morality.

The right or wrong of your action – your thoughts maybe. What you believe in. I think your family has a big influence on what you consider what’s wrong – and also the environment is affecting you – I don’t know it’s sort of instinctive, you sort of know what’s right or wrong – cheating on the tests, lying – you know that’s wrong. Cheating lying, stealing basic things. You know if you are doing something right or wrong, if you betray a friend that’s wrong – because you broke the trust between you and your friend . . . I think it’s hard to pinpoint the right things because you do more when you are
unaware of them I suppose. But – not cheating, being honest and truthful – just being good. I really don’t know how to describe it . . . not breaking too many rules cause there are rules that make sense . . . but just getting along ok. I think getting along with people . . . just doing your best in everything (So doing your best in terms of school work or friends or?) For everything . . . just making efforts to be a better person (Feb. 2000).

Her narrative focuses on the meaning of morality as the “right and wrong of your action”, “not cheating, being honest and truthful”, which all indicate an “impartial” morality. However, she extends that explanation to one that includes relationships, “getting along with people”, “just being good”, “making efforts to be a better person”, and not to “betray a friend” because breaking trust means breaking the connection in relationship (as outlined in Chapter Four). Thus she tends to blend a justice and care orientation and is able to recognize both as part of morality. Conversely, for another girl, EM, the justice perspective is hardly visible at all, and she describes how she does not ‘get’ what ‘morality’ is. Then she goes on to describe her sense of morality.

Actually morals is a word that I hear a lot, I just don’t really get it – but what is not right depends on who you are. But I think – how people treat others like how I see it now how I treat [people] – but I see how other people treat each other, I’m more that kind of person who likes to observe people, how they are with their relationships between friends. Sometimes I see some people treat other people really badly, like selfishness, and the person doesn’t notice it, but an outsider would think ‘oh maybe that person is kind of against or maybe a bit selfish’, not that they are really against – [it is] just that friends should
cherish each other . . . I hate being enemies with anyone so even if I hate someone I’ll be really nice to them just to cover up that thing coz it’s mean to hate people. But at the same time it’s mean to hate someone and yet pretend you like them coz I don’t I don’t know – it’s not fair I suppose, but I used to do that coz it makes me feel better . . . you can’t make everyone like you but then take the initiative to try (So if you don’t like them, why would you pretend to like them?) Because if I don’t like them it causes problems in school. It will cause so much less problems in the future, coz if we were to work together and she knew I hated her or something then I’d think we wouldn’t get along very well (Feb. 2000).

To her morality is “how you treat other people”, which includes “trying to get along well with people”, and maintain good relations. Although she knows she is supposed to “get” something that has to do with morality, she cannot articulate what that is. Instead she knows it is contextually determined (it “depends on who you are”). However, contrary to other findings (see Brown and Gilligan, 1990), she does not invalidate her own experience, or classify it as not belonging to the moral domain. However, she does struggle with a language that describes why she should not pretend to like someone (“it’s not fair I suppose”), whereas it seems more related to her concern with maintaining good relations and avoid hurt (“it’s mean to hate someone”) rather than a question of ‘fairness’. For her there is a dilemma between authenticity and care (“it’s mean to hate people, but at the same time it’s mean to hate someone and yet pretend you like them”). She however chooses, knowing well that a conflict exists, to “cover up that thing” so as to maintain a good relationship.
Another girl, NS, shows in the following excerpt that she like SO is aware of social or religious definitions of morality, but clearly does not necessarily identify with such standards. Instead, she, like EM, confidently proclaims her own knowledge of morality.

The 100% goodness that you can have. It's... like I'm not a very moral person in the sense that - religiously things like drinking or swearing or having bad thoughts, and all that kind of stuff. Yeah well that's not good but when I think about the way I treat others I'm moral about that... I think everyone tries, or would like to have... high morals... well there is a lot more of in the world than people think... not always thinking about yourself... making the best of your life really... trying you know - then again only trying to be moral is also not being moral because then you are focusing on you wanting to be 'oh so good' not about you know about others, it becomes more about you.

(Feb. 2000)

NS makes a distinction between morality that is given a priori in the social world ("drinking or swearing or having bad thoughts, and all that kind of stuff"), and what she considers her own morality. However, she does not devalue her own knowledge of what morality is ("the way I treat people, I'm moral about that"), despite knowing that her morality differs from societal or religious standards. This is done without necessarily disqualifying societal standards, "well that's not good", which again reflects (as we shall see in the next section) her ability to see others in their own terms, indicating a morality of care or response. AL also shows awareness of moral
standards given a priori in the social world, but contrary to NS she identifies with them when explaining what morality is.

Not doing anything wrong. Hmm – morality is in treating people right and in – I guess using the same moral – you know there is a certain moral standard to this society they expect us to have . . . like not going out and killing everyone (laughs), very wide ones like that, not stealing, respect for other people, and then I guess you could narrow it down to no sex before marriage, don’t swear those things which I kind of fit into but other people don’t. (Feb. 2000)

For AL morality hinges on an impartial morality where particular social/religious rules are standards to be followed, and breaking these rules means being 'immoral'. However, it is also “in treating people right”. Despite having clear definitions of right and wrong, AL shows much concern with being responsive in relationships while respecting people's individuality. While she applies certain standards, “not stealing”, “respect for other people”, “no sex before marriage”, to herself, she does not condemn others for behaving differently but sees them in their own contexts and shows acceptance of individual concerns. However, for her personally a priori rights and wrongs are followed. Just as AL postulates standards or principles of conduct, BA likewise voices the acceptance of similar principles but for different reasons:

if I apply it [morality] directly to what I’m thinking now it would be all the drinking and all the drugs and things that go on upstairs in the six-form centre.
Morality is doing what is right – I mean in real life – doing what’s right. . . . people doing drugs coz . . . they are only ruining their health, there’s no point to it, besides it’s illegal – drinking I suppose people do it just to have a good time but we haven’t got to the drinking-driving stage so there’s nothing really – what else- I suppose that would be sleeping around. (So why do you consider that immoral or is that what you consider it?) I guess it’s just a stereotype that if you sleep around you have different boyfriends, it’s you are just labelled a slut that has been around. I guess once you have been labelled a slut, you can never get rid of that label, so I just think that would be terrible (Jan. 2000).

BA’s morals about taking drugs or drinking take on a different cause from AL’s. BA’s main concerns are with not “ruining your health” rather than its absolute wrongness ("besides it’s illegal"). Thus her moral reasoning for not taking drugs is not because it is simply ‘illegal’, or sinful, but first and foremost because people are hurting themselves. There are no real dilemmas, however, when considering “drinking” (and drugs) since to her what makes them moral concerns is contemplating the consequences these activities have on people rather than the illegality/or ‘wrongness’ of them. To her the answer is clear-cut: it is bad to be “doing drugs coz they are only ruining their health”. Since “drinking” is not considered as damaging to one’s health as taking drugs is, it only becomes a moral problem when the potential danger that comes with “drinking-driving” develops. Different from substance intake, and what goes deeper to her sense of self is “sleeping around”\(^6\). Although she is

\(^5\) Such as accepting and even learning to deepen her understanding, when her friend had a baby at age 16, although she herself is against sex before marriage (this was discussed in Chapter Four)
\(^6\) And we saw in Chapter Three how awful she felt when she was accused of ‘sleeping around’ by her mother.
clearly aware of the stereotypes surrounding this phenomenon, she also shows her concern with acquiring the label “slut” by saying “that would be really terrible”. But it is “terrible” because of social sanction, not because she has set herself that standard (of “no sex before marriage”) like AL has.

This section has focused on how girls describe morality, and has shown their understanding of traditional notions of morality as well as the need for expanding on that morality when talking about their own experience. The above examples show awareness of social expectations of them in terms of what morality means in the society in which they live. None of them dispute the wide, abstract notions of ‘don’t kill, don’t lie, don’t have sex before marriage, be honest and truthful’ etc. but following them or not may not be the essence of their concern as they also proclaim another sense of morality that is more immediate to their life experience (“how you treat people”). This supports the dissonance also found by the Relational psychologists, that on the one hand there is a morality defined by social principles and on the other there is a morality that is more applicable in daily life. However, the girls in this study, contrary to the findings of Relational psychologists (see Brown, 1990) also show a validation of their own experience as moral, that is, an acknowledgement of a care perspective as part of the moral domain. Moreover, the justice and the care perspectives seem to apply to different situations; in contemplating abstract morality there are few dilemmas of right or wrong; in reality they see that what is prescribed by certain principles and standards does not easily capture the nature of their experience as we shall see in the next section.
4.2 The Framing of Moral Dilemmas

Both the voice of justice and the voice of care can be found within most of the girls' conception of morality. However, it is when they face a moral dilemma in real life that the nature of the issues requires a clearer articulation of moral orientation. Table 5.2 outlines their moral orientations, and the focus of their resolution to moral dilemmas. In the following, I have added a column on “Moral Dilemmas” according to how they describe resolutions to dilemmas in real life and not simply according to a hypothetical description of what constitutes morality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Orientation</th>
<th>Justice Orientation</th>
<th>Mixed Orientations</th>
<th>Moral Dilemma</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td></td>
<td>C/J</td>
<td>Care/response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Care/response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
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<td>Care/response</td>
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<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td></td>
<td>j/c</td>
<td>Care/response/fairness</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
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<td>YE</td>
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<td>Care/response</td>
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Table 5.3 How girls express morality when faced with a real life moral problem
C=care, J=justice, c=notions of care also present, j=notions of justice also present

4.2.1 A Justice Orientation Includes a Solution of Care/Response

AL’s sense of morality focused on a set of principles such as not drinking, not smoking, and not having sexual relationships before marriage. In the following she shows what struggles she encounters when she is forced with having to make a choice about drinking and smoking in real life.
When I go to parties, my friends’ parties, and they are all drinking and smoking and I don’t like to drink and smoke so it’s like you want to but you don’t because I have set myself that standard. So, I’m quite ok with others drinking but – smoking no! I’d be disappointed in myself later so that’s a difficult choice to make . . . smoking is bad for your health, it’s not a sort of habit I want to give into. Drinking I’m not particularly fussed either way . . .[but] I don’t see any point to it. I don’t think you need to drink to have fun but a lot of people . . . like it, it being illegal you’re not allowed to do it that’s what they like about it (Feb. 2000).

This reveals that in terms of “drinking and smoking” the struggle is a question of violation of principles. Although she says “that’s a difficult choice”, the choice is between whether she can withstand the desire to drink and smoke or not, and the failure to do so would mean being “disappointed in myself”. Thus the moral conflict is between herself and her own principles, which is also how she interprets her friends’ behaviour towards drinking, i.e. that they like drinking because they like defying rules, thereby indicating to AL that they do not have the same moral standards as her. However, when she comes face to face with her friend, YK, becoming a mother at the age of sixteen, the moral dilemma becomes more complex, and to her, no longer fully explainable within a justice framework.

Well for me, because I don’t believe in sex before marriage . . . She [YK] doesn’t have morals to that extent, sexual morals like I do and so . . . I felt should I not actually reprimand her to her face . . . but then should I decide – say she shouldn’t have done that, or, you know, should she not be free to
make her own choices – so it's sort of a two way thing… it must have been pretty bad for her then to keep something like that for a secret so I feel bad for her in that way… it's not something she should hide from her close friends, because it's part of her life, and if we are part of her life then it would be uncomfortable if she didn't tell us. I'm glad she did (Feb. 2000).

YK's situation causes AL to struggle between her ideal of "no sex before marriage" and responding to her friend in her own terms. The first gives rise to the feeling that she should reprimand YK in order to stay true to her ideals, and the second is based on her knowledge of reality, that her friend is independent of her which means accepting her friend in her own terms. By respecting YK's individuality ("should she not be free to make her own choices") she is able to keep her integrity, and comes to realize that she cannot simply force her principles on her friend. This realization enables her to respond with care while staying true to herself, and she moves into a mode of connection where the voice of care becomes dominant. Her ability for empathy ("I feel bad for her in that way") enables her to respond to her friend in the friend's terms, and based on this empathy she comes to the realization that their relationship exists in interdependence ("we are part of her life"), and that she should not abandon her friend. Here we see the paradoxes that only through a connected mode of being can one truly come to acknowledge the differentiation of the other. Thus the underlying voice becomes one of care as she responds to her friend's needs and concerns. She no longer insists on fitting her friend's experience into a set framework that has now become redundant in the face of reality.

Another dilemma indicates that there is movement between the perspectives of justice and care for AL, and that morality depends on the circumstances surrounding
the dilemma. In describing being part of a “12-person team” that takes care of a
school magazine she says that

people have no initiative, don’t do any work, or we [her and another girl] ask
them to do something, and they say ‘yes certainly’, and in 6 weeks they still
haven’t done it . . . We are telling them what to do, but we have no choice
because they can’t come up with anything themselves . . . but then I’m getting
reprimanded for asking them . . . They just don’t understand about what
working on a team is like, and not I should be doing everything, and I
shouldn’t have to boss them around . . . well maybe it’s the cultural
difference . . . I do worry that I intimidate them because I’m much more
extroverted than them . . . so myself and this other girl . . . she also feels a bit
like that as well . . . sometimes we just have to sit around and pause and . . .
these pauses have got a bit long . . . I think I’m just a perfectionist, so I like to
drive towards certain things, and they don’t seem to, it doesn’t seem to bother
them either way (Feb. 2000).

At first the dilemma is framed in terms of a justice perspective, and the conflict is one
of ‘fairness’ and ‘reciprocity’, i.e. people “don’t do any work” and they ought to,
according to AL. The resolution at this stage lies in undoing the ‘unfairness’ and for
the other party to ‘reciprocate’. However, then she switches to a state of self-
reflection, “I do worry that I intimidate”, and the resolution is no longer so clear-cut.
Her next step then, after having tried to “boss them around” which she shouldn’t have
to do in terms of fairness, becomes to try to see the situation from their perspective,
and the subsequent action is to make a conscious effort to “sit around and pause”. 

188
Thus by considering others’ situation in their own terms and by contemplating her own influence on the situation, she tries to include a care/response mode. She then realizes that there may be another way to solve the problem than “boss them around” that maybe by withdrawing her own dominance from the situation others will have a chance to contribute. However, her main concern is not restoring the relationship but with getting the job done. Thus we may conclude that the focus is still dominated by justice but it has come to include a care mode as well.

Another girl, whose voice is based on the justice perspective, is YK. She, like AL, also shows that ‘speaking’ in a particular moral voice depends on the situation. When talking about the wrongness of stealing and in contemplating an abstract situation of whether to steal when a person did not have enough money to buy food for her baby, she has this to say:

Yeah . . . you might do it but it would still be wrong . . . I must have done something wrong to get nothing, and yet I must either work or . . . and then the people I steal from have worked their whole life to get that – I think to steal is still wrong. (YK, Mar. 2000)

Thus in this abstract situation it seems she sticks to a morality of impartiality, that it is wrong to steal, although she may be forced to do so. By considering the consequences of her theft, that it is ‘unfair’ to others to steal from them since they “have worked their whole life to get that”, she frames the moral question in fairness to others. However, when faced with a real life dilemma it becomes more difficult to fit abstract principles of right and wrong into the situation. In the following she describes her decision to break off contact with her boyfriend, who is the father of her daughter, but
who left her when she got pregnant, and then later attempted to re-establish contact with the daughter. 

"(What was the dilemma?) Well there's that Melissa would not know her real dad and then . . . he would just always be there" (Mar. 2000). And she goes on to describe that her decision to "cut off" the relationship was influenced by her fear that maybe one day he might seek "child custody" as well as just corrupting the relationship by simply "giving presents" (giving the example of a "dad loaded with money and buying her presents so the daughter automatically liked the dad better"). Thus she is caught between disconnecting Melissa from "her real dad" and taking the risk of losing her daughter if they remain 'connected' (knowing that he may try to take the daughter away). The dilemma arises because she wants to care for her daughter in the best possible way, but also wants to care for herself and the relationship with her daughter by taking precaution against the risk of losing her daughter, or the possibility of the relationship being 'corrupted' by the father. Thus in this real life dilemma she switches to a perspective of response, and the resolution is to ensure that good will come to her daughter and to herself (however, unfair or uncaring this may seem to the father); the dilemmas can no longer be solved with a question of fairness. The failure to find one 'right' solution for these girls by reliance on a hierarchy of principles becomes clear when facing real moral dilemmas as described by Gilligan (1982) and Brown (1990). Thus the moral focus of a solution may depend on the situation.

4.2.2 A Care Orientation

For NS, whose orientation is one of care/response, conflicts arise from taking responsibility for what she knows of others' concerns and needs.
Whenever I move countries there's always a conflict coz I always feel like I want to stay coz I've got friends here, I've got such a good time, blah, blah, blah, which is selfish. And then moving, I think yes my dad will have a better job, or mum will be happier although I might meet new friends. (Feb. 2000)

The conflict here is framed in terms of being "selfish" and considering others' needs. Selfish here refers to only viewing the situation from her own perspective, which is not satisfactory to her since she is aware of how others (her parents) feel. Thus her feelings of selfishness come from empathy and from taking responsibility for what she knows through empathetic experience ("dad will have a better job, mum will be happier"). It is her care and her empathetic ability, which allows her to forego her own interests although not necessarily without struggle ("I've got friends here, I've got such a good time"). However, the conflict is not simply one of "fairness", but arises from knowing and empathizing with others' concerns as well as her own. Her decision making process is based on considerations for everyone involved although as she says "I normally don't have a choice anyway", but she still liked to consider the options. However, the last time she did have a choice (because she was older), but in the end decided to go with her parents although she "could have stayed at boarding school". Thus the moral dilemma arises from seeing relationships as interdependent, from locating herself within reality rather than apart from the situation.

The following dilemma also occurs within responding to relationship needs but takes a slightly different turn. Here, NS struggles with ways to hold on to her integrity while dealing with her relation to others.
I don’t really like her [grandmother] very much because when I was younger, and she came over, she really hurt me. Well basically she favours my brother . . . and she was always acting as if I was a problem, and my mum was a problem . . . so I still can’t get over that. My brother and my mum email and talk to her all the time but I just can’t really get over it. I know [I should] but she just annoys me . . . I don’t feel I owe her a conversation or whatever. And then my mum’s realizing that she is getting old, you know, I really should be getting over it . . . I have to do something but she’s just annoying [because she wants attention] (Feb. 2000).

NS oscillates between (1) dislike for her grandmother, which is rooted in past experiences of disrespect/unequal treatment (by her grandmother) towards herself and her mother, and (2) between knowing that she ‘ought’ to care for her grandmother. The difficulty lies partly in a question of authenticity/autonomy ("I don’t feel I owe her a conversation or anything"), but the real dilemma is caused by her feelings that I “really should be getting over it”, that a ‘mature’/caring response would be to ‘forgive’ her grandmother. ‘Maturity’ is here based on the view of relationships as existing in interdependence. At the root of the conflict then is a moral judgment that until now had seemed to compromise her integrity because it was framed in terms of ‘fairness’ (she did not feel her grandmother deserved a response from her). The solution to the dilemma was ‘right’: if she stayed true to her own feelings, and ‘wrong’: if she ‘forgave’ her grandmother as that would entail compromising her own integrity. However, the conflict is cast in new light as she starts to perceive the vulnerability (“she is getting old”) of the other. In fact, she is increasingly in a position where she can ‘let go’ of her feelings of dislike without losing her integrity
because of the grandmother's age, which makes her feel like she should be looking at the situation not only in terms of her own dislike or sense of fairness, but in terms of her grandmother's situation. Thus by deciding to respond to her grandmother, by trying to 'forgive' her, she does so without disavowing her own experience. Her willingness to do that is her ability for empathetic understanding triggered by changing circumstances (grandmother is aging), which allows her to try to see the situation from her grandmother's perspective. However, as we saw, the conclusion that she can respond to her grandmother's situation without losing her integrity did not come about without a long struggle, where she oscillates between autonomy (integrity) and 'femininity' (empathetic understanding).

BA describes another relational conflict, which arose from her autonomous action of "playing matchmaker", when she 'fixed' the meeting of one friend with a boy two of her friends both liked, and hurting her friend in the process.

Two friends, they both really like this guy, and this guy was going on a boat with all my family ... I invited one (girl A) but she couldn't go, I didn't know whether I should invite the other girl (girl B) because the other one (girl A) would have an unfair chance. And it turns out - she (girl A) is really bitter at me now because the other girl (girl B) went and she (girl A) didn't. So I don't know if I should have done that or not coz I mean it's like I lied to her (girl A) or something ... being polite I should have asked both of them at the same time ... but then once she (girl A) got upset I feel upset. So I wrote her a long letter of apology and everything is ok now ... (So what impact do you think that has had on your life?) I guess I have realized that I shouldn't do things
like that, be so spontaneous and not care about other people’s feelings (Jan. 2000).

For BA the conflict arises as she realizes that she acted without considering the other girl’s situation and thereby hurt her feelings. Although it was done unintentionally, BA does not consider that justification enough for her behaviour. She does not construe the situation in terms of fairness, by for example thinking “well I asked one and she said no, so she made her choice, and then I asked the other and she said yes”, which was suggested as justification for her behaviour by another friend. The dilemma is not one of fairness, but one of having hurt her friend. The moral problem is the result of fractures in the relationship caused by the effects of her actions. Her subsequent solution is to try to restore that relationship ("I wrote her a long letter of apology"). She learns that people can get hurt by her actions although well intended. The fact that she feels she has “lied to her or something” shows that she feels personally responsible for her friend’s being “upset”, which results in BA being “upset” herself. This indicates her view of relationships as existing in interdependence (it is difficult for her not to be upset if her friend is upset when she has been the cause of it). Thus her moral dilemma is framed within a care perspective, and the solution is one of restoring the relationship by writing her friend a letter of apology.

4.2.3 A Mixed Perspective

Although most of the dilemmas girls in this study face in real life are framed within the care perspective, they also show the ability for hypothesising the resolution to a dilemma within both perspectives. Although NS sees morality as “how I treat other people”, she is clearly aware of the different moral perspectives that could be
applied to a given situation. In the following excerpt she talks about a situation where
the solution could have different outcomes depending on what is being framed as the
moral problem.

Amnesty International faxed me this thing . . . about an Islamic man being
suspected of being an Islamic terrorist by the Iranian government. Ok so he
might not be just because the Iranian government is saying so. But the moral
dilemma is the fact that you don’t know whether to support him and get him
out and get him asylum, coz if you do and he is part of a terrorist organization
you could be helping that person kill other people, and yet if you don’t you
know you could be wrong, and he could actually be ok . . . a decent person.
And then there is another moral dilemma in the fact that if he’s a terrorist
that’s not necessarily bad . . . it is he himself that believes that what he’s doing
is right and whereas for people to decide that it’s not, I mean killing is wrong,
but he himself believes that he will go straight to heaven, and they believe
anyway that heaven being – dying is - for you your religion is such an
amazing thing to do so, and if they haven’t been good their whole life, then
committing jihad is the best way to get into heaven. So it’s like you don’t
know what to do because either way you are probably gonna be wrong. (Feb.
2000)

The first part of this excerpt is framed more straight forwardly, and the conflict is
between failing to support a ‘good’ man who is being accused wrongfully, or
supporting a ‘bad’ man who may be a terrorist. The difficulty is that she does not
know whether he is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. In some ways there is no dilemma because what
she wants to do is support him if he is innocent, and not support him if he is a terrorist;
the tricky part lies in finding out the truth and the consequences of making the 'wrong' choice. Thus the first moral dilemma that she describes can be explained within a framework of justice. But then she reveals "another moral dilemma", which is that if the reason behind being a terrorist is that he wants to "go to heaven", and since that is "what they believe" to be the ultimate goal and is guaranteed by committing Jihad, then being a terrorist is not "necessarily bad" because he is just acting on his beliefs of being 'good'. Thus by considering the possible motivation behind action, the moral dilemma becomes "should she not respond to him whether or not he is a terrorist since whatever he has done he has only done in order to be 'good' or 'right', and the fact remains that he is being harassed by the Iranian government". As discussed earlier, empathy means being able to enter into another person's belief system. NS here shows ability for empathetic understanding, and ability to switch perspective and go beyond the apparent truth, fact or popular belief, which means she is responding to a person based on her empathic understanding of his subjective state. Thus according to NS, this moral dilemma can be viewed from at least two angles, that of "impartial" morality (she should help him if he is innocent, and condemn him if he is a terrorist), and from a morality of "particularity", looking at the motivations behind his behaviour disregarding the 'truth' of whether he is innocent or not.

What emerges from the moral dilemmas the girls in this study face is a picture of how they view relationships, either in interdependence-connection or independence-separation, or a blend of the two. It seems that both modes depend on the situation, how close it is to real life, how personally involved one is, or whether the situation can be resolved purely by abstract principles. Certain themes emerge from the girls' narratives, such as the question of care/response and the interdependence of
relationships. These themes are accentuated further when respondents are asked the question "how would you define equality?"

4.3 Interdependence and Responsiveness

Girls' narratives explore themes of moral dilemmas that are essentially concerned with connection/attachment and dialogue, to act or respond in a way that is good, right, or best, which results from acknowledging others' particularities and the interdependence of relationship, and the 'truths' that are brought forward by authenticity. From the knowledge of another person's concerns or needs comes the imperative to respond, which is based on the belief that it is wrong to turn away from someone in need. There is no evidence of girls withdrawing, as postulated by Kohlberg, to view a situation from a position of detachment and 'objectivity'. Rather girls plunge straight into a situation and become actively involved with the resolution by considering others' as well as their own truths. This reflects a view towards others of existing in interdependence. Their dilemmas draw attention to ideals of connection and attachment, and refusal to 'disconnect', or disavow 'truth'. The following table shows the focus of response to a question on equality. Equality being a concept promulgated by western philosophy and traditional moral theory as a key concept unattainable at the third level of Kohlberg's stage theory, and also unattainable within a response of care. However, the girls in this study show not only that equality is a real issue of concern, but also that the concept of equality is not fully captured solely within the justice perspective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUSTICE</th>
<th>CARE</th>
<th>View of relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO Being fair no matter who people are</td>
<td>Caring for people who are left out</td>
<td>Everyone is the same: independent but with responsibility; reality is interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Must be equal to communicate (having the same rights)</td>
<td>Willing to share and communicate</td>
<td>Same rights but with responsibility to others: reality is interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS Having the same rights</td>
<td>Not about doing the same things</td>
<td>Same rights but respecting individuality, different needs: reality is interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL Everyone gets treated the same</td>
<td>Sharing of things</td>
<td>Same rights but with responsibility to others: reality is interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA Equal rights for all people: no restrictions on one group and not on another</td>
<td>Receiving special care according to circumstances; respecting individuality</td>
<td>Same rights but different needs: reality is interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YD Being fair: balance/no difference between two sides</td>
<td>Seeing people as different: caring for people in different ways</td>
<td>Existing in harmony with different roles to play: reality is made up of independent parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KA Equal in every way: inequality is socially constructed</td>
<td>Showing compassion</td>
<td>Same rights but with responsibility to others: reality is interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YK Treating people the same: being fair</td>
<td>Caring for people in vulnerable situations</td>
<td>Everyone is the same: independent, but with responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN Same opportunity, treating people the same, not stereotyping</td>
<td>Responding to people depends on the situation and the people</td>
<td>Seeing people as independent agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YE Same opportunity</td>
<td>Should not look down upon others or self</td>
<td>People as independent but often without self-respect and individuality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 Summary of girls’ view on equality and relationships

As indicated by Table 5.4, to girls the basic understanding of equality is that everyone must have the same rights, opportunity, and yield the same respect. However, after outlining this definition of equality, which neatly fits within the framework of justice, the respondents show that to truly respect equality consideration of another person’s specific needs and circumstances must be included. That is, how
to respond “fairly” to someone can not simply be construed in terms of responding in the same way to everyone, or seeing everyone as one would like to be seen, but must necessarily include seeing others in their own terms. Therefore the ability for empathetic understanding is required to truly respect individuality. The girls’ morality hinges on such respect for individuality, which is reflected in their reply to what constitute ‘equality’. This again reflects their view of self and other as existing in interdependence, and supports the consistency of their care/response mode of framing moral dilemmas.

Conflict for these girls in real life could not be defined in dichotomous terms of black or white, right or wrong, but required a more complex understanding of the situation. Rather than withdrawing from the situation, girls tended to take a care/response perspective. Their unwillingness to detach themselves from the dilemma, needed to solve the conflict in terms of a set of principles, has been suggested to originate from their view of interdependence and their ability for empathy. Empathy was discussed in Chapter Four on Friendship, and gives rise to the ability for responsiveness. By empathetically understanding others’ subjectivity, deliberate inattention feels “not right” and “selfish”. Seeing the resolution to a moral dilemma as laying in responsiveness means taking responsibility for what one knows through empathetic understanding. Since one can empathize with what the other may feel/go through it feels morally ‘wrong’ to turn away from someone in need. To not turn away means then to make a choice and take responsibility for that choice. Gilligan says: “the essence of moral decision is the exercise of choice and the willingness to accept responsibility for that choice.” (1982:67)

Another aspect of not turning away from someone in need arises both from a sense of unfairness and care. Some of the girls describe how they defend others who
are being bullied, excluded, or unable to speak up for themselves. All the respondents comment on the difference in ability to 'speak up' between Chinese, who are seen as much quieter (by both Chinese and others), and other people whose first language is English, especially Australians and English people, who are much more "loud-mouthed" (out-spoken), and seen as confident enough to speak in front of large groups of people. This is at least one reason for why some of the girls sometimes find themselves in a situation where they feel 'responsible' for speaking up for their Chinese counterparts. SO described such a situation in Chapter Four as arising out of empathy for someone who is being excluded. Here NS describes why she "can yell quite easily at people" because

I can't stand it when some people, say in drama, they don't listen to other people's ideas, and they don't let other people have a turn, and they kind of try and boss everything - and that's when I get angry and like yell at them to let everyone speak so they don't take over. (Nov. 1999)

Here we see a mixture of a sense of unfairness and care that are at play, and she responds by standing up for a (Chinese) girl who was left out because she "was so quiet". She says

I actually got her to yell out this line she had to do [in drama] . . . that just makes me really happy, so that's good fun (Nov. 1999).

So not only does NS speak up for her but she also gets her to be more outspoken. And she goes on to describe how she wants to become a director rather than an actor.
because it is more satisfying, and she is “better at bringing out the best in people than in myself”. Thus she passionately takes responsibility for how she feels people treat others ‘unfairly’ or ‘unkind’.

This sense of responsibility of responding to what is seen as the truth (in this case that someone is not being treated fairly, or not being given a chance to have her turn) was also discussed in Chapter Three, which paradoxically results in independence. Deciding to respond to a moral dilemma through attachment rather than detachment therefore means to act independently. Responsiveness emphasises knowledge of the other(s), of their particular situation and needs, which complicates the situation and makes a resolution based on a justice mode unsatisfactory. In short, it is the ability for empathy that complicates the dilemma and questions the application of standards of morality in real life (as was clearly seen in the example of AL in dealing with YK’s sexual ‘misconduct’). Since the solution to moral dilemmas lies within connection to others and somewhere outside the prescribed ‘recipe’, the lack of a clear-cut answer of right or wrong may signal a refusal to give up what they know is ‘right’. Unfortunately this ability to consider the complexity of the situation is what led moral ‘activists’ such as Kohlberg and other traditional theories on human development to brand women indecisive and somewhere on the ‘lower’ end of human development? I have here argued that this seeming ‘indecision’, which I would call ‘oscillation’, or self-reflection, is a reflection of an awareness of multiple subjectivities.

4.4 Responsibility and Integrity

This chapter has argued that traditional notions of morality reflect the justice perspective, which promulgates a clear and readily available language to talk about

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7 As Rosemary Tong humourously remarks about the traditional view of such ‘indecisiveness’: “Apparently, doubt and intellectual soul-searching are not a part of ‘mature’ moral agents” (1993:83)
“impartial” morality (Blum, 1987 cited in Brown, 1990). However, this view excludes different perspectives, i.e. the morality of care and concern for others, which has traditionally been privatised and submerged under the banner of women’s ‘irrational’ concern for relationships. The voice of justice is a morality defined and transmitted by the dominant culture. Girls struggle with the relevance of such standards in considering the dilemmas in their daily life since they occur within a relational context. This may cause a tendency to define relational dilemmas as “not a real dilemma”, which is why impartial morality has been defined as a concept of power (Brown, 1990). That is, because it succeeds in suppressing other moral voices, impartial morality becomes an instrument of power. However, in the present study there were signs of healthy resistance to the tendency of girls to ‘convert’ their own knowledge to devalued and insignificant issues. Girls knew and stood by their knowledge despite the awareness of dominant discourses telling them otherwise.

For girls in this study, dilemmas tended not to arise from violations of principles or standards, but from struggles that arose from acknowledging responsibility for their part of a relationship and the potential fracture and hurt that could result from the consequences of their actions. Their awareness of the potential painful consequences their actions/or their failure to act may inflict on someone reflects their ability for empathy. This also confirms the dominance of the care perspective in real life. What is remarkable is their ability to act while acknowledging inevitable consequences. Acting upon such knowledge requires courage compared to acting while being unaware/or refusing to acknowledge possible consequences/or seeing it as ‘natural’ to consider oneself first. Although a particular ‘action’ may overtly be the same, whatever moral perspective, the motivation behind this action may differ greatly. And
a similar motivation with the same goal may be expressed differently depending on the moral orientation.

The two moral perspectives on relationships give rise to different moral problems. The justice perspective focuses on the problem of not treating someone fairly, the care perspective on not to turn away from someone in need. The concern of the care perspective is the realization that to act raises questions about herself as a knower and accurate perceiver. At the same time, to feel good and right about a decision is to claim ‘public space’ (Blasi 1983, cited in Brown, 1990). That is being able to claim and validate one’s own voice/knowledge. That the girls are able to identify their struggles as moral may indicate that they are able to claim such ‘public space’. This is contrary to findings of Gilligan and Brown (1990) who found that most girls find it difficult to locate their own experience as moral. On the other hand, taking responsibility for knowledge is alien to Piagetian cognitivism, or Kohlbergian morality. Blasi (1983, cited in Brown, 1990) claims that “responsibility to what one knows - about right and wrong, about others and oneself - is integrity . . . [it is] a responsible actualisation of what one knows to be right and true.” (p.106). Blasi here postulates that taking responsibility for what is known indicates integrity. Can I therefore infer that girls in this study are able to act according to their own integrity, according to what they know is true as dictated by their own experience?

Blasi further postulates that responsibility stresses the self as the source of “moral compulsion”. Thus taking responsibility for what one knows, that is integrity, emphasises the idea of moral self-consistency, intactness and wholeness. According to Brown (1990), Blasi’s concept of responsibility provides a lens through which the struggle of female adolescents’ dilemmas can be understood and seen to have integrity, that is, the “moral reasoning, moral feelings, and moral action in which
these young women engage are given coherence by a moral identity achieved through and defined by relationship” (Brown, 1990:107). This “moral identity” is another name for a self that is based on and acting according to the ability for empathy and knowledge derived from this ability. I therefore infer that the respondents’ moral response in this study reflects their refusal to suppress their own integrity or ‘voice’, and that their idea about self, relationship and morality are deeply intertwined.

V. Conclusion

The concern in this chapter has not been with which moral perspective, justice or care, is better or more correct in its description of morality, but with how to understand each one on its own premise, and to use the one that best describes the moral experience of the girls in this study. The examples used in this chapter illustrate that moral struggles and decision making for these girls were not accurately or comprehensively described by standards and role obligations as outlined by the justice perspective. Rather their considerations were with responding to individuals and restoring or maintaining relationships, and how their actions would affect the relationship with one another. We could see that moral dilemmas arose out of taking responsibility for what they know to be true. Yet an abstract notion of morality is what is perpetuated as the moral domain by social authorities, which thereby explicitly (intentionally or not) tries to exclude the experience of these girls. The risk is that their relational understanding of morality is ‘illegitimized’ by the dominant culture, which means that the integrity of the self may be at risk. Despite this, girls showed healthy signs of resistance and an ability to validate their own experience as moral thereby transcending the views of authorities. This study, like earlier studies
(Gilligan, 1977;1982; Belenky et al. 1986;1997, Lyons, 1988), also found that there was a link between girls' ways of knowing to the logic of their ideas about self, relationships and morality as has been outlined in this chapter.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the three major themes that arose during this research. All chapters have reported on the importance and intricate aspects of girls’ relational world, and how their life experience and development do not fit into dominant theories. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I have set myself three tasks. First, to summarise the major findings; second, to see how girls’ worldview corresponds to theories and discourses that dominate concepts of human development; and third, to further conceptualise theoretical concepts of human development.

I. Summary of Findings

There are altogether three interrelated sets of data that correspond with the major themes that arose during this research. These three will be summarised below.

1.1 Adolescence: A Time for ‘Independence’ and ‘Femininity’

Findings in Chapter Three show that girls sought psychological connection with significant others in their lives. Based on connected relationships of care and authenticity, girls were found to develop. Chapter Three also revealed parent-adolescent conflict to be a search for connection and more authentic relationships. The trust that they felt towards their mother was manifested in the ability to be authentic in the mother-daughter relationship. We could also see how girls’ sense of
self was not based on competition and self-assertion, and they showed how they disliked ‘self-promotion’, or people trying to belittle others to appear ‘superior’, which indicates a connected and egalitarian mode of being.

Girls were also found to have flexible self-boundaries that enabled the establishment of such connected relationships. We saw that girls’ sense of self was characterised by emotional openness, responsiveness, empathetic understanding, and the ability to allow others to have an impact on self. Girls saw the ability to adapt to specific contexts as an expression of such relational capabilities, which were viewed as a sign of self-confidence by the respondents. Moreover, the experience of growing up in a multicultural climate enhanced their ability to relate and grow in relationships with people of different cultures and races. An ability to take an active interest in other people was found, reflecting a connected self, with permeable self-boundaries, and ability for active tolerance.

No dualistic notions between mutuality and autonomy were found. Instead, girls were able to be autonomous by being authentic and attuned to their own affective and cognitive states without losing their connection with others. Empathy was a central aspect to this development, and empathetic understanding underscored their ability for acknowledging multiple subjectivities. Mutuality and autonomy were in fact found to enhance each other.

Thus respondents were not in the process of ‘storm and stress’ with a need to cut interpersonal ties in order to establish a differentiated self. Instead, they were found to protest this dominant discourse on storm and stress. Conflicts were a process of building greater connection that increased understanding and acceptance. For one girl, however, this was not the case, and she was found to recently have experienced a sense of detachment and wish for ‘separation’ in the face of lack of understanding and
false accusations by parents. This was mainly, according to her, due to her parents' 'unwillingness' to trust and respect her.

Furthermore, independence was found in taking responsibility towards self and others. It was shown that through parental strictness girls learn to negotiate what they want but also that there are other opinions that carry weight and 'truth'. Parental strictness coupled with a sense of developing independent responsibility fostered self-confidence. Independence was also found in being authentic towards self, as well as including others' 'authenticity' or needs. In this way, respondents were found to display a self/other directed development that showed a blend of what has been considered traditional notions of autonomy and femininity. This self/other orientation was also manifested in future aspirations such as using a profession for doing something for others or that involves other people. Their 'independence' reflected a worldview of life as interdependent.

1.2 Girls' Friendship and Girls' Talk

Findings in Chapter Four show that each of the respondents was part of various friendship circles, divided into more loosely knit friendship circles and a closely knit friendship circle. This categorisation was determined by level of closeness in the friendship. The loosely knit friendship circles consisted of classmates, PE team-mates, school project team-mates, same racial group, or same language group. Language, cultural practices, and gender were found to be the main barriers for developing close friendship in the loosely knit friendship groups. Such barriers were found to exist in the public domain of peer culture and dominant discourses. Although these barriers existed, girls did not experience any hostility between different racial groups and
mingled with all these groups. However, respondents sometimes stood up to boys when they, in their eyes, were being too obnoxious in their display of masculinity.

However, at the closely knit level, these barriers were overcome as girls were able to transcend stereotypes and let individual characteristics determine the level of closeness in friendship rather than dominant discourses. In fact, it was not so much the respondents who were unable to go beyond stereotypes, but boys who were under peer pressure to behave in stereotypical masculine ways in the public domain that prohibited the development of close friendship. Such masculine behaviour was highly unacceptable to girls as a way of interacting, and unthinkable for friends, which made it difficult to form close friendship with boys in the public domain. Cultural expectations in the public domain were also found to be dominant and sometimes difficult to overcome, however, this was not the case in the private domain, where close friendship between girls and boys as well as cross-racial friendship were common.

Relational capacities were the ingredients that made close friendship possible. These included the ability for giving support and encouragement (active listening), empathetic understanding, being able to be emotionally authentic, companionship, trust and respect. Such relational capacities were both a ‘requirement’ for the formation of close friendship (what made friends move from being common friends to more intimate friends), as well as a development that took place and was enhanced in the process of being friends. Empathetic understanding also included the ability for multiple perspective taking, which was valued as an attribute of a developed person. Those who could only look at a situation from their own perspective were seen as narrow-minded and difficult to accept as a close friend. Any display of racism or bullying was completely unacceptable, and girls would oppose such behaviour.
directly. Relational capacities were the thread of girls' friendship, with which they would assess the level of closeness with their male friends as well.

The overwhelming mode of interaction between close friends was verbal communication. Being able to 'talk' was a highly significant and treasured activity for girls, and seen as key to establishing friendship. The characteristics of such talk between close friends were 'empathetic', 'authentic', and 'humorous'. Empathetic and authentic talk enhanced the development of trust, understanding, encouragement, and emotional openness. A sense of humour was found to be important in fostering friendship, as being able to laugh together to make life experience more enjoyable was a treasured experience. Respondents were found to acquire confidence through the building of trust that is fostered in psychologically connected relationships. Lack of trust was found to impair girls' motivation for self-disclosure, which caused the need for firmer self-boundaries. This resulted in less authenticity in communication, and feeling less psychologically connected. Also, the breaking of trust, as well as abandonment of companionship, would cause deterioration in the closeness of a friendship.

Findings show that even for girls who did not always speak their minds in their own relationships because of lack of trust, did not hesitate to stand up for others who were excluded, or being bullied. Their empathetic understanding and care shone through this willingness to take action on behalf of others, and the ability to stand up to what they saw as social injustice. Moreover, this link between care and courage was also displayed in having the courage to tell their friends if they thought their friend was behaving 'wrongly'. Ability to communicate with such authenticity and care enhanced the connection and closeness of the friendship, and closer friendship in return enhanced the ability to communicate authentically.
1.3 Relational Dilemmas and Solutions

Findings in Chapter Five show that the traditional ideas of morality presented in the voice of justice could not sufficiently describe the moral dilemmas of the girls in this study. Although both the voice of justice and the voice of care were present in most girls' moral reasoning, it was the voice of care, which best captured and most comprehensively described the moral dilemmas girls faced in their real life experience. This was found to be an expression of the difference between hypothetical moral reasoning and moral reasoning that deals with real life dilemmas that occur within real relationships.

This also meant that the age-old split between thinking and feeling was overcome. Girls manifested a dynamic and wholesome way of responding to self and other with the underlying view of relationships as interdependent. Empathetic understanding was a central psychological mechanism that influenced the mode of moral reasoning. Upon the question as to the nature of morality answers ranged equally within, and in most cases included, both the voice of justice and the voice of care. Upon describing a real life moral dilemma, however, the orientation changed to a care focus for those who had described morality within a justice orientation.

Moreover, findings show that moral dilemmas arose out of taking responsibility for what respondents knew to be true; from ‘knowing’ the thoughts and feelings of the other with whom the moral dilemmas arose, and for taking responsibility for that knowledge. Moral dilemmas were framed within a care focus and solutions found to be in the nature of a call for response rather than a question of fairness. We saw how girls with a moral orientation of justice struggled with fitting their real life moral dilemmas into this framework, finally abandoning it, and moving into using a resolution of response. If the dilemma was of a hypothetical nature, it was easier to
speculate within the frame of certain principles. In short, the complexity of a real life dilemma fell outside the parameters of the justice perspective. However, girls showed that both moral voices were present, and that they could oscillate between the two and look at situations from different angles, but that they would focus on a care perspective particularly when dealing with real life dilemmas.

Themes of interdependence and responsiveness emerged from girls’ narratives that were further highlighted by inquiring about ideas of equality, equality being a concept promulgated by western philosophy and traditional moral theory, and seen as unattainable at the third stage of Kohlberg’s theory, and supposedly within a care orientation, if we follow Kohlberg’s logic. Girls showed that issues of equality were of real concern, but that traditional notions of equality as being concerned with fairness and sameness, insufficiently described what equality meant to the respondents. Instead, equality could not be determined simply by responding in the same way to everyone, but had to necessarily include considerations of individuality and particularity of circumstances. The corresponding actions based on empathic response can be said to be ‘fair’ and ‘equal’, and truly respect individuality. This view expands on traditional notions of equality and individuality. The girls say (almost unanimously): everyone should have an equal chance and opportunity, but everyone should also be respected as individuals, that to treat others fairly, you have to consider their specific circumstances.

Girls were found to be unwilling to detach themselves from what they know to be true, which would mean avoiding the dilemma by putting it into a question of principles or fairness. Their view of reality and relationships as existing in interdependence and their ability for empathy were reflected in their continued attachment, or connection to ‘truth’. Their refusal to detach themselves from the truth
was also displayed in their sense of responsibility towards responding and defending peers who were treated ‘unfairly’. This responsibility towards redressing the plight of others that arose from staying connected to truth was again reflected in their future aspirations, taking responsibility for what one knows was interpreted as a sign of integrity. Girls in this study were found to act, or striving to act, with integrity. If we are to follow Blasi’s (cited in Brown, 1990) postulation that responsibility stresses the self as the source of moral compulsion, girls were found to be their own moral compulsion, displaying their refusal to suppress their own voice or integrity.

II. Girls’ Worldview and Dominant Theories . . .

The three concepts suggested by the Relational paradigm of Empathy, Care, and Connection as important aspects of psychological growth kept returning throughout this study, which supports the rationale for including such relational capacities to widen our concept of human development. These three relational capacities were found as underlying psychological aspects infused with other developmental themes found in adolescent girls in this study. Girls’ worldview reveals an understanding of the interdependence of reality, ability for deep relational ties, ability for staying with what is seen as truth, and communicating and receiving ‘truth’ in an empowering way. Thus girls’ worldview greatly expands on traditional theories describing human development.

2.1 Independence in Interdependence

As postulated by the Relational paradigm, girls in this study displayed a different mode of being from the desired separation, individuation and autonomy promoted in
conventional theories of the Freudian and Eriksonian genre. Instead, connection, empathy, and care were found to be essential aspects that promote psychological growth. This supports a shift in the balance from a freeze on the one-person intra-psychology of development culminating in the maximisation of the ego-self, to a focus on the human-to-human relationship. The respondents showed that not only does self grow because of the relationship with others, but by the nature of an empathetically oriented psychology attuned to the subjective state of the other, self grows as well. This accentuates the need for a movement from the static, atomistic view of an individual as developing through receiving from others, to a view of self as existing and developing in the dynamics of empowering relationships, where self grows both through 'giving' and 'receiving'.

Moreover, independence has typically been viewed as being autonomous within a particular social framework. For example, if a male child grows up to become an effective competitor with firm self-boundaries, who is self-assertive and shows confidence in his own opinion, he is considered autonomous. That is, he is likely to prevent 'outside' stimuli to interfere with his actions in the world. The girls in this study, however, questioned how autonomous this individual really is since he is in fact just following social expectations of the development of masculinity. Since all girls in this study were aware of the typical masculine expectations of boys in the public domain, one boy in particular was frequently mentioned by a number of girls as standing out because of his ability to transcend masculine stereotypes. This boy was regarded as essentially more autonomous than other boys as he stepped outside the social parameters of expected masculine behaviour, and against all odds developed and acted upon relational capacities in front of other boys. Display of such
relational capacities by boys was judged as more attractive by girls than the display of masculinity.

Girls in this study, similarly, were able to transcend both the expectations prescribed by the discourse of femininity, as well as the dominant public discourse on masculinity. They did this by using their connected self to go beyond stereotypes and turn both modes into, what I interpret as, a positive self/other orientation. However, the ability for including self and other by no means developed without, and continues to provide, a struggle between autonomy (listening to what self wants) and femininity (listening to what other wants). Findings show that most of the girls, most of the time, were able to come to a resolution of a healthy balance between this struggle of separation and attachment. This is what has been described as self-in-relation, with a self 'centred in self', rather than either 'self-centred', or 'other-centred'.

Since the struggles and conflicts that the respondents have gone through, up to this point in their life were not struggles to separate, they challenge dominant discourses that favour separation and detachment as the means for development. Although they were all in the process of becoming 'their own woman', this did not entail or necessitate a process of separation from significant relationships in their life as dictated by conventional theories. Quite the contrary, autonomy was found to be a process of becoming more connected. With one girl we could see her disillusionment and loss of confidence in losing connection with her parents and her friends. Girls were seen to be resisting detachment, as both required by the discourse of masculinity/adulthood (detachment from others) and the discourse of femininity (detachment from self). Instead, they struggled to increase connection with both themselves and others. Their struggles and conflicts were not aimed at rebellion and separation, but were a resistance to conventionality and a desire for greater connection.
If independence means greater connection to self, and interdependence means greater understanding of the connectedness of human-to-human relationships, then I can infer that there is a strong tendency for the girls in this study to be independent in interdependence. Thus responding to self and to other are real life concerns for girls in this study that reflect a more encompassing view of independence than that of conventional theories.

2.2 Friendship, Trust, and Dialogue

Contrary to popular literature that describes friendship in terms of rights and duties, and female friendship as shallow, unimportant to women’s development, and an insignificant part of the social fabric, this study found that friendship to girls was the most important aspect in their life. The purpose of friendship was a far cry from Erikson’s idea, which sees female friendship as a temporary means to prepare girls for the real relationship they are to have with a man. In fact, for most girls, boyfriends played an insignificant role in their life compared to their friends. Also contrary to popular literature, it was common for girls to have close male friends. As long as boys were able to manifest relational capacities, the same required of female friends, boys could also become friendship material. However, these friendships took place outside the male peer culture dominated by masculinity, just as different race friendship took place outside the dominancy of the culture of a particular race.

Trust was the most important aspect of the girls’ relationship with their friends, with parents, and with themselves. At this time in their life the development of friendship were focussed on processes of deepening trust rather than breaking it. In this process girls also developed further self-confidence. Most of them took for granted the trust they felt towards their parents, especially their mother. Different
from the relationship with their mother, who they trusted would be there no matter what, was the deepening of friendship through increasing closeness and connection that evolved around a process of mutually empowering relationships. Deepening of friendship was created in the process of feeling increasing levels of trust and connectedness, which spun the thread that furthered the quality of the friendship. On the other hand, breaking trust meant disconnecting the relationship. Girls showed ‘resistance’ to the dominant discourse on masculinity that prescribes self-assertion and competition to demonstrate ‘difference’ and ‘superiority’ as ways of interacting between adolescents. Girls proclaim that trust cannot be found in ‘separation’ but only through deepening connection.

Lack of trust was found to be a sign of lack of confidence, which fed the need for firmer self-boundaries to prevent other people from knowing one’s inner thoughts and feelings. This is in line with traditional notions of development although typically interpreted as a sign of a strong self. For the girls in this study, however, having trust and confidence meant being able to open up both to self and other. This makes the building of trust and friendship a dynamic, interactive process. Talk was the means by which this process took place and friendship was built, which moreover, was the most treasured activity among girls. Contrary to popular beliefs that portray girls’ talk as silly and insignificant, girls in this study showed that through increasing levels of quality talk they deepen their friendships, while friendship in return fosters quality talk.

Moreover, ‘talk’ has not traditionally been seen as significant to human development in theories that emphasise intrapsychic aspects at the expense of being relationally attuned. In the present study where relational capacities were of overwhelming importance, girls’ ability to talk openly, which included being listened
to sincerely, knowing the person can be trusted, getting encouragement from a friend, being influenced to look at a situation in a different light, and the mutual process of such interaction, was characteristic of qualitative relationships and self development. Such egalitarian and responsive dialogue did not only take place in times of trouble/distress, but also when they were having fun, and joking. The two characteristics of dialogue, listening and speaking, engaged girls in mutually empowering relationships. Less close friendship also exhibited less intimate talk, but was nevertheless dialogic in nature, and the girls stressed the important learning aspect of mutuality. In contrast, the importance of such mutuality has not been mentioned in theories focusing explicitly on development of individuation and autonomy, since such relational development and the benefit derived from such development has been ignored, relocated to the private realm of women, and considered undesirable to western anthropocentric stress on individual needs fulfilment.

Girls’ way of communicating and their ability for establishing deep bonds of friendship challenge a self-focused and competitive way of verbal interaction that dominates our masculine culture. Questions arise as to what happens to such dialogue in the dominant discourses on interaction in the public domain; why is it silenced? Why is this not the dominant mode of having dialogues, especially since it seems more democratic and encompassing? Girls’ egalitarian and empathic way of communicating seems highly relevant as a learning tool for realising a more democratic society.

Thus the stereotypes surrounding girls’ friendship, that they are shallow, insincere, and temporary turned out to be myths. Rather through the building of friendship characterised by relational qualities trust is build. And trust fosters independence, and
dexterity for authenticity in relationships, as well as serving as a tool for transcending racial and gender stereotypes.

2.3 Responsibility and Integrity: Moral Dilemmas and Resolutions

Justice or care, this question goes in many ways to the root of our present social existence and has a tendency, at least symbolically, to split society into public and private domains, characterised by the age old split of reason and emotion, and men and women. As was discussed in Chapter Five, Kohlberg’s theory of morality has been found to highlight the merits of justice, impartiality, and equality, the ideals of the public domain, which simultaneously locates care, compassion, and responsiveness to the private realm. However, girls in this study protested this split, and concepts of self and of morality were not experienced as separate issues. Rather how self is in relationship with others was of a moral nature. This expands the moral domain to include the interpersonal as moral.

For girls in this study, moral dilemmas arose from taking responsibility for what they know to be true. This meant including the knowledge of others’ subjectivities in decision-making, unlike the traditional ‘moralist’ who through distancing himself from the human consequences of his judgement and actions, makes a ‘moral’ decision. By paying attention to such knowledge and in light of the Relational paradigm, girls were not seen as less moral as postulated by traditional theories on morality. Rather girls emerged as ‘humanistic’. In actuality, girls showed how the orientation of the justice perspective is not really about moral dilemmas but rather a question of delineating an objective ‘truth’ on right and wrong. Instead, they showed how moral dilemmas arise from knowing/responding to more than one’s personal perspective,
which was brought about by the ability for empathy, i.e. by being able to go beyond
the apparent truth/social mores. This challenges our conventional concept of morality.

Thus contrary to Kohlberg’s theory of morality, which culminates in impartiality,
caused by increasing levels of detachment and ability for abstract reasoning, the moral
dilemmas that arose in this study could not be solved through such a framework.
Hypothetical moral reasoning tended to be less relevant in real life. Although in
considering hypothetical situations, or in considering what morality is, an awareness
of abstract reasoning was manifested, in real life such abstract thinking was incapable
of providing a satisfying resolution.

Instead, girls refused to give up their care voice by refusing to detach themselves
from what they knew to be true. By acknowledging responsibility for their part in a
relationship and the possible consequences their actions may have on others, they
stayed true to what they know through empathetic understanding. The concern of the
care perspective is that to act raises questions of a person as a knower and accurate
perceiver. However, integrity depends on taking responsibility for what one knows.
Girls have been accused of being indecisive by the traditional paradigm of separation,
whereas in fact, they have been found to weigh up the pros and cons of what they
know. This ‘indecisiveness’ is an expression of a process of oscillating between
knowing different truths/or different perspectives arising from their ability for
empathy, which was also found to be case in the present study. Being able to act while
acknowledging different truths and conflicting responsibilities is an expression of an
articulate self/other directed self-development, which protests the traditional concepts
of autonomy and morality. Instead, the respondents saw autonomy as the ability to
include responsibility to self and responsibility to others. It is through such
articulation of the interdependent reality of life that they developed moral ability.
Thus morality, contrary to traditional ideas, could not be found in simply applying universal rules, but rather through taking responsibility for what one knows through connected knowing/empathetic understanding.

III. Expanding the Theoretical Framework of Adolescent/Human Development

The objective of the present research has been to widen our concept of human development to include the importance of the nature of the human-to-human relationship so as to help lift the curtain on the creation of a more caring, non-violent, and truly humane society. Therefore, in this final part of this dissertation, I would like to expand on some fundamental issues and theoretical concepts that have arisen during this research process.

3.1 A Central Issue: Finding a Balance Between Autonomy and Attachment

We have seen in the traditional ideas of human development that gender socialisation is linked to concepts of autonomy and attachment, which have been portrayed dualistically and hierarchically, and further conceptualised into the traditional dichotomous notions of reason and emotion. The Relational paradigm is an attempt to bring these two concepts into conversation with each other with the conclusion that both aspects of autonomy and attachment cannot be postulated as opposing camps, but indeed need each other. The Relational paradigm says that autonomy and attachment are two intertwining aspects in the sense that upon the neglect of one the pathology in the other is brought out. This struggle between autonomy and attachment (or separation and connection) has been dichotomised further in the concepts of masculinity and femininity. To be male/masculine there
needs to be a focus on self where the person often ends up overly self-centred, and with an inability for empathy and understanding of others. To be feminine the girl needs to focus on the welfare of others, and women often end up feeling other-focused, self-sacrificing, and selfish/guilty for doing something for herself. However, needing to be either selfish or selfless obscures the struggle in each individual between autonomy and attachment. It is here postulated as a central psychological struggle the outcome of which determines healthy psychological growth.

One of the objectives of the present study has been to draw self and others, together in an ever-growing process of change, and to see girls’ ability to struggle for a healthy balance between autonomy and attachment. The objective is to generate a new understanding of what has been seen as the developmental milestone of adolescence, ‘independence’, and cast it in a new light that includes the concept of other. Instead, becoming independent is joined with experiencing/behaving/acting in interdependent ways that acknowledge a new self-other logic, of being autonomous but maintaining connection. This also means a focus on aligning self-interest with reality in life and the lives of others, of being able to be autonomous in an egalitarian, dialogic, and caring way. There is a call for a reassessment of what constitutes selfishness and selflessness that corresponds with a reality of interdependence. We saw in Gilligan’s theory that it is the third level of moral reasoning that brings us to a level where both selfishness and selflessness is clarified, and where connection and attachment can be maintained in growing interdependence without losing autonomy.

Holding together self and other then becomes the special developmental issue during adolescence; being autonomous in relation to others, holding on to one’s integrity while dealing with one’s relation to others. These issues of identity and morality, of being able to see others in their own terms and contexts may be the
cutting edge of change and growth. This requires both an attached and an autonomous self that is able to work in mutually empowering relationships based on connection. This is proposed as the aim of adolescent development.

3.2 Relationship with Self-Other: Relational Mutuality

It is postulated above that the dichotomy of self/other portrays a distorted view of the human condition. On the one hand, an over-focus on 'self' fosters a development of a strong tendency for egotistical judgment and a self-using-other mode of being, or seeing other as a means for need fulfilment, which fosters an individual in constant need for self-validation through being 'different' from others, and self-worth is determined by making this difference appear superior. On the other hand, an over-focus on attending to others' needs at the expense of self develops an other-directed-self, whose self-worth is also in need of constant validation by others. Both modes talk about separation, the first separation from the feelings and needs of others, and the second separation from the feelings and needs of self.

However, the Relational paradigm, and this study, focuses on a self-other directed self, a self that is capable of validating others, as well as self. It takes into consideration the quality of interaction and the deeply intersubjective state of human life (Jordan, 1991). This greatly expands our understanding of healthy psychological growth. Relationships are seen not simply as a means for need-fulfilment, but rather as providing the structure for fostering psychological growth of mutual intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity refers to a mode of exchange where an individual is both affecting and being affected by the other. Mature intersubjectivity postulates a state where one is capable of accepting the other as a whole person (not simply as a projection of self), which means that the other is not simply there to take on one's
needs. It is through the ability for empathy that self is capable of taking an active interest in other, and it is when empathy and concern flow both ways that there is an affirmation of self as moving beyond the self-boundaries and into a greater relational unit. This does not indicate some kind of loss of a distinctive self. Quite the contrary, it indicates an expansion of self. Mutual intersubjectivity therefore means attuning and responding to the other’s inner experience, both affectively and cognitively (Jordan, 1991). It is this ability for empathy that opens up the possibility for mutual psychological growth in interaction with others. Empathy refers to both the affective and cognitive experience of understanding the other. Stern (1986) has said that this self-other logic is not a passive lack of differentiation but an active mental construction that has developed the capacity for intersubjectivity based on empathy.

Therefore, being in relationship postulates a theory based on empathy where self develops a connected understanding of one’s own and others’ affective and cognitive subjectivity, and is able to create/be in mutually empowering relationships. Such a process of empathetic, mutually empowering relationships indeed seemed to characterise girls’ close friendship situation in the present study. However, girls’ ability for empathy hinges their self-esteem on how authentically they respond to others and to themselves. Based on these conceptualisations and the findings of this study, I see the Relational paradigm as a model for promoting a much-needed improvement of dominant discourses and theories on human development, a model that reflects reality and encapsulates the dynamic process of being a self in relationship.
3.3 Self, Relationships, and Morality

The Relational paradigm locates the origin of morality in the young child’s awareness of self in relation to others (Gilligan & Wiggins, 1988); the experiences of inequality and attachment are critical to the growth of moral understanding. The young child’s experience of inequality that the child-parent relationship brings, creates the need for equality and independence, and the experience of attachment affects the child’s understanding of human feeling, and how human beings should act towards each other. Both these experiences create two very different kinds of awareness of self: the need for autonomy and equality, and the need for attachment and connection. However, as has been one of the focal points of the present study, it is the moral implication of attachment that has been generally overlooked in theories on moral development, since self-awareness that arises during this period has been tied to the need for separation and detachment. However, children both have experiences of the need for fairness and love. Moral dilemmas arise both from demands of equality and demands of attachment. But I argue here, in line with the Relational paradigm, that detachment is not the solution to either of these dilemmas, but rather that continuous connection is.

The egocentric fallacy is to assume strong feelings and clear principles as self-generated, whereas the Relational paradigm argues that strong feelings and clear principles depend on being in authentic relationships (connection). The idea that safety and insight is gained through detachment is challenged by the recognition that in the absence of empathy, there is a danger of being in a state of egocentric ignorance, which Gilligan and Wiggins (1988) see as dangerously close to rationalisation. In fact, detachment, seen as necessary in the justice framework, becomes the sign of moral danger in the care framework, because it means a loss of connection with others, just
as connection with others is seen as loss of objectivity and fairness in the justice framework. However, through an emphasis on detachment there is a greater danger that the child will develop egocentrically. This means being able to only feel and understand through the medium of him/herself thereby losing contact with the feelings of others. Relying only on egocentric judgment makes the loss of objectivity much more likely. Detachment is therefore likely to create distortions of reality. Unfortunately, detachment has and continues to be confused with objectivity.

The Relational paradigm proposes the following ideas for change in the two frameworks of care and justice, linked to the connected mode and the separate mode respectively. The voice of care, or the response/interdependent mode: (1) enter oneself in the dialogue, not only by being self-reflective but essentially by engaging in choice; (2) hold on to what one knows and speaking out about it; (3) name the psychological realities of self and other that one knows. The voice of justice, or the autonomous/independent mode: (1) bring others into the dialogue with self; (2) balance the standards one holds with the need of the other. Both modes, the interdependent and the independent, involve developmental issues of autonomy and attachment, which involves issues of trust. The independent mode easily gives rise to mistrust and continues to foster the need for strong self-defences/firm self-boundaries, which stops other's subjective experience from being perceived and having an impact on self. Again, paradoxically, the interdependent mode says that trust is central to psychological development, which makes having permeable self-boundaries and letting another's subjectivity impact decision-making on moral issues possible. In line with Relational paradigmatic postulations, it is proposed that moral inquiry should no longer focus simply on set standards of inequality, that is, to act as if self and other were in fact equal, or how to impose rules of equality based on a principle of equal
respect. Instead moral inquiry should focus on questions of inclusions and exclusions, how to be connected with oneself and with others, how to avoid detachment or resist temptation to turn away from someone in need. Framing moral dilemmas as questions of exclusion and inclusion means that resolutions to moral dilemmas do not lie in detachment and separation. The ethic of care, and its preference for inclusive solutions is designed to avoid turning moral dilemmas into a binary choice between self and other. Rather it is the ability to see differences between people as opportunities for creative solutions that can include everyone’s needs (Gilligan & Wiggins, 1988:132) and turn resolution into a win-win situation.

Thus, what kind of relationship we have with other people and how we see ourselves in that relationship is the essence of morality. Moral dilemmas occur in the process of struggling with self about issues of inclusion and exclusion. This study has argued for the necessity of understanding the worldview that leads to either a gendered or un-gendered conceptions of morality, where care, the moral virtue that flows from benevolence, and justice, from which honesty and fairness flow, can be incorporated in a dynamic and creative process based on connection. We need to construct research and theory that sees females and males beyond the prism of patriarchy.

IV. Limitations of the Present Research

Limitations of any research are inevitable, and this applies to the present research as well. The most fundamental barriers to carry out a more comprehensive and thorough study seem always to be time and resources. This was also the case in the present research, which is limited by the scope of an MPhil dissertation.
The present research would have benefited from further exploration into various aspects of the significant relationships in their lives over a longer period of time. This includes a more in-depth study of the racial and gender barriers experienced by respondents in achieving and developing more connected and empathetic relationships. More insight into meanings of inclusion and exclusion when dealing with cultural, racial, and gender differences is needed, such as for example the influence of the nature of the parental relationship on respondents’ understanding of inclusion and exclusion when dealing with moral dilemmas.

Furthermore, together with a more thorough investigation into cultural and gender dynamics/tensions, a comparative study of the influence of the mixture of western and eastern values present in Hong Kong on the respondents’ sense of identification with being Chinese or Caucasian would have elaborated further on themes of inclusion and exclusion, on the extent of tolerance and empathetic understanding for ‘difference’. Also an analysis of the influence of their social economic status (class) would have provided further explanation to their apparent confidence in being able to go to university and develop a career. Another interesting area for future research, and connected to the moral domain as seen in terms of inclusion and exclusion, would be to develop deeper understanding of the meaning of care and empathy, and how these developmental aspects are interconnected with truth and integrity.

Including such considerations and further explorations as mentioned above would have elaborated on the present research. However, considering the scope of an MPhil and the limited resources (one investigator), these, albeit exciting, areas must necessarily remain the domain for future studies.
Appendix 1

Preliminary/Biographical questions

Date:  
Place:  
Time:  

Participant’s Name:  Date of Birth:  Age:  

Birth Place:  

Residents Pattern: (Country, city/rural)  

From when to when:  

Birth Order: 1st  2nd  3rd  4th  5th  

Brothers:  
First name  Present age  Now lives in  

First name  Present age  Now lives in  

First name  Present age  Now lives in  

Sisters:  
First name  Present age  Now lives in  

First name  Present age  Now lives in  

First name  Present age  Now lives in  

Parents:  
Mother’s age  Died in what year  your age then  

Father’s age  Died in what year  your age then  

Marital Status:  

Special comments:  

Birth Place of Mother  
Birth Place of Father  

Ethnic Background of Mother  
Ethnic Background of Father  


Occupation of Mother

Occupation of Father

Participant’s Education

Religious Background
Appendix 2

Grand-tour Questions & Follow Up Questions (for the first interview)

1. **How would you describe yourself? How do you see yourself right now?**
   - What are your present life concerns?
   - What do you enjoy most at this stage in your life?
   - What is bothering you most at the moment?
   - What do you think most about these days?
   - In what way does that trouble you?
   - What impact do you think that has had on your life?

2. **How do you relate to your family members?**
   - Can you describe to me your family relationships?
   - Are there any differences in the way you relate to your mother and to your father?
   - Which of these relationships are most bothersome or enjoyable? In what ways?
   - Are there any differences in the way you relate to your friends and siblings?

3. **What is your view on friends?**
   - Can you tell me about your friendship situation?
   - How do you define/decide who is not your friend?
   - How many friends do you have? Why are they your friends?
   - Have there been any changes?
   - Do you have a real/best friend?
   - Are there any differences in having male friends and female friends?
   - What are some of the things you and your friends do together?

4. **What is your view on having a boyfriend at your age?**
   - Is it popular or common to at your age to have a boyfriend?
   - How common is it among your group of friends?
   - What do you look for in the relationship with your boyfriend?
   - Have you had any disappointing experience/or thing you were frustrated about in your relationship with your boyfriend?

5. **What is your view on school life?**
   - Can you describe your school situation?
   - What do you like/dislike about school?
   - What do you think about your teachers/your subjects/the homework you have to do?
   - If there was anything you could change about school, what would that be?

6. **How do you see yourself in the future?**
   - Can you tell me some of your plans for the future?
   - What is your view on marriage?
Appendix 3

Abstract of the first interview

(Idle chatter about how she is doing today etc., some biographical questions)

A: A kind of time line.

NS: Yeah, it's a long story. I was born in South Africa, I lived there for two and a half years - and then I moved to HK for five years - Singapore for the next two years - and then I moved to Australia, Melbourne for four years and then I moved back here, and I've been living here for three years now, almost three and a half.

A: So how come you moved around like that?

NS: Because my dad is in the hotel business, I live in a hotel.

A: Right, so where abouts do you live?

NS: I live in the . . . it used to be called the . . . Renaissance - it's on . . .

A: Right so you're right in . . ., right in the centre of everything.

NS: Ah-ha.

A: So eh - so how did you- you can obviously compare life in HK with elsewhere.

NS: Yeah, I like HK best, because eh especially compared to Australia, the people in Australia are really - especially Melbourne - they're [HK] multi-cultural, which Melbourne is not, the people are very narrow-minded. When I went to primary school there the first time in grade four they - they used to pick on me and stuff because I had an American accent - because I went to a kind of American school in Singapore - and because all their mothers grew up there and they all had just the same kind of friends, so it just continued their mothers have the same friends and they have the same friends so you can't really come into their groups and - people there are really racist- I mean, I did make lots of really good friends there but I wouldn't really want to live there again.

A: So you say that the groups were a close circle or . . .

NS: Well it's not that - they are just not willing to accept anyone who's different. This Indian girl came once and they used to swear at her and stuff - and it was really nasty so. But here it's different eh- people are so used to coming and going because of people's jobs change and they move so it's quite an accepting community really - especially our school is really fun.

A: So how would you describe yourself, if you had to introduce yourself to yourself?
NS: Ahh – well it’s quite funny because my friends always that that I’m - - I’m very opinionated and blunt but not the way some people can e where it’s like too much, basically if I like you you’ll know and if I don’t you’ll know as well, I don’t go out of my way to mean or anything to you if I don’t like you but you can tell. I mean I really look- - I choose my friends very much on personality I never really – like lots of people that other people find pretty I don’t – it completely depends on what I think of them and – whether they are nice or not and what kind of personality they have – I really like to laugh that’s why I’m best friends with Helen cause she’s really funny. And I’m – pretty optimistic - - I get really over – cause see my friends who takes drama – like I get really into it all the time cause like when I watch films my friends always laugh cause I can talk about it for months afterwards, I get too involved in things like I get too wrapped up eh - - but basically I just – I try and see the best in people and enjoy life – but I mean I have faults I’m not wonderful (both laugh) I – I if things are going down I kind of slip into like a real low for a little while and people pull me back out eh- I guess it’s the same for everyone really – but eh- - I can yell quite easily at people but then they know that I don’t really mean- yeah. .

A: Why do you think that is, that you can yell quite easily?

NS: Well, it’s especially with the subjects I take it’s all about group working, and that’s good but I can’t stand it when some people say in drama and they don’t listen to other people’s ideas and they don’t let other people have a turn and they kind of try and boss everything – and that’s were I get angry – and like yell at them to let like everyone speak so they don’t take over- eh – I work with my creative side of the brain not the logic side, I can’t stand maths or science – actually I had to retake my maths exam because I got a C and I should have got a B it’s just that I missed pages but my maths teacher is always saying how I could actually use the other side of the brain but it’s only recently since I have started to do eh- more maths that I actually quite like it now – but I always liked drama, art, religion, and psychology, English subjects. And I don’t do sports I refuse.

A: (laughs) So eh – so what A-levels are you doing?

NS: English, drama and psychology. And my friends don’t often have the same eh-hobbies as me. Eh normally my best friends in Australia and my best friend her they are all sporty – so – I still don’t. I think that’s what they find funny cause in a sport class I’m just like the clown. I can’t be bothered to do it. I don’t see the point. I don’t need to loose weight yet so I don’t worry.

A: (laughs) So what are some of your resent concerns?

S: What about HK or just in general?

A: I your life or school or . . .

NS: Eh- - well organization is a bit tough for me I tend to leave things to the end sometimes. Eh- I – it’s mainly because I do so many things at once, right at the moment I’m doing West Side Story, I’m doing school production, and I’ve got all my A-levels so for me you know, performances come first so (laughs) I can’t really - actually I haven’t really missed any dead lines yet – but it’s starting to slack off a bit -
- eh- in general eh- I hate people that think – I don’t like people that can’t come up with two points – like two sides of the story or topic or whatever because I think if you can’t give both point you really are quite ignorant on the subject – if you can’t see good things as well as bad things.

A: So would you describe yourself as someone who’s able to see two sides of a story?

NS: Yeah – except when I talk to Helen because she eh- Helen has this thing that she’s always right -and I make up stuff just to prove her wrong (laughs) – I mean she knows that we both know that I do it but she’s just really head strong, and Helen can never be wrong so sometimes it’s fun to like claim to know what you are talking about and that there’s only one right answer but otherwise I definitely listen to the other side of the story.

A: So it’s more like an activity you both engage in?

NS: Yeah – and then in the end we just go “oh forget it”.

A: Okay so you would say that you’re quite argumentative or . . .

NS: Oh no – no I’m – I only like to argue if it’s for a good reason –otherwise I don’t really like to have conflicts – I’m sarcastic but not in a rude way, you know . . .

A: So can you tell me – is there anything that’s bothering you at the moment?

S: Eh- actually it’s not bothering me now but it comes up sometimes – there’s this girl – this isn’t gonna be heard be anyone but you, yeah – there’s this girls called [A] and I had a really tough time during the exams last year because me and NH have always been like best friends, I mean we have so many other friends but we have always been best friends, and this girl came, and all of a sudden she wanted to be NH’s best friend, which I was kind of like uhm (grimaces). And I just stepped back for quite a while because it just upset me to always see. Because NH is always worried about her image, the way she looks, she is so scared about – she thinks her bum is too big and blah, blah, blah, - you know and she’s actually like – she went through this self-conscious stage hanging around [A] cause [A] is so pretty it made her feel better in some way. And I kept telling her – basically one day I sat her down and said – because people were telling me “Oh NH has changed she’s not so nice anymore and blah, blah”, and she was saying to me that – it’s because she’s so worried, and this girl’s [A] also, she didn’t really help – and saying to her “oh NH you’ve got a big bum” (laughs), and I was thinking oh just get on with it. But then all of a sudden NH was too worried about that. So eventually I sat down and told her “you know people like you so much if you just act the way are” so she’s done that now. And – only now recently have I actually been starting to make it obvious I don’t like [A], and NH’s parents don’t like [A] – and she’s just not a nice influence on her [NH]. That just upsets me because I know she [NH] can be a much better person without her [A]. It has got nothing to do with being in a three or whatever, because I don’t really have a problem with that - we’ve been in a three before, it’s just the fact that she [NH] can’t be herself so.
A: So you say she’s a bad influence on her . . .

S: Well - okay when we go out on Friday nights yeah- those two had been out before because it was really important to them to start going, da, da, da – it wasn’t so important to me. And then the first night I went out, they [NH and A] walked up to the place and they were kind of ‘oh look we know all these people’ and I was just standing there going – I was so scared I didn’t know anyone – like and – like HN has problems, she always forgets to introduce people like she does – but she was not helping me she was kind of trying to say – ‘look I know you’ – and it wasn’t NH – and even people used to say – “oh NH is completely different on Friday nights”. And I was like “I know” - but now she’s not like that anymore, and it’s basically because I – I got really upset because they’d [NH and A] come to school during GCSE when we were revising, come to school, have a sit down with the teachers and not ring me and tell me they were planning on it. And so they both get the same mark, basically, actually NH did excellently considering we both slag off, she got all As and A-stars, and only one B. But eh- I just felt kind of bad because I felt I could have done that too if you guys had included me sometimes – eh – but now – I’m just really happy now because NH kind – realises then- if she doesn’t I tell – and I had so many other friends who were really helpful during those days cause I went through – not a depression- but I was really upset for a while and during the summer when NH was away, normally we’re away the same months, but we weren’t last year, eh- lots of people we were inviting me over. I realised that, you know, if next year they [HN and A] become really close then I can still carry on because I have all these friends but then it just changes but eh . . .
Appendix 4

Background information of the ten interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Siblings&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Experience of Living Overseas Country &amp; Number of Years</th>
<th>Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 YB</td>
<td>Ireland/Hong Kong</td>
<td>Eurasian</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3 A &amp; 1 AS&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 YB</td>
<td>Hong Kong&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Australia, 5 years</td>
<td>3 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 YB</td>
<td>America/Australia</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South Africa, 2 1/2 years, Singapore, 2 years, Australia, 4 years&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 EB</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea, 1 year, Australia, 4-5 years</td>
<td>3 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 YB</td>
<td>England&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Bahrain, 4 years</td>
<td>4 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YD</td>
<td>17&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 EB</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Canada, 6 years</td>
<td>3 A &amp; 1 AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>S&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1 YS</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>England, 2 years</td>
<td>3 A &amp; 1 AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3YS/1ES</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>England, 2 years</td>
<td>2 A &amp; 2 AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1YS</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>England, 2 years</td>
<td>3 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YE</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1ES</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Australia, 5 years</td>
<td>3 A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> M=married, S=single
<sup>2</sup> ES=elder sister, EB=elder brother, YS=younger sister, YB=younger brother
<sup>3</sup> A=advanced level, AS=advanced supplementary
<sup>4</sup> But she has Australian nationality
<sup>5</sup> The rest of her life she has lived in Hong Kong, nine years altogether.
<sup>6</sup> Her nationality is British, but she actually only lived in England when she was very young. Her parents are Greek and German.
<sup>7</sup> She was a few weeks away from being seventeen at the time of the first interview.
<sup>8</sup> KA’s father passed away when she was nine years old.

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236
Appendix 5

Brief life history of the ten interviewees

SO:

SO, aged sixteen, is the eldest sibling, with one younger brother aged thirteen. She describes him as 'sensitive' and their relationship as close. Her mother is Chinese, from Hong Kong, and her father is Caucasian, from Ireland, and she is therefore Eurasian. SO gets on well with both of them. Her mother is a businesswoman who owns her own business, and her father is a corporate executive. She also grew up with a Filipina domestic helper who she regards as her second mother. Her mother, however, has remained the main person responsible for running the household.

SO has lived in Hong Kong her whole life, apart from holidays spent in Ireland. She has also travelled to a variety of destinations within Asia and Europe. She also attended an international school for her Primary school years, and has always received an English education.

She is taking three A-levels in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and one AS-level\(^1\) in Music. She enjoys school and homework, as well as the pressure that comes from striving to improve academically. She wants to do all the sciences first, but is actually interested in doing psychology at university. She thinks she will go to England for her university studies.

Her interests lie in sports and music. SO likes running, hockey, cross-country, and swimming. She likes both individual sports and team sports, and likes competing in

\(^1\) A-level=Advanced level. AS= Advanced Supplementary
competitions. She does a lot of extracurricular activities in sports and in music. She plays the piano.

Her close friendship group consists of six girls including her, one other Eurasian, two Chinese and two Caucasians, all girls. They are all very close friends and are able to confide in each other and share their deepest feelings. The group as a whole prefer to be around girls rather than boys because of differences in personality. SO has a Chinese boyfriend who she has been going out with for about three years. She makes a conscious effort to balance the time she spends with her friends and her boyfriend, which used to cause conflicts when she first met her boyfriend.

EM:

EM, aged sixteen, is the eldest sibling with one younger brother aged thirteen. She describes her brother as a ‘typical guy’ who likes to play computer games, but who she cares for very much although he does not seem to notice. Her parents are Chinese from Hong Kong. She gets on very well with both her parents, and especially appreciates her mother’s efforts to take care of her. Her mother is a secretary and her father is a business director. They both have Australian citizenship. Her parents seem to value both a traditional view of women, such as viewing marriage as the most important event in a woman’s life, as well as encouraging EM to pursue a career and go to university.

EM lived in Australia with her mother and brother (who was born there), for about five years, while her father stayed in Hong Kong to work. She was aged three when she went to Australia and returned to Hong Kong after Primary 2. She attended an
international Primary school, before entering the present international secondary school, and has therefore received an English education since she beginning school.

EM is taking three A-levels in Mathematics, Chemistry, Design/Technology, and one AS-level in Physics. She enjoys school, works hard but describes herself as quiet in class. She also thinks she gets a lot of support from both the teachers and her follow students in terms of her studies. After completing university EM wants to either study medicine, or design. What she will do seems less important than why she would do it. Her main motivation in deciding on a career is to be able to help children who are suffering in some way. She presently also helps with giving peer support in the younger classes. She is also involved in the student council and various other extracurricular activities.

EM has a lot of friends who she thinks are all supporting her. A recent example of this was when she was running for an election to the student council. She describes how her friends helped her by encouraging her, by pushing her to do it, and by reassuring her that she could manage when she had to give a public speech. Another example of this support network is a kind of exchange she has carried out with one of her American friends, (who was also her best friend before she left Hong Kong), who helps her with her English pronunciation and who she in turn helps with her Mandarin studies.

NS:

NS, aged seventeen, is the eldest sibling with one younger brother aged fourteen. She describes her brother as ‘sensitive’ and gets on well with him. Her parents are Caucasian,
her mother is from America, and her father is from Australia. Her mother is an occupational therapist, and her father is an hotelier. She gets on well with her father who is away most of the time on business overseas, and less well with her mother who she tends to experience a lot of conflicts with. She grew up with a Filipina domestic helper who she regards as close as her own mother. Her mother, however, has remained the main person responsible for running the household.

NS was born in South Africa where she lived for two and a half years, before she moved to Hong Kong for five years. After that she lived in Singapore for two years and then moved to Australia for four years before moving back to Hong Kong. She has lived most of her life in a hotel because of her father's occupation and is presently staying on one of the biggest hotels in Hong Kong. She has also travelled extensively around Asia, Europe, and America. Out of all the places she has lived she likes living in Hong Kong the best because of its unique multicultural character and open-mindedness towards difference.

NS is taking three A-levels in English, Drama and Psychology. She enjoys school and her subjects, and proclaims that she works with her creative side of the brain, not the logic side, although she recently started liking mathematics more. NS is going to university in America because she is on a prepaid programme, but actually she would like to go to England. She would like to study drama in the theatres in England rather than in Hollywood.

Her interests lie within acting, films and directing. She dislikes physical exercise and in that sense is very different from her best friend, NH (also a participant in this study). Although they have different interests they have a very close relationship in which they
can confide in each other and share their deepest feelings. NS says that they support and encourage each other, and that she could not imagine life without NH. She is also part of a bigger group of close friends, who she describes as making life truly enjoyable, and has two close male friends.

**AL:**

AL, aged 16, is the younger sibling with one elder brother aged 18. She describes her brother as hot-tempered and a person who does not easily see beyond his own opinion. In the relationship with her brother AL does not feel at liberty to voice her opinion or feelings, and does not feel that he respects her. Therefore she is looking forward to his going to England to study. Her parents are Caucasian from Australia. Her mother is a teacher in a secondary school and her father is a pilot. The whole family are very strong Christians, but AL describes herself as 'not fanatic', while still feeling different from her friends because of her religion. She gets on well with her mother and they have a close relationship where she feels her mother is the only person who really understands her. The relationship with her father is more like the one she has with her brother, and he is stricter than their mother. The father is away a lot because of the nature of his profession, which makes home life different (more relaxed) when he is away. YK also grew up with a Filipina domestic helper.

Her parents were missionaries before, and they lived in Papa New Guinea when AL was born. She spent her first year of life there before moving to Tanzania. They did not stay in Tanzania for long, however, as her father left the missionary agency he was
working for, and they moved back to Australia. When she was about five they moved to Hong Kong. She loves living in Hong Kong, and compares people/life in Australia as narrow-minded and confined. Every summer she usually spends in Australia, but feels restricted when she is there. Although she knows she probably will have to spend her university years in Australia she would prefer to go somewhere else.

AL is taking three A-levels, Chemistry, Geography, English, and one AS-level in Mathematics. She does not really like studying but she pushes herself because she is a "perfectionist", and because she has to study. She has strong self-discipline and she sets herself high standards. AL has plans to go into the food industry, as she loves food. She has had clashes with her teacher over such future aspirations, as he believes that would be a waste of time since her grades are very high in all the science subjects. She dismisses such hierarchical ranking of subjects, and is determined to do what she likes.

AL does various extracurricular activities, and is one of the editors of the school newsletter. She also likes collecting things, writing letters, and cooking. She also loves children, and if she were not to go into the food industry she would do something with children.

Her friends are all important to her, and at the beginning of the present study she was best friend with BA (also a participant in this study). Over the last few months, however, she has also greatly developed her friendship with YK (another participant in this study). She is also part of a bigger group of girls.

**BA:**

BA, aged sixteen, is the eldest sibling with one younger brother aged fourteen. She describes their relationship as good, and her brother is actually part of her circle of
friends as he is going out with one of BA’s friends, which to her is ‘ridiculous’ since he is much younger, but she accepts it nevertheless. Her parents are Caucasian, her mother from Germany and her father from Greece. Until recently she got along well with her parents, however, the relationship has soured upon parents unwillingness to accept YK (also a participant in this study), who got pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl.

BA was born in England, and at the age of two moved to Bahrain where she went to kindergarten. At Primary school age she moved to Singapore, before, shortly after, moving to Hong Kong. She likes to describe herself as either European, as she does not feel English, or as Hongkongese as she has lived her most of her life. BA has travelled extensively around Asia and Europe. She likes living in Hong Kong because of its multiculturalism and open-mindedness.

BA is taking four A-levels in Geography, English, German, and Drama. She likes studying, finds it useful, but most of all would like to teach. She therefore aspires to become a teacher, and intends to go to Teachers’ College after her graduation from university. She plans to go to England for her university degree, but before that she wants to go to Germany or Greece and learn more of her parents’ languages.

She is also in the student council and environmental committee which she finds pretty pointless and is thinking about running for the Student Council which she thinks is more influential. She is also top English speaking girl guide in Hong Kong of which she is particularly proud.

Her best friend is AL (described above), but she also has another group of close friends who she spends a lot of time with. AL and BA also do their homework/projects together in for example geography. Most of all, however, she loves spending time talking
with her friends, which is why she finds most boys immature and annoying as she finds them incapable of holding a decent conversation and showing their deeper feelings.

YD:

YD, aged seventeen (almost seventeen at the time of the first interview), is the younger sibling with one elder brother aged twenty. Their relationship has become less close than when they were younger, especially with his being away in the United States studying at university. Her parents are Chinese from Hong Kong. Her mother is a nurse, and her father is a doctor. She enjoys spending time with her family, and regrets the little time she has to talk to them, especially her mother.

She is taking three A-levels in Biology, Chemistry, Mandarin, and one AS-level in Mathematics. She enjoys studying and school life, and studies very hard. Her own interests lie in design, but she is also thinking about studying medicine, which is why she is taking science subjects. Her parents want her to go into the medical field.

YD engages in various extracurricular activities. She helps with language support (Mandarin) for the younger years, sings in a choir, and also helps a teacher making historical costumes.

She has a lot of girl friends who she talks to, but her boyfriend is the person she shares all her deepest feelings with. They are very close and talk about everything. He has, however, recently gone overseas to study, which to her is fortunate as she sees this particular point in her life as the time to concentrate on her studies. She wonders how
long their relationship will last since talking over the internet and telephone is not the same as talking face to face.

**KA:**

KA, aged sixteen, is the eldest sibling with one younger sister aged fourteen. She describes the relationship with her sister as one of conflict because they are the same (sisters) but they are also different, they have different opinions, views on life etc. Her parents are Chinese from Hong Kong. Her mother is a housewife, and her father was a police inspector. Her father passed away when she was ten; he was shot to death. It is still unclear whether it was murder or an accident, but it is clear that it turned KA’s life upside down. He seemed to have been the main person organizing all family affairs.

It was also her father who believed in the benefit of sending KA to boarding school in England, which is where she went at the age of nine. During that time she experienced the clash between Chinese at her school who cold not speak English well and the native English speakers. She felt stuck somewhere in between because since she is Chinese but also capable of speaking English as she attended an international primary school. However, when her father was killed, she came back to stay with her mother and sister.

KA is taking three A-levels in Biology, History and Chemistry, and one AS-level in Psychology. She likes school life but does not enjoy studying that much. Her aspiration for the future lies either in psychology or law. She likes psychology because it is very interesting to know about people, and law because she likes to argue a point.
Her best friend is Canadian-Chinese and they are friends because they care about each other and can talk about anything. Her best friend’s boyfriend is also a good friend of hers. She is also part of a larger group of girls, who spent a most of their time together talking.

**YK:**

YK, aged 16, is the second oldest of five siblings. She has one elder sister, aged twenty-one, and three younger sisters, aged twelve, and six. The two youngest are twins. She has a close relationship with the eldest sister, who is now studying at university in England, and a very conflictual relationship with her twelve-year old sister who she also shares a room with. Her parents are Caucasian from England. Her mother is a teacher but became a housewife after having the twins, and aspires to do a Master’s degree. Her father is a professor. Her relationship with her parents is good and they have been very accepting and helpful when YK got pregnant about a year ago, and consequently gave birth to a baby daughter. They all live together and her parents have employed a Filipina domestic helper to help take care of the baby. YK also grew up with a Filipina domestic helper.

YK was born in England but lived in Hong Kong from when she was a baby. Her mother and her sisters moved back to England for two years when YK was eleven, and when her family moved back to Hong Kong YK stayed at boarding school in England. She came back to do her A-levels in Hong Kong. She finds a lot of people in England narrow-minded and racist, as she is used to the multiculturalism of Hong Kong.
YK is taking two A-levels in Chemistry and Biology, and two AS-levels in English and Mathematics. She enjoys studying more at this point in her life and finds the school and the teachers in Hong Kong much nicer and more helpful compared to England. She has just found out that she is dyslectic, which she says should not be a problem. She aspires to be a paediatrician. One of the reasons for this is that when she was a child she was in hospital and remembers how comforting it was when other people took care of her. So she wants to do the same to other children. She also wants to get a good education so she can support her daughter. She plans to go to university in England.

Her friendship situation has recently changed, and she has become much closer with AL (mentioned above). But she also likes to spend time with some of the boys during lunch break playing basket-ball or other sports.

HN:

HN, aged sixteen, is the younger sibling with one elder sister aged twenty-one. They get on well but she describes her sister as very different from her. Her sister is more conventional, very formal, and enjoys science subjects, whereas she describes herself as more ‘arts and English’ and as getting along with people a lot better. Her parents are Caucasian from England. Her mother is a teacher and her father is an engineer. She gets on well with her parents. Her mother is the person she confides in, however, whereas the conversations she has with her father tend to be less serious although enjoyable.

NH was born in Hong Kong and went to primary school here. She went to boarding school for two years in England when she was eleven. She did not like England much
because of the cold weather, less outdoor activities, and the narrow-mindedness and racism of the people around her. She therefore returned to Hong Kong and started year 9 in her present school. She has also travelled to various places around Asia and Europe.

NH is taking three A-levels in English, French, and Drama. She enjoys studying, but enjoys school life more. She does not know what she wants to study at university, but plans to go to university in England.

She does a lot of sports and loves sailing and outdoor activities. She plays hockey, runs, swims and does cross-country, and engages in these activities every day after school. She also competes in various sports competitions. She also likes acting and films.

NH has a lot of friends and is part of a circle of close female friends. She also has friends from outside her school that she talks to regularly. Her best friend, however, is HN who is the person with whom she shares her deepest feelings and confides in. Good friends are the most important aspect in her life.

YE:

YE, aged sixteen, is the younger of two siblings with an elder sister aged eighteen. She herself is very close to her sister, but also says they argue because they are so close. Her sister studies at a university in Hong Kong. Her parents are Chinese from Hong Kong. Her mother is a housewife and her father is a manager. They have a close relationship, and her father helps her with her homework.

She lived in Hong Kong until age six, during which she changed kindergarten three times. She then moved to Australia with her mother and sister and went to school there.
from Primary 1-5. When she was in Australia she faced racism in school with young children calling her names. Moreover, she did not have many friends and did not speak English well. But she liked the home life in Australia as she was staying with her mother's family and a whole group of aunties and uncles were staying together. Her father was in Hong Kong working during these five years.

YE is taking three A-levels in Chemistry, Biology and Psychology. She wanted to take arts and drama but her science and mathematics grades were better so she decided to take chemistry and biology, because she does not like mathematics. However, she describes herself as not very smart, as not liking studying, and she does not believe the teachers like her. She finds it hard and boring to study but likes some of the case studies in psychology. She likes school life, however, and spending time with her friends. She is still unsure about what she wants to do in the future, maybe be a dentist or designer, but knows that she will probably change her mind again. She is sure that she will go to university, however.

She engages in various extracurricular activities such as squash, community service and flute lessons. Most of all she likes playing the flute, and recently went on a school tour to South Africa, which was the best event in her life so far.

Her best friend used to be a Caucasian girl from America, but she recently left Hong Kong. She is also part of a group of girls. Talking to friends and eating together are the most treasured activities with friends. She does not have any male friends as she sees most boys as immature, only capable of telling stupid jokes.
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