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Some Affects of the Mother / Daughter Relationship on the Individuation Process of Women Between 35 and 45 Years of Age: A Pilot Study

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SOME AFFECTS OF THE MOTHER/DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP
ON THE INDIVIDUATION PROCESS OF WOMEN BETWEEN
35 AND 45 YEARS OF AGE: A PILOT STUDY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Counseling Psychology,
The Lindenwood Colleges

by
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1981

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The literature of Margaret Mahler (1979) clearly states that in order for individuation to take place in a child, she must first separate from her mother. Mahler goes on to state that the process of separation/individuation is repeated in adolescence. Eric Erikson (1968) supports Mahler in stating that during adolescence, there exists a state of moratorium. At this time, an adolescent reflects on her previous development in order to establish a foundation on which to build her adult life. She begins to establish her identity.

What happens after adolescence? Does the adult process of individuation continue to be influenced by the childhood and adolescent developmental stages? It is the premise of this culminating project that the individuation process of a woman between 35 and 45 years of age is directly affected by her relationship with her mother. Specifically, a woman's socialization process, sex role formation, choice of a traditional or non-traditional role, her attitude toward financial independence, and her choice to seek a second career or occupation are all influenced by

her relationship with her mother. When the terms "infant young girl", "adolescent girl", "young adult woman", "adult woman", "woman", or "women" are used, they will refer to the daughter or daughters of the mother or mothers. Mother or mothers denotes the person or persons who gave birth to the woman and women and/or raised them.

In light of the fact that in the literature there have been very few studies which have concentrated specifically on the adult woman and her relationship with her mother, this study will be largely an exploratory one. Since this is a pilot study, the most valuable results will lie in the new questions it raises and the areas for future research it suggests.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following chapter will cover separation/individuation through a discussion of the theory of Margaret Mahler with special emphasis on the third sub-stage, rapprochement. The fifth stage of the eight stages of man, as theorized by Eric Erikson, will also be presented. Both the theories of Mahler and Erikson will be related to the individuation process of a woman as it is influenced by her relationship with her mother. In addition, a general discussion of the socialization process of a young girl, the traditional role of a woman and the non-traditional or contemporary role of a woman, and a woman's choice to have a second career will be reviewed, emphasizing the role of the relationship with the mother. This section will provide the basic information for the framing of the hypotheses for this pilot study.

Separation/Individuation

Everyone experiences an emotional dependence on their mother. Even though the emotional dependence lessens as the individual grows, the need for the mother remains and

is a life-long need which continues until death. Freud believed the cause of this enduring need for dependence on the mother is due to the fact that the child enters this world in an immature state. As she matures, she is exposed to many different influences, especially her mother. A child becomes an individual within the mother/child relationship. During this time, it is very important that the child experience the relationship with her mother as safe. In addition, it is salient that the daughter feel free to be in contact with the mother and check back with her often (Blum, 1977).

As the child grows, she gradually moves away from the mother, both physically and emotionally. The physical movement away from the mother is a faster process than the emotional moving away. The mother can aid in the emotional separation of her child from her by inhibiting the intrusion upon and stifling of her child's individual and inborn needs. Some mothers have difficulty in this area (Blum, 1977).

The infant achieves identity by establishing limits or boundaries of her body image from that of her mother (Blum, 1977). According to Mahler (1979), the formation of an identity is very much like a second birth experience. Separation and individuation from the mother is a most important and necessary condition for developing and maintaining a sense of identity.

The second birth experience and commencement of establishing an identity occurs within the first two months of an infant's life during the state of normal autism. Normal autism incorporates symbiosis or attachment. Symbiosis implies that the infant is not able to differentiate between the self and the love object (mother). During the state of symbiosis, it is possible for the infant and mother to be able to echo one another. Thus, it is possible for the child's identity to emerge in the midst of genuine mutuality of recognition of both the needs of the mother and the child (Mahler, 1979).

The infant is not capable of functioning outside normal autism because she is biologically unprepared in maintaining an existence under separate conditions from the mother. Normal autism is an indifferentiated stage. No polarity exists between the self and any other object. There is a relative absence of attachment of emotional feeling and significance to an external object or person. The infant lacks the awareness of the mothering person, although, brief responses to some external stimuli do exist (Mahler, 1979).

The separation/individuation stage follows symbiosis and first appears at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth month of life. It is at this time that the birth of a child, as an individual, occurs within the mother/child

relationship. At this time, it is most important for the infant to feel safe to individuate. In addition, the infant wishes to be able to continue to check back with her mother and know she is available to her (Mahler, 1979).

The actual process of separation/individuation occurs at the end of the first year of life and continues through the second and third years of life. The process takes place when developmental readiness occurs and independent functioning is sought with pleasure. For normal individuation to proceed, it is necessary that separation be a prerequisite. Normal separation/individuation permits a child to achieve separate functioning from her mother within her presence. The most conducive atmosphere for this process to occur incorporates a loving relationship with the mother. At this time, the child is confronted with a slight threat of object loss (loss of the mother). As the child individuates, the mother serves as a catalyst for the individuation process. It is important that the mother be able to read and interpret her child's unspoken want of love and praise. At this time, the child begins to experience the freedom of locomotion. She still needs to have her mother near her for support. The child moves away from the mother and then back towards her. With this movement, the child begins to differentiate the self from the love object, the mother (Mahler, 1979).

The differentiation process becomes relatively stable by the end of the third year of life. The child begins to slowly feel autonomous and function independently of the mother. In order for independence of the mother to occur, it is necessary that the mother be available and accepting of the child's desire for physical contact with her and the child's desire to move away from her (Mahler, 1979).

There are four sub-stages of the separation/individuation process differentiation, practicing, rapprochement; and the cognitive functions such as verbal communication, fantasy and reality testing. It is the third sub-stage of rapprochement and the establishment of object constancy that I find specifically applies to my topic, the individuation process of a woman between the ages of 35 and 45. The recognition on the part of the child that she is separate from her mother opens the door to the rapprochement period. It appears to me that this process is repeated any time a woman would wish to further individuate.

The third phase, rapprochement, begins approximately at the time the child is ready to walk, to master locomotion and thus move away from the mother. The child experiences anxiety as well as pleasure and this specifically promotes the process of separation. The mental and motor maturation of the toddler makes her aware of her separateness from the mother. When the awareness of separateness occurs, the

toddler proceeds to make active approaches to the mother (Mahler, 1979). It is necessary for her to turn back to the mother often for support (Horner, 1979).

Rapprochement involves the establishment of an autonomous ego. For optimum functioning of this autonomous ego, it is important that the mother be emotionally available to the child. The child has a need to share every new skill and experience with the mother. By being available emotionally to receive this sharing of experiences and skills, the mother makes it known that she is interested in and supports the child's movement away from her (Mahler, 1979). If the mother is detached from her child emotionally at this time, the child may have developmental problems, become involved in power struggles, and her will may clash with the mother as well as other people.

The rapprochement period may cause misunderstanding between the mother and child because the child appears to be independent and separate. Underneath this appearance, the child deeply wants her mother to share in every aspect of her life (Mahler, 1979). The child begins to shadow the mother and there exists a certain amount of wooing of the mother on the part of the child. If the mother is unavailable emotionally at this time, the toddler becomes very insistent in her desire and endeavor to woo the mother (Mahler, 1979). If the mother prevents the child

from the pleasure of being able to express her needs for dependency, the child may feel abandoned. The child may be, in turn, overwhelmed by fear of the loss of the love object, (the mother). The child may need to learn to depend upon his own autonomy prematurely if the mother is very suddenly, in her estimation, unavailable to her. The child may appear to the mother to be self-sufficient, but in reality it is a false self-sufficiency (Horner, 1979). The normal development, however, during this period paves the way for object constancy which develops toward the end of the third year of life.

The child is able to begin to make available and incorporate the consolidated representation of the love object, so it will be available to her internally, as it was available to her in the outside world during her earlier development (Mahler, 1979). The maternal and paternal love objects soon begin to function within the self of the child as the objects are separated out and differentiated from the self of the child. The child learns to assimilate the nurturing directive methods (Horner, 1979).

It may be said a goal for everyone is to have an identity without discord. In order to do this, it is necessary for a person to separate herself from her mother (Horner, 1979). This process begins with differentiation, practicing, and rapprochement at the approximate age of

five months. In adolescence, a person strives to establish their own identity. Again, one must return to the differentiating, practicing, and rapprochement process in order to refuel the self with the internalized love objects representations. This supports identity and object constancy (Horner, 1979).

Coupled with the establishment of an individuality within the child is the developmental job of achieving object constancy. This involves the gradual assimilation by the child of her mother's functions into herself. The nurturing mother is incorporated into the self of the child and functions as the caretaker of the child. The caretaking of the child by herself is extremely important in maintaining a balance between the maternal functions which become self-representations. The process involves a gradual internalization of the maternal functions that lead to a separate and self-managing self. The child begins to have the ability to relate to others as a total person and not just as a source with the sole purpose of satisfying her needs. The child is able to withstand ambivalence because she does not have to deal with a division between good and bad self representations. The child acquires an ability to experience and maintain a good feeling about herself. The feelings come from the resources within the child, the self. In this manner, the child achieves object

constancy. This now leads to an adult who has the ability to have a firm sense of a self and is able to successfully have a differentiated other (Horner, 1979).

Margaret Mahler's theory of separation/individuation is included in this review of literature because it appears to me that when a woman wishes to further individuate, the desire takes her back to the separation/individuation stage with emphasis on the rapprochement and the establishment of object constancy. A woman between 35 and 45 years of age, who wishes to further her individuation process must first realize that she is psychologically separate from her mother. At this time, a woman could possibly be wanting to separate from her husband and family in order to establish her own individuality. In order to do this, she must deal with the original separation from her mother. When she realizes that she is psychologically separate from her mother, she looks to her internalized love object for support and nurturing during her return to the separation/individuation stage and specifically the rapprochement period. The internalized love object is what the woman moves toward and away from in her pursuit to further individuate. It is important for the woman of 35 to 45 years of age to realize that she will have a lifetime of mourning for the loss of the mother. It is her job to turn

to the consolidated representation of the love object for the support she needs.

Margaret Mahler believes that a person begins to establish her identity during adolescence. Mahler continues by stating that in order to do this, an adolescent must return to the separation/individuation stage in order to continue her development as an individual. An adolescent is unable to assume her identity until she is ready to do so (Mahler, 1979).

Eric Erikson (1959, 1968, 1963) also speaks of adolescence as a time when a person integrates the elements of her earlier development. This time in a person's life is referred to as a moratorium and surfaces during adolescence. Erikson goes on to state that adolescence belongs to the fifth stage of development, identity versus role diffusion.

According to Erikson, there are eight stages of a person's development. All of the eight stages are present within an individual, in some form, in the beginning of her existence. Each stage can be a potential crisis in that each stage can cause a radical change in the perspective of an individual. Erikson refers to a crisis as a developmental period, a point in time when a person makes a significant change. This is a crucial period in which the individual may find herself more vulnerable than usual

and, at the same time, experience a heightened potential for development (Erikson, 1968). The eight stages are a gradual development of integral parts with a progression in differentiation of the parts.

The eight stages are related to one another and they are all dependent upon one another for the proper development of each stage. They develop in a sequence. Each stage exists in some form prior to its actual appearance. When a stage does surface, it is usually during a critical time in a person's life (Erikson, 1968). Erikson refers to these stages as the psychosocial development of a person.

The fifth stage emerges at the end of childhood and the beginning of puberty and continues through adolescence. Erikson continues by stating that adolescence is a moratorium state for a young person. It is a time when she struggles to come to terms with her earlier developmental crises. For example, she may, as an adolescent, find it necessary to focus once again on her developing the ability to trust herself and others. Developing trust could be manifested in her being able to trust the ideas of others and trust in her own ideas. At the same time, a person may fear trusting others and their ideas. She, therefore, may protest and state her mistrust of others.

Shame and doubt are part of an earlier developmental crisis. Adolescence is also a time when a person wishes to be of service. At the same time, she does not want to be forced to do something in which she would feel any shame or self-doubt. Thus, a person may act in a manner in which others think her shameful rather than do something in which she herself feels any shame or self-doubt.

Erikson continues to further emphasize the importance of this time of moratorium as a time to be uncertain as to what kind of an adult role an adolescent wishes to follow. It is a time for the adolescent to explore what area of specialized work she would like to do during her adult years. The re-examination of the early developmental crises gives her a foundation in which to move into early adulthood and the next developmental stage or crisis. Erikson further believes that the adolescent wishes to work towards acquiring an occupation of importance. Remuneration and status is of little importance. The most important element at this time is satisfaction and satisfaction is placed above success.

In addition, Erikson points out that most young people will choose to belong to a clique. The membership in a special group enables the adolescent to have the support of her peers. The support of the group enables

her to keep herself together. Furthermore, the support from her chosen clique gives her strength to defend herself against any forces which would be a threat to her.

I have included Mahler to show that a woman who is between 35 and 45 years of age and seeking to individuate, returns to the separation/individuation stage of development of early infancy and childhood as part of her adult process of individuation. In addition, as in adolescence, she finds herself once again in a state of moratorium. She finds herself examining much of what has been her past development which serves as a base support for her movement forward to further individuation.

Thus, in reviewing Eric Erikson's stages of development of man, it appears to me that any time a person finds that she has decided to further her process of individuation, she creates a level of moratorium for herself. A woman who chooses to further develop her individuation process at the age of 35 to 45 would possibly begin to have some self-doubts. She would not want to be forced to function at a level before she feels prepared to do so, for she would not want to feel any shame or self-doubt. Furthermore, a woman in pursuit of individuation might find herself right in the middle of two roles. It is very possible that she has developed beyond her present role and is uncertain about a future role. At

this time, such a woman needs support. As seen in reviewing the work of Mahler, she must get support from her internalized love object (the mother). In addition, the support of peer groups is important. Thus, the many "women's support groups" which became so popular during the last ten years or so may serve as peer support groups for women between 35 and 45 years of age.

Gender

Gender is included in this review of literature because socializing agents relate to a child according to gender. Women between 35 and 45 years of age may internalize the treatment they have received since infancy due to their gender. For the purpose of the topic of this presentation, special emphasis will be on the mother as a socializing agent of a young female.

Kopp (1979) reports that gender is the physiological classification of a newborn. The labeling by gender provides the basic information about the infant. The gender is what people want to know about the birth of a child. The classification describes and categorizes the infant as either female or male. The description and categorizing of an infant fulfills a need in those people who come in contact with her immediately following her birth and later. People are uncomfortable holding an

infant when they do not know the sex. With this information, people who come in contact with the newborn have expectations and shared assumptions about the infant.

According to Kopp (1979), gender leads to the differential treatment of infants and children by all socializing agents. Furthermore, Kopp states that children are able to classify themselves according to sex by the age of 2 years. If asked their sex at 2 years of age, a child acknowledges correctly that it is a boy or girl. Kopp continues by stating that gender role socialization commences at birth and continues until death. To many individuals, their gender role is an important aspect of who they are. Everyone fulfills an intense program in training to be a male or female human being. Kopp goes on to state that gender is the basis on which to build a psychological sex role. Sex role behavior is both enduring and powerful.

Socialization

I now choose to turn my attention to reviewing the literature available on the socialization of young females because they grow up to be women. Females, as they mature, internalize the socialization they received as young females. Women between the ages of 35 and 45 may have to examine their early socialization prior to their movement toward further individuation.

Weitzman (1979) states that socialization is the process by which sex roles are transmitted. According to Kopp (1979), a sex role generally refers to the psychological component of a person's gender. Weitzman states that sex roles are learned by the interaction of a young person with others. Thus, she learns the sex role of others and that of her own. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) emphasize that the process of socialization involves the differential treatment of children of the two sexes by socializing agents.

Williams (1977) points out that studies on differential socialization show that socialization begins at the time of birth. Williams (1979) and Weitzman (1979) state that the mother quite often chooses sex typed clothing and toys, chooses to paint a child's bedroom a specific color properly designated for the sex of her child, and will play rough with a boy and gentle with a girl.

As Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) state, there are a number of socializing agents for a young female at birth and throughout her life. In this paper, I will concentrate on the socialization of the woman by her mother. Through socialization, the young child learns sex typed behavior. Maccoby and Jacklin explain that sex typed behavior narrowly referred to is interpreted as sex role behavior which is most appropriate for the ascribed gender of the person.

She goes on to emphasize the importance of social shaping as a contributing factor in acquiring sex typed behavior.

Williams (1977) points out that sex typing leads to sex stereotyping. Sex stereotyping is the advancement and communication of conventional beliefs about sex roles and sex differences. For example, a girl loves animals but fears mice. A boy is noisy and refuses to take a bath.

Differential Treatment

Hoffman (1972) reports that it has not been shown whether the differential treatment of a mother towards a son and daughter is caused by the mother's predisposition in regard to the infant's sex or if the mother responds to her infant due to the infant's behavior. Hoffman goes on to state that there does exist differential treatment by the mother toward a son and daughter. I choose to briefly present some material reviewed on the following areas: responsiveness to male and female infants by the mother, a mother's differential handling of discipline in early childhood, the display of permissiveness towards children by the mother and some differential handling based on gender preconceptions; because if there is significant differential treatment by the mother toward a daughter, the 35 to 45 year old woman might have to review the effects of the treatment if she chooses to change her life in any way. She will have

to examine her relationship with her mother to determine if she was conditioned in any way by differential handling on the part of her mother toward her.

Hoffman (1972), Tangri (1972), and Kopp (1979) report that mothers appear to be more responsive to male infants than female infants. This response on the part of the mother is independent of the activity level of the infant. Mothers were observed to hold male infants more than female infants, but mothers displayed more attention to female infants.

According to Hoffman (1972), a mother's response to her infant's crying is important in influencing the infant's regard for the mother as a provider of comfort. There exists a sequence of events in the comfort/response area. The infant cries and the mother responds with the necessary care. The sequence of events is important in shaping the infant's reaction to the mother as a supplier of care. In a study reported by Hoffman (1972), mothers did not pay more attention to the needs of female infants than those of male infants. In fact, mothers, she reports, pay less attention to the needs of females. Furthermore, a mother will link her attention display toward her daughter more closely with the infant's need as expressed through crying. Sherman (1974) states that boys require more attention as infants because they are more fussy.

Whereas, girls soon learn that if they are fussy, the mothers will pick them up.

In regard to the differential display of warmth-rejection of a mother toward her infant son and daughter, there is no consistent finding as reported by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974). One study showed that there was less warmth displayed toward a son by his mother than toward the daughter. Whereas at age 5, the study showed that there was no difference in the amount of warmth displayed toward a daughter. Another study told that a mother showed more affection toward a daughter than a son, but three other studies found no difference in the amount of affection a mother displayed toward her daughter.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) state there is some support suggesting that girls are treated, by their mothers, in a manner which designates them to be more fragile than boys. One study showed that mothers expressed that they were more concerned about their daughters than their sons encountering physical danger. There have not been enough studies to firmly establish that there exists any consistency in regard to a mother's differential treatment of her children according to sex in the area of children encountering danger. In a longitudinal study, Maccoby and Jacklin report that at age 7, her subjects received their first substantial differential treatment from their mothers in

regard to knowledge of a daughter's whereabouts. A daughter is more likely to be chaperoned and her whereabouts must be known to her mother at all times. In addition, more girls are escorted home from school by their mothers than boys. Lewis (1969) states that studies show that a girl at any age is under more supervision by her mother than a boy.

In regard to discipline, Lewis (1969) reports that girls are more likely to be disciplined by their mothers than by their fathers. As children mature, a girl is increasingly more disciplined than is a boy, by the mother.

Although, she is disciplined with love-oriented techniques. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) state a mother finds it more difficult to punish a daughter than a son.

Lewis (1969) states that a mother is less strict and more permissive with a son than a daughter. A son is allowed more freedom by his mother to engage in more overtly active conduct. A girl is more often given the message that she must conform to the stereotype image of her sex. She must act like a "lady".

According to Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), there are no consistent reports of studies available to support that a mother is more permissive of aggressive behavior in a son than in a daughter.

Some studies show that a mother is far more

permissive in allowing her son to display aggression towards her than she is in allowing her daughter to do the same. In addition, a mother will allow her son to display more aggression toward neighborhood children than she will allow her daughter the same conduct. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) go on to report that other studies show that girls and boys are punished the same amount for aggressive behavior toward their mother. In another study, forty pre-school children were studied to measure their permissiveness in regard to aggression toward their mothers. This study showed that there was no differential treatment of aggression directed toward a son or daughter in regard to permitting aggressive behavior toward her. Thus, women between 35 and 45 years of age who choose to individuate would not have necessarily had a mother who encouraged or discouraged aggressive behavior in early childhood or punished her more than a male sibling. In order to move into further individuation, a 45 to 45 year old woman may have to develop some assertiveness to do so.

Sex Role Socialization

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) report that most research on sex role socialization has centered on studies using the same sex in order to ascertain the underlying causes as to why some boys are more masculine than other boys and why some

girls are more feminine than other girls. Intrasex research studies are not sufficient in establishing the development of the feminine or masculine sex role.

Baumrind (1972) states that girls are socialized to be responsible, obedient, nurturing; and boys are socialized toward achievement and independence. Cohen (1966) states that girls who were passive and protected by their mothers during childhood, displayed a tendency toward passivity and dependency on their families as adults and chose to withdraw from any problem situations.

Kopp (1979) reports that some theorists believe that the acquisition of sex role behavior is the most powerful and enduring part of the socialization process of a female and male. There are four accepted theories in regard to how children acquire appropriate sex role behavior. They are reinforcement, modeling, identification and cognitive development. Psychological and social consequences may occur during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood as a result of sex role socialization.

The most active time for sex role learning to occur is between the ages of 2 and 6 years of age. During this time, the child builds upon the skills, patterns and her formative identity learned in infancy. The differential treatment of her parents contributes to the acquiring of these skills, patterns and identity.

Lewis (1969) and Tangri (1972) report that in adolescence, role conflict may occur in a girl due to the message she receives about some childhood conduct. For example, during early childhood development, it is acceptable for a girl to be a "tomboy". This is just one message she may receive from her mother. As she matures and enters adolescence, she may receive another message from her mother. The message might be that it is not okay to be a tomboy any longer. The girl must now be a "young lady".

Sex Role

According to Kopp (1979), the fact that a mother is her daughter's first role model is undisputed. From her mother, a daughter learns about feminine sex role behavior. In addition, the mother transmits to her daughter, via modeling, the cultural expectations she has chosen to accept as feminine sex role behavior. A mother will make a distinction between the household tasks a girl and boy perform in her home. These tasks are consistent with the projected sex role of the child. Weitzman (1979) reports that in many middle-class homes, a little girl observes that her mother does not like nor do household chores. Domestic help is available. On the other hand, the little girl in this type of home may be given dishes, vacuum cleaners, mops and brooms as toys for play. The little girl

may become confused about participating in behavior which appears to her to be of low esteem

Sex Typing

Sex typing, narrowly explained, is how children in early childhood arrive at preferring feminine or masculine toys and activities. This process leads to masculine and feminine behavior. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) define sex typed behavior in a narrow sense as the behavior that is appropriate to a child's ascribed gender. They go on to state that sex typed behavior refers to behavior which is clearly labeled masculine or feminine.

Social shaping is very important in a child's acquisition of sex typical behavior. Williams (1977) states that sex typing is the prescription of the different qualities, activities and behaviors to females and males in the interest of socializing them for their adult roles. Williams further states that sex typing leads to sex stereotypes. Sex typing is exaggerated in sex stereotyping. Sex stereotypes are generalizations made about the categories of people. Howe (1971) states that sexual stereotypes are assumed differences between the sexes, social conventions, learned behavior, attitudes and expectations. For example, "men are smart" and "women are dumb and beautiful".

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) state that there are not

many quantitative studies available on the topic of sex typed behavior. They go on to report that it is obvious that mothers buy specific gifts for boys and girls. For example, girls usually receive dolls, doll carriages, play stoves or dishes for gifts. Boys usually receive trucks, trains, guns or footballs for gifts. It is not known whether these types of gifts are purchased by the mother in response to preferences displayed by her son or daughter, or whether they are given to a child before she has any preference for them. Due to the lack of quantitative studies, Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) state that it can only be assumed that it works both ways.

One observational study reported by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) regarding sex typed behavior showed that a mother does offer different toys to female and male children. This study involved 13 to 14 month old infants, their mothers and a selection of toys. The toys included stuffed animals, robots, toy workbenches, and a musical ferris wheel. The study showed that during free play, the mothers chose different toys to offer a boy and a girl. There was also some evidence that the children's choice of a toy differed according to their sex even though the toys used were not considered to be specifically sex typed.

Howe (1971) reported on a study using fourth grade children to determine their attitudes toward the employment of their mothers and fathers. These children did not think

that boys were smarter than girls. They did think that their daddys were smarter than their mothers because their fathers worked and their mothers did not work. These children went on to state that people who work know many things. People who do not work do not know things. Many times this is due to what children read and learn in school books and view on television. It was assumed that the children of mothers who work just thought that their mothers were different from those they observed in texts and on television.

Thus, through sex typing, women between 35 and 45 years of age may feel they must follow the stereotype roles they learned in childhood. It would possibly prove to be a difficult job to choose not to model their mothers. Yet, in order to separate from their mothers, the women may have to choose other role models in order to separate from their mothers and establish individuation.

Contemporary vs. Traditional

To further research the influence a mother has upon her daughter's individuation process, I chose to examine the daughter's choice of a traditional or contemporary lifestyle. According to Lipman-Blumen (1972), a traditional lifestyle, under ordinary circumstances, dictates that a woman belongs in the home. She cares for the children and performs all domestic duties. Her husband

is responsible for the financial support of the family. Lipman-Blumen continues by stating that a contemporary woman's relationship with her husband is based upon equality. She may share domestic child rearing and financial responsibilities with her husband. Lipman-Blumen did a survey study, in 1968, on married women with a mean age of 23.4 years. They all had at least some college education at the time the survey was taken. The socioeconomic status was the same for all the women. They were all married to graduate students. Although, their families of origin proved to be quite varied.

The results of the survey taken by Lipman-Blumen (1972) showed that the women who favored the traditional way of life admired their mothers more than their fathers. The daughters who tended to choose a traditional way of life thought their mothers had either accepted the role of homemaker or had an indifferent attitude toward household tasks and performance. In addition, the women tended to have a critical father. They reported that neither parent frustrated them. They also stated that they viewed both their parents as being successful. Their fathers were more dominant in the family than their mothers.

Lipman-Blumen (1972) reports that the women who favored the contemporary way of life rejected both parents as people whom they wanted to admire. Although, these same women had a slight tendency to admire their father more than

their mother. These women tended to have critical mothers, and they were frustrated most by their mothers. This group of women viewed both parents as being unsuccessful. Lipman-Blumen states that it is her belief that a woman's perception about her mother's satisfaction with life can be used as a criteria in predicting her choice of a contemporary or traditional lifestyle. The daughters who favored a contemporary lifestyle also perceived their fathers as more dominant in the home than their mothers. In addition, these daughters perceived their mothers as dissatisfied with their homemaking role.

Lipman-Blumen goes on to report her findings in the area of educational aspiration. Lipman-Blumen was interested in what level of education her subjects wished to attain. As mentioned previously, all the women in this study had completed part or all of a college program. Lipman-Blumen believes that a woman's concept of her female role is related to her educational aspirations. When both parents of a woman in the study were in favor of graduate studies, for the daughter, the woman favored the contemporary way of life. A mother's favoring graduate school for her daughter influenced the daughter to favor a contemporary lifestyle. A father's urging his daughter to attend graduate school without the mother's agreement did not direct the daughter toward a contemporary lifestyle. Within the group of

women who favored the contemporary way of life, the majority wished to pursue graduate studies. Whereas, within the group of women who favored the traditional way of life, more than half of them did not wish to pursue studies after the bachelor's degree.

I now wish to report on the amount of influence a working mother has on her daughter in three areas: female social equality, a mother's involvement in the courtship of her marriageable age daughter, and a daughter's choice to be a role innovator. A role innovator is a woman who chooses a male-oriented occupation. Meier's (1972) study of women showed that there was positive female social equality scores for those daughters of mothers who were employed from the time the daughter began her schooling. There was a statistically significant amount of association between a daughter's FSE score and the prestige of her mother's occupation. Daughters who had mothers employed in a low prestige job were more likely to have an extremely low FSE score than those daughters of mothers who had a high prestige job. Furthermore, the daughters who had mothers occupied exclusively in the housewife and homemaker role had lower FSE scores than those daughters of mothers who had been employed for any substantial length of time regardless of the prestige level of the job.

Bruce (1974) reports a study of a mother's

participation in the courtship of her marriageable age daughter. One area of concentration revolved around a mother's work status and her projected view of the work status of her daughter. At the time of this study, the largest group of women who had daughters of marriageable age were working either part-time or full-time.

The mothers who worked, regardless of full-time or part-time employment, and/or prestige of their job, were less involved in the courtship of their daughters than were those women who did not work. The employed mothers were not less involved because they did not want their daughters to marry. They indeed wished for their daughters to marry. A working mother was more likely to think of employment as a future option for her daughter than did an unemployed mother. When a non-working mother thought that her daughter would not work in the future, she encouraged the courtship of her daughter more than a working mother who thought her daughter would be working in the future.

When non-working mothers and working mothers projected that their daughters would be a future worker, the two groups of mothers were less far apart in the degree of involvement in their daughters' courtship. Whereas, a working mother who projected that her daughter would be a non-worker encouraged her daughter to seek a mate more than a non-working mother who viewed that her daughter would be a future worker.

Tangri (1972) did a study of 200 senior women in college. Included in her study were findings in regard to a mother's influence on her daughter's choice of a non-sex typical occupation. She called these women "role innovators". Tangri states that a woman's level of role innovation is firmly related to her mother's role innovation score and present employment status. It is interesting to note that only 14% of the mothers whose occupations were listed in the study were role innovators themselves. The daughters, as a group, had higher occupational goals than their mothers' actual accomplishments. In addition, 3% of the mothers did not work after marriage. Only one college senior in the study did not intend to work after marriage. Although, 10% of the women said they were uncertain about working after marriage.

Role innovators share more of their mother's values than their father's. The shared value system did not include agreement on college goals. A daughter's feelings that her mother did not understand her and a daughter's warm feelings for her mother directed the daughter to that of a role innovator.

In a study of female undergraduate students conducted by Stewart (1974), self-defining women were compared to socially defined women. A self-defining woman planned to have a career. A socially defined woman planned to marry and

have no career. The results of the study showed that self-defining women tended more often to have mothers who worked continuously throughout the daughter's growing years. Most often, the mothers began working before the daughter reached puberty. Stewart states that the mothers of the self-defining women modeled earnest participation in an occupation.

Second Careers

Presently, some women choose to pursue a second career. Their first career was that of housewife and homemaker. They now wish to be employed outside the home and receive payment for their services. Cooperman (1971) states that some women enter the labor market after having been a homemaker for anywhere from ten to twenty years. He goes on to state that psychologically, these women are beginning a new career.

Cooperman (1971) states that during the 1970's, married women between 35 and 40 years of age began to enter the labor market as a conscious choice in order to occupy their over-abundance of leisure time. This leisure time was due, in part, to population control, to the fact that their last child was in kindergarten, and to the fact that the responsibilities as homemaker and housewife consumed very little of their time. Samler (1971) and Sheppard (1972)

go on to state that for many of these women, their role as homemaker did not equal their occupational potential. These women received only partial fulfillment from child rearing and homemaking. In order to receive the utmost fulfillment for themselves as possible, many homemakers choose to enter the labor market. Lynn (1971) points out that these women think that their role as homemaker does not meet their original aspirations. Thus, they perform the duties of homemaker but may not enjoy doing so. For this group of women, a second career may be the most welcomed.

LeFevre (1972) states that by working these women were able to change their self concepts. In addition, Haug (1967) points out that for many women, age 45 marks the end of a career of child care. These women are not willing to settle for retirement. They choose to pursue a second career for the purpose of status, monetary gain, and security. In addition, LeFevre (1972) points out that women who choose to return to school or work in pursuit of a second career for the purpose of monetary gain and elevation of their self esteem and status are more autonomous and individualized than they were previously. They resemble the women who, in her early 20's, chose to have a career.

I have been reviewing the available literature on women who chose to pursue a second career during the 1970 decade. Now I wish to present information about some of the

mothers of these 1970 women. Many of the mothers were employed in the 1940's and 1950's. Helson (1972) states that these women's last child was in kindergarten by age 35, and many of them were employed. It was appropriate for a married woman and mother in the 1940's and 1950's to work if it was required of them to help support the family. In addition, many of these women worked only as long as it did not interfere with their homemaking or child care duties. A woman's job received second priority. Motherhood and homemaking received first priority. There were few women who chose to pursue a career in addition to marriage and motherhood. If a woman did so, she was often looked upon as being maladjusted.

Samler (1971) reports that as these women who began working in 1940 to 1950 are presently approaching the age for early retirement. The identity of these women, far more than the women of the 1970's, is tied to their husband and his work, her household, and their children rather than to their work. Thus, she would not choose to seek a second career as would a 1970 homemaker who is approaching early retirement. Hartley (1964), Elder (1972), and Smith and George (1980) point out that some women of 1970, 1940, and 1950 share the fact that they had to work in order to help support, or solely support, their families.

In summary, the separation/individuation stage of development is paramount to the establishment of a positive internal support system in an individual. Included in the internal support system is object constancy. A woman who chooses to further her individuation process at 35 to 45 years of age, needs a positive inner support system in order to individuate beyond her present level. The internalized support system is the result of the early mother/child relationship and the daughter's early separation/individuation process. In addition, a woman between 35 to 45 years of age may be in a position similar to the moratorium stage of adolescence. If this is true, she may be able to use the time to gather some internal support before she moves on to the next phase of her particular adult life.

Some women in their early 20's choose either a traditional or contemporary lifestyle. Sometimes the chosen lifestyle is based upon early childhood and adolescent socialization by their mothers. Some daughters may choose to model their mothers and others may choose not to use their mothers as models. The daughter's choice is based upon her perception of the mother's fulfillment of her role.

Today, some women who are 35 to 45 years of age are possibly considering changing their lifestyle. Once again, the relationship with their mothers may possibly have to be

explored in order for them to decide if their present lifestyle and role is what they want to continue to lead, or do they wish to choose another. Many times the choice to choose another lifestyle leads to a second career.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in Chapter II presents no definite data about a woman's individualization process between 25 and 35 years of age. The literature does point to the fact that some women between 25 and 35 find that they wish to move into the labor force and thus change from a traditional lifestyle to a contemporary lifestyle.

The literature does suggest that a mother is an important model for her daughter. The literature also suggests that daughters are trained differently than sons by their mothers. Socialization of a daughter by a mother is different than that of a son. How much of this early socialization of a girl results in her life as an adult woman? Does there come a time in her life when she wishes to separate from this early socialization?

The literature points to the fact that a daughter needs the emotional availability of her mother during the process of separation-individuation in childhood. Again, in adolescence the mother is needed for the same thing. How do daughters who are 25 or 35 years of age and wish to

CHAPTER III

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHOD

Part I--Statement of the Problem

The literature reviewed in Chapter II presents no definitive data about a woman's individuation process between 35 and 45 years of age. The literature does point to the fact that some women between 35 and 45 find that they wish to move into the labor force and thus change from a traditional lifestyle to a contemporary lifestyle.

The literature does suggest that a mother is an important model for her daughter. The literature also suggests that daughters are treated differently than sons by their mothers. Socialization of a daughter by a mother is different than that of a son. How much of this early socialization of a girl remains with her as an adult woman? Does there come a time in her life when she wishes to separate from this early socialization?

The literature points to the fact that a daughter needs the emotional availability of her mother during the process of separation individuation in childhood. Again, in adolescence the mother is needed for the same thing. Does the daughter who is 35 to 45 years of age and wishes to

separate from her own family still need and seek the emotional support of her mother as she moves toward individuation? Does the decision to move out of the home follow an examination of her lifestyle as compared to her mother's? Does the daughter consciously choose to no longer model her mother and wish to separate from her psychologically? Is financial responsibility a factor in her individuation? What does being separate from her mother mean to a woman whose age is between 35 and 45?

There is a need for an exploratory study on women between 35 and 45 years of age to gather preliminary information about their relationships with their mothers. There is an additional need to explore how a daughter's relationship with her mother influences her individuation process at age 35 to 45. Therefore, a pilot study was carried out to obtain information on three hypotheses about women who are in the above age category. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. From the results of this questionnaire, this study also generates some hypotheses and areas of inquiry for further study.

Hypothesis I

In order to individuate, a woman between 35 and 45 years of age must consciously evaluate her relationship with her mother. These women, even though of the same age and exposed in the past to many of the same influences as they

matured, all had mothers who related to them in a specific manner unique to that relationship. Age 35 to 45 is a time when many women choose to further their individuation process. Exploration of their relationship with their mother is salient.

Hypothesis II

In order to successfully individuate, the self concept of a woman between the ages of 35 to 45 must come to include a sense of responsibility for her own and/or her family's financial support. When a young daughter realizes she is separate from her mother, individuation begins to occur. When an adult woman moves toward further individuation, she finds the need to contribute to her own financial care and that of others in her family. She wishes to contribute by providing for some of her basic needs and those of her family. Thus, she begins to separate once again from a caretaker, this time her husband, and to further individuate. Her separation and individuation that occurs at this time in her life is based upon the foundation she received within the early mother-child relationship.

Hypothesis III

In order to successfully individuate, a woman between 35 and 45 years of age must have actually achieved a

means of financial support or be in the process of attaining a means of financial support. The manner in which women move into the role of contributing to their financial support is unique to each person. The important fact is that by age 35-45 years, they have acquired an occupation or that they have begun to seek a means of support for themselves. Without her own means of support, a woman cannot assume separateness, and being separate leads to individuation. To be truly separate involves the ability to care for oneself. Thus, the separateness and ability to care for oneself leads to being an individual.

Area of Inquiry for Exploration of Hypothesis Raising Issues

One area of inquiry is in reference to the employment status of both the mother and daughter. The responses to this inquiry will provide some information about the mother's and the daughter's reasons for working or not working. In addition, some information about the daughter's desire or lack of desire to contribute to her financial support will be provided.

A second area of inquiry will explore the psychological separateness of the daughter from the mother. Thus, the level of individuation for the daughter will be explored. In addition, the degree to which the mother was available to the daughter during her early development as a loving and supportive love object is explored.

A third area of injury is the question of how much the daughter chose to repeat the lifestyle of her mother. Included in this area of inquiry is the daughter's concern for fulfilling her mother's expectations of her. It is important to inquire if the daughter's expectations of herself as an adult woman are the same or different than her mother's expectations of her.

Part II--Method

Subjects

The subjects in this pilot study were women between the ages of 35 and 45. Subjects qualified for the study by stating their age as 35 to 45 years on their returned questionnaires. Two hundred and fifty questionnaires were given out and sixty-one were returned by mail to the investigator. The returned questionnaires were filled out anonymously.

The women who responded to the questionnaire were participants in The She Center of Los Angeles Valley College, Women For, Career Planning Center, The Woman's Building, The Center For Feminist Therapy and The Alcoholic Women's Center. The Centers are located in Los Angeles County.

Procedure

Two hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed and sixty-one were returned. Thirteen were unable to be

used due to the fact that the stated age was below 35, above 45, or no age was stated. Thus, forty-eight questionnaires were used to obtain results in this pilot study.

Design

No statistics were used. The study did not require the application of statistics, because it is an exploratory study with the intent to generate new hypotheses. The questionnaires were read according to specific blocks of questions and the results were recorded in categories as they presented themselves. Patterns and similarities were sought as a base for discussion of this pilot study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results are presented for each hypothesis. The group of questions which applied to each hypothesis is presented according to major categories. It was necessary to group the responses into categories for clarity, organization, and the presentation of a general trend.

Hypothesis I

In order to individuate, a woman between 35 and 45 years of age must consciously evaluate, be aware of and examine her relationship with her mother.

The first question which applies to this hypothesis is: *19. In what ways are you different from your mother?* There were four categories: personality characteristics, performance, emotional and physical. Twenty-six women expressed that they were different from their mothers in regard to personality characteristics. For example, the daughters expressed that they were "more positive about self", "more relaxed and easy-going", and less verbal and more open than were their mothers. Ten women used the category of performance. Some of their comments were,

"wish to be active, in the mainstream", "in cooking", and "I work". Three women chose to express that they were physically different. For example, some women replied, "I'm thin, she's heavy", "appearance", and "not as gorgeous as Mom". Nine women shared that they were different from their mothers in an emotional manner. A few of the comments were "I value feelings, my Mom does not", or "emotionally more stable", and "allow myself to be depressed, and sad".

Question number 20. asked the subject to *Briefly describe your relationship with your mother.* There were four categories in which the responses could be put: positive, negative, ambivalent, and no comment. There were twenty-nine negative responses involving role reversal. These twenty-nine daughters expressed either that their mothers wished to be cared for, that they felt dutiful toward their mothers, that they feared disapproval from their mothers, and/or felt their mothers to be unloving. Thirteen women's answers belong in the positive category. They were intimate with their mothers, had a give-and-take relationship and they felt their mothers to be supportive. Three women expressed that they were ambivalent about their relationship with their mothers. Three women did not answer the question.

The next question, *In what manner does your relationship with your mother hinder or encourage you in*

seeking your own individuality? If your mother is deceased, in what manner did your relationship with her hinder or encourage you in seeking your own individuality?

Twenty-three women expressed that they thought their mothers encouraged them in seeking their own individuality in that they received support from their mother. The support was expressed in the areas of independence, acceptance and letting the daughter know "she could do it alone". One woman stated that after realizing consciously and unconsciously the type of person that she had as a mother, she became the opposite and thus she sought her own individuality. Twenty-three women felt that their mothers hindered their seeking individuality. The women in this category thought their mothers rejected them, encouraged dependency and were very judgmental. Two women left the question unanswered.

Question number 22. *Do you feel you have separated from your mother and sought your own course in life?* was answered in the following manner. Thirty women answered yes. Some of the replies were adamant and, for example, they replied "definitely, absolutely", "definitely, first in rebellion, then in confusion, then in peace", "sure have", "yes". Seven women answered with the words "somewhat", "most ways", or "mostly". There were ten women who stated that they had not separated emotionally from their mothers.

These women thought that their mothers still influenced them. There was one woman who stated that she had separated from her mother upon her death.

The next question asked, *In what ways has it been difficult for you to separate from your mother?* There were eighteen women who felt that it was difficult for them to separate from their mothers in that they felt obligated not to let their mothers down or disappoint them. They wanted love and approval from their mothers. Nine women wished to change their mothers so that she would be psychologically or emotionally different. Fourteen women stated it was not difficult to separate from their mothers. A miscellaneous category covered five women who were financially dependent on their mothers, one who was caretaker of her mother, and one who had not separated because of religion.

Question number 24. asked, *Are there any issues you need to work on in terms of separation from your mother? If yes, briefly state what they are.* Twenty-four women stated "no", "none", or "not now". Seven women thought they still needed their mothers' approval. One woman stated that she wanted to "learn not to be hurt by her; not fetch and carry, not watch what I say". Four women stated that they did not wish to be like their mothers. Two women did not wish to be like her physically and six women left the question unanswered. Four women stated that they did not know.

In replying to question number 26. *To what extent do you feel influenced or restrained by your mother's expectations of you?*, twenty-six women responded by stating that they wanted their mothers' approval. These women were concerned about not disappointing their mothers and the control with which their mothers related to them. In addition, they related to the fact that they were influenced by their mothers' expectations of them and that it was hard for them to make decisions on their own. Sixteen women thought that they were not influenced or restrained by their mothers' expectations of them. One woman answered, "don't know". Five women felt they had received positive support from their mothers.

In regard to question number 41. *Would you say that your mother tried to pass her identity on to you?*, twenty-eight women replied "yes" and eighteen women replied "no".

The following question asked, *If yes, were you willing to accept it?* Twenty-two women replied "yes", twenty-four replied "no", and two women did not answer the question.

The following question asked, *If yes, to question number 42, are you still willing to accept your mother's identity as your own?* Thirty women left the question unanswered, eleven replied "no", and seven answered "yes" or "some of it".

The last question in this series asked, *If no to question number 42, at what age did you decide to seek your own identity and what precipitated your decision?* Eighteen women stated that they made the decision to seek their own identity while still living at home. Many stated that they were teenagers at the time. Others stated that their mothers' lifestyle made them want to be different. Three women replied that they sought their own identity when they were aware of their mothers' hang-ups. Seven women stated that they did so in their early 20's when they decided to leave home. Two women replied that when they divorced, they decided to seek their own identity. Eight women stated that they decided to seek their own identity between the ages of 28 and 38. Ten women left the question blank.

Hypothesis II

In order to successfully individuate, the self concept of a woman between the ages of 35 and 45 must come to include a sense of responsibility for her own and/or her family's financial support.

In answering question number 37. *How important is financial independence to you?*, thirty women answered "very important", two women answered "very, but not from my husband", two women answered "very important, but top priority are my kids, work part time", and one woman

answered "need to have money of my own". Five women answered the question by stating "fairly", one woman answered by stating "detest it", and seven women stated that financial independence was not very important to them.

In turning to the question, *If presently married, do you find that you are less financially dependent upon your husband as the years progress?*, fourteen women answered "no", twelve women answered "yes", one woman answered "slightly", one woman answered "about the same", and twenty women did not answer the question or stated not applicable.

In answer to question number 39., *If divorced, are you financially independent or do you plan to be in the future?*, ten women stated "yes", two women stated "plan to be, but not now", one woman stated "would like to be, chances not too good", one woman stated "no", one woman said she was a widow, one woman stated that she did "not believe in financial independence, because I believe a husband should care for a wife", and thirty-two women left the question blank.

Question number 40. asked, *Has your relationship with your mother influenced your thoughts, feelings or behavior in regard to questions number 37, 38, and 39 and in what ways?* Thirty women replied that their mothers had influenced them to be financially independent because they saw that the older women were totally dependent upon their

husbands for support. They observed that their mothers were not interested in investments and other women stated that they were taught "a man will be there to care for me". Two women stated "probably", one woman stated "somewhat, Mom worked to bring in money and for something to do; she encouraged me to do the same." Fifteen women stated "no".

Question number 26., *Due to any recent or past developments or feelings, do you desire to be other than in the traditional role of a woman?*, twenty-eight women answered, "absolutely" or "yes", seven desired to be "traditional", two stated that they had discarded the traditional role when they divorced, one woman asked, "what is it", one woman left the question unanswered, one woman said "no", one woman was ambivalent, one woman said, "not now, can't handle traditional and career", three women stated that they were working toward "financial and emotional independence", and three women were ambivalent.

Hypothesis III

In order to successfully individuate, a woman between 35 and 45 years of age must have achieved a means of financial support or be in the process of attaining a means of financial support.

The results for questions number 6., 7., 8., 9., 10., and 11. are combined. The questions are as follows:

Are you presently married?, Are you presently employed?, If employed, how long have you worked?, If employed, state your reasons for working., When you were growing up, did your mother work?, and If your answer is yes to number 10 (the preceding question), state her reasons for working or if she never confided in you as to why she worked, state why you imagine that she worked? There were five women who replied that they were married and unemployed. The mothers of these women were also unemployed. One woman's answer was so confusing that it had to be discarded. Two women were unmarried and unemployed. Their mothers had been employed during the daughter's childhood. There were nine women who stated that they were unmarried and employed. Their mothers had also been employed during their childhood years. Nine women stated that they were married and employed. The mothers of these women had not been employed during their daughter's growing years. One woman stated that she was presently unmarried, unemployed and a student. Her mother had been unemployed during her childhood. Another woman stated that she was married and worked. She did not consider what her mother did as work, for during her childhood her father owned a camp and the whole family worked. Eleven women stated that they were married and employed. The mothers of these women had also been employed during the daughter's childhood years. There were seven women who

stated that they were unmarried and working. The mothers of these women did not work during their daughter's childhood years. One woman stated that she was separated and employed. She stated that her mother worked during World War II and stopped after her dad came home from the war.

Question number 27. asked, *If the answer is yes to number 26, how do you (did you) plan to seek your chosen role as a woman? i.e. continue with school, return to school after an absence, seek employment, etc.* Sixteen women stated that they would like to be in a role other than a traditional one and have pursued their goal through working. Twenty-four women stated that they have chosen to return to school. Three women stated that they were divorced. One woman stated that she does what she wants to do; one woman stated that she chose the role of a single parent; another woman stated that she had a multiple number of roles; one woman responded that she was an "individual woman, never accepted society's role for women"; and one woman expressed that she would "like to try being more traditional".

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this culminating project was to explore in what manner, if any, the individuation process of a woman between 35 and 45 years of age is directly affected by her relationship with her mother. Three specific hypotheses were examined by means of a subjective questionnaire. General trends ascertained from the replies to the questionnaires are presented in Part I. Part II will discuss conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Part I--Discussion of Results of Hypothesis Testing

The purpose of Hypothesis I was to explore whether women between 35 and 45 years of age, in order to individuate, must take a conscious look at their relationship with their mothers. Twenty-six women out of forty-eight were able to state that they were different from their mothers in personality characteristics. These women thought that because they were different, they had separated from their mothers. It appeared to be acceptable to these women to be separate from their mothers. In addition, it would seem to

me that these women had an internal support system of object constancy which they established during early childhood. They see themselves as separate from their mothers and feel that they are individuals.

In the area of performance, some women felt that they actually functioned differently as women than their mothers. Most of them wished to be more active in the community or work and it was most acceptable for them to be this way. There appeared to be no trauma connected with these realizations.

Nine women saw themselves as different emotionally from their mothers. They most definitely acknowledged that they were separate and reacted to life differently than their mothers. They viewed themselves as separate and apart from their mothers. Thus, they looked upon themselves as unique and individual.

The women who commented that they were physically different than their mothers were not willing possibly to look at the relationship they had with their mothers in a psychological manner. On the other hand, acknowledging that they were physically different than their mothers may be their way of stating that they are separate or not like their mothers.

The women who were concerned about not disappointing their mothers and those that were most interested in having

their mothers' approval, it would appear to me, did not have a positive experience during the rapprochement period and differentiation period of the separation/individuation stage. During these stages of development, the child must have the support and availability of the mother in accepting that she wishes to function autonomously. In addition, if the child feels that she wants to be near the mother for support and approval during this time, it is necessary that the mother give support and approval to her child. Furthermore, the internalization of a loving and supportive love object which leads to object constancy is very important to the process of separation/individuation. It seems to me that the women who are so very concerned about receiving approval from their mothers and not wanting to disappoint them at the age of 35 to 45 have not separated or completed their individuation process in relation to their mothers.

Twenty-three women felt that their mothers encouraged their seeking individuation and twenty-three women felt that their mothers hindered their seeking individuation. The women who felt the support of their mothers most likely received acceptance during the rapprochement period of development. They most likely were able to move toward and away from their mothers in an atmosphere in which the mother was available to them when she was needed and allowed autonomous function in her child when the child gave the

signal that that was what she wanted. In addition, the women most likely were able to return to the rapprochement period during adolescence with ease. During this moratorium state, they were able to have the internal support of the love object which, in turn, allowed them to have the support which sustained them through the identity role confusion stage of adolescence. They approached adulthood with a firm feeling that it was acceptable to be a separate and individuated person. Now at 35 to 45 years of age, they continue to feel that their mothers encourage their individuation process. It would seem to me that the mothers of these women are just continuing to relate to their daughters as they had during their daughter's childhood and adolescent years.

In regard to the thirty women who felt that they had definitely separated from their mothers and sought their own course in life, it would seem to me, from their definite "yes" answers, that they had achieved something that they were determined to accomplish--separation. It was important for them to achieve autonomy and they were able to do this with the availability of an understanding mother. Eighteen women stated that they sought their own identity during their teens. Margaret Mahler (1979) and Eric Erikson (1968) state that a person begins to establish her identity during adolescence. Erikson goes on to state that adolescence is

the time that a person integrates the elements of her earlier development. Thus, an adolescent re-evaluates her earlier development within the moratorium stage and is able to explore in what direction she wishes to move. Thus, it seems that eighteen women out of forty-eight were able to seek their own identity while living at home with their mothers. These women most likely continued to do so after they left home. It would further appear that these women find it reasonably easy to further the process of individuation and development of an identity at age 35 to 45.

There were seven women who chose to seek their own identity in their early 20's and they moved out of their mother's home. It would seem to me that they may have thought that they were separate from their mothers and thus it was time to seek their own destiny. In so doing, they were able to say that they were prepared to seek individuation. The same women today, at 35 to 45 years of age, may remember that time of separation as an additional foundation for their present life. They may feel that they did some foundation work in their early 20's and were then able to build upon that foundation in the years that followed.

The nine women who felt that they had not separated from their mothers emotionally or that they were still influenced by their mothers, probably were unable to separate

during early childhood and were unable to seek their identity while living at home during adolescence. It would seem to me that they carried with them to adulthood and to the ages of 35 to 45, an attachment to their mothers. Thus, they do not appear to be separate from their mothers, which prevents the development of individuation. It would seem to me that the area of concern is with the internalized support system and object constancy. The women may have a weak internal support system which makes it even more difficult to separate at age 35 to 45 from a mother and thus feel individuated.

In summary, it appears that women who think that they have separated from their mothers during adolescence and early adulthood also think that they are definitely separate from their mothers today at 35 to 45 years of age. It appears that these women received support, an acceptance of their separation/individuation process during early childhood and adolescence which laid the foundation for them to further the process and feel separate and individuated as adult women of 35 to 45 years of age. In regard to those women who wanted approval from their mothers or had not separated from them, it would appear that they did not receive the necessary support and acceptance which leads to object constancy during their childhood and in many ways did not seek their own identity during adolescence. In addition,

today at age 35 to 45, they find themselves still wanting the approval and acceptance from their mothers much like a child does in a relationship with her mother. The approval is paramount to the relationship. Thus, they did not have a positive experience during the rapprochement period of development on which to build a foundation for separation and individuation in adolescence and in adulthood.

Hypothesis II explored the assumption that a woman between 35 and 45 years of age must have a sense of responsibility for her own and/or her family's financial support in order for her to successfully individuate.

For those women who stated that financial independence was "very important", it would appear that during early childhood they received a good foundation for independent function and the desire to care for themselves. During the separation/individuation stage of development, the women learned that they were separate and able to respond to their own needs. As adults they realize that in order to be cared for, a person needs finances. An individualized woman between the ages of 35 and 45 wishes to continue to be able to respond to her own needs. Thus, she has a sense of financial responsibility toward herself and those who are in her care. In addition, during childhood, they were able to acquire the ability to function autonomously without the feeling of abandonment. Thus, in adulthood, the women have

the foundation to function autonomously and do not feel abandoned, for they have the support of an internalized love object, which contributes to their wanting to help financially support themselves and their families. With object constancy, the child, and thus the adult, is able to feel comfortable with herself as her caretaker. She is able to think that she can take care of herself and thus she wants to do so. There is no threat of object loss and she is able to be separate and self-managing.

In regard to those women who stated that financial independence is not very important, they possibly do not feel separate from the first love object, their mother. It is possible that they do not have the developmental base which dictates the desire to care for oneself. They, therefore, are still in need of someone else to be their financial caretaker. There does not exist a sense of separateness or individuality.

Many of the thirty women who thought that financial independence was important to them, commented that as children, they observed that their mothers were financially dependent upon others. The women went on to state that they did not want the same for themselves. They wanted to participate in financial decisions and felt they had to work to do so. Their mothers did not want to concern themselves with financial matters. The daughters observed that their

mothers were not always happy in the role of being dependent. It could be that these women chose not to follow the role in which they were socialized based upon their gender. Their role was not going to be dictated by their gender. They probably were socialized by their mothers to the extent that they were given sex-typed toys and treated as more fragile than boys. As they matured, they may have observed that the sex-role they were to be socialized for did not lead to self-fulfillment and thus, they chose a contemporary lifestyle as opposed to a traditional lifestyle.

In regard to the question exploring a traditional role versus a contemporary role, twenty-four women, just under half of the total women in the survey, stated that they definitely wanted to be contemporary women. Others stated that they were working toward the contemporary way of life. According to Lipman-Blumen (1972), the contemporary woman admired her father more than her mother. It can be assumed that the father worked. Lipman-Blumen goes on to state that the mother, whether she worked or not, was perceived by the contemporary daughter as not liking household work. Thus, it could be that the contemporary woman was socialized by her mother for a more fulfilling role than keeping house. According to Lipman-Blumen, the women in her study who chose to be in the traditional role, viewed their mothers as successful women who liked the role of homemaker and

were indifferent towards household tasks. Thus, it appears that women who choose contemporary and traditional lifestyles came to know their mothers differently.

There were fourteen women who answered that they were not less financially dependent upon their husbands as the years progressed. Twelve women answered that they were presently less dependent upon their husbands than they had been in the past. The remaining women did not answer the question, or stated "slightly" or "about the same". It appears to me that there is about an even break in how married women feel about financial independence. Only a small portion of the women in the study feel they wish to have a financial responsibility for themselves and their families. With twenty women not answering the question, however, it could be assumed that these women were not married and the question was not applicable to them.

In summary, women who wish to have a sense of financial responsibility for themselves have a foundation which states that they are able to be responsible for taking care of their own needs. Thus, they wish to contribute to their own caretaking. The women who wish to be taken care of financially are not able to respond to their own financial needs. Their internal support system is not developed sufficiently for them to be able to want to care for themselves.

Hypothesis III explored the fact that women between the ages of 35 to 45 must have achieved a means of financial support and that they be in the process of attaining a means of financial support in order to successfully individuate.

In response to questions concerning the employment of the women and the employment of their mothers, five women were married and unemployed. Their mothers were also unemployed during their childhood. In the study by Lipman-Blumen (1972) of college women, she found that a woman's perception about her mother's satisfaction with life can influence her choice of a traditional or contemporary role. The women who chose, like their mothers, to have a traditional lifestyle, possibly viewed their mothers as being satisfied with their role and chose to follow the same role.

In regard to female social equality score, Meier (1972) found that daughters who had mothers occupied exclusively in the housewife and homemaker role had low FSE scores. It could be assumed that the women in the study who were unemployed as were their mothers, did not think that they had a sense of positive female social equality to warrant them pursuing a role other than homemaker. Especially since Lipman-Blumen (1972) reports that even those mothers who were employed in very low prestige jobs had daughters with higher FSE scores than daughters of homemakers.

Bruce (1974) found in his study that working mothers thought that employment would be an option for their daughters more than did an unemployed mother. In another study of self-defining women (women who planned to have a career) and social-defining women (women who planned to marry and have no career), Stewart (1974) found that self-defining women tended to have mothers who worked during the daughter's childhood years.

There were nine women in the study who were married and employed. They had mothers who were not employed during their childhood years. These women may have perceived their mothers to be unsuccessful in the homemaker role. Two of these women in the study stated that they chose to work after their children had grown and were not in need of her as a full-time caretaker. According to Cooperman (1971), some married women choose to enter the labor force in pursuit of a second career after about ten years of marriage. Their first career was that of homemaker. It can be assumed that the women in the present study were married at least ten years. With the growth of their children, these women have an over-abundance of leisure time. Working allows the woman to use the leisure time to fulfill herself.

Six of the married employed women whose mothers did not work, stated that they chose to work because they wanted a healthy self-image or self-concept in addition to

financial return. According to Lynn (1971), many married women work because the role of homemaker does not meet their original aspirational goals. These women probably did not think, as Lynn states, that they could reach their occupational potential as a homemaker, even though their mothers possibly did do so. Although many women, as stated previously, viewed their mothers to be unhappy in the homemaker role. Thus, possibly some women in this study chose to work to assure themselves of not repeating the unhappy, unfulfilled role of their mothers.

There were nine women in the study who were unmarried and employed. Their mothers were also employed. It can be assumed that they had to work to support themselves. It can also be assumed that possibly because their mothers worked, they would also have worked if they were married.

In a study by Bruce (1974), mothers who worked were less involved in the courtship of their daughters than non-working mothers. In addition, those mothers who worked and those who did not work but projected that their daughters would work, did not take an active role in the courtship of their daughters. Thus, these unmarried women in the study may have possibly worked if they had been married and thus have chosen to contribute to their financial support.

There were twelve married women in the study who worked and had mothers who also worked. It may be that the

daughters perceived that their mothers were dissatisfied with the homemaker role and they chose to work in order to have a more fulfilled life than that of a traditional woman.

Bruce (1974) points out that working mothers are more inclined to think that their daughters will work in the future than non-working mothers. The working mother could have socialized her daughter for the contemporary role by making it known that she preferred the contemporary role to the traditional. Women who work are self-defining and Stewart (1974) points out that self-defining women have employed mothers.

Sixteen women stated that they preferred the contemporary role as opposed to the traditional role. They chose to pursue their role choice by working. If married, I would assume that they combined both their domestic obligations and their work obligations. Twenty-four women stated that they wanted to pursue the contemporary role and they chose to do so by returning to school. Many of the women stated that they were pursuing an advanced degree. In a study by Lipman-Blumen (1972), she found that when mothers were in favor of graduate school for their daughters, the daughter was inclined to favor the contemporary lifestyle for themselves. Self-defining women wished to have a career. It can be assumed that some women who return to school wish to train themselves in order to eventually work and have a

means of income. Thus, many of the women who are married and returning to school will eventually be able to earn money and will, therefore, combine both the homemaker role and the employment role. In addition, the return to school, for many women, can be a step toward establishing themselves in a second career.

In summary, thirty-eight women out of forty-eight were employed. Seventeen of these women were unmarried, and it can be assumed that they had to work in order to financially support themselves. Twenty-six married women were working and it can be assumed that they had reached some level of achieving a means of financial support. In addition, twenty-four women stated that they preferred the contemporary role and some chose to return to school in order to establish themselves in that role. Thus, some women in the study were willing to assume financial responsibility for themselves, either by working or pursuing an education, which will lead them to employment.

Part II--Conclusion and Suggestions For Further Research

It is the conclusion of this study that Hypothesis I is supported and that women between 35 and 45 years of age must examine their relationship with their mother in order to successfully individuate. The general trend of the results

of this pilot study showed that some women feel separate from their mothers, others are still wanting the approval of their mothers, twenty-three women out of forty-eight thought their mothers encouraged their individuation and twenty-three women out of forty-eight thought that their mothers hindered their individuation process. It is a further conclusion of this study that the preceding facts, when related to the literature on separation/individuation and to the literature that theorizes that the process repeats itself during adolescence, would dictate that whenever a woman chooses to further her individuation process, she must return to the original separation/individuation stage and the establishment of object constancy.

It was further concluded that Hypothesis II, which states that in order for women between 35 and 45 years of age to individuate, they must have a sense of financial responsibility for themselves and their families, was partially supported. Thirty women out of the forty-eight in the study stated that it was important for them to be able to contribute to their own support and that of their families. Whereas, just about half of the married women in the study did not desire to be financially independent of their husbands. They thought that they had separated from their mothers and sought their own identity. It appears that they had replaced one caretaker for another. On the

other hand, twenty-four women who participated in the study wished to follow the contemporary role. There is a discrepancy here, for a contemporary role combines work and home and some of the women who stated that they wished to follow this role also wished to be totally financially dependent upon their husbands or former husbands.

It is a further conclusion of this pilot study that women between the ages of 35 and 45 do return to school or work in order to achieve a means of financial support. The assuming of the responsibility for contributing to their own financial support and that of their families aids a woman in her individuation process. Twenty-four women in the present study returned to school. Their intention was to eventually be employed. They thought that with financial independence would come self-esteem and a higher level of self-concept. Thirty-eight women in the study were working. Twenty-six of these women were married and combined household responsibilities with employment.

For future studies, it would be important to have the subjects divided according to marital status. In addition, it would be beneficial to have five categories of women: married, divorced, never married, widowed, lesbian. In this manner more detailed results could be accumulated relating to financial independence.

In addition, a more objective type of questionnaire

would produce more detailed and accurate results. It would be interesting to have a study of mothers and adult daughters and have both women fill out a questionnaire. Some women stated that they did not know what was meant by certain words. For example, the words "traditional", "individual", and "separation" appeared to be either confusing or misunderstood by some subjects. In the future, it would be beneficial to explain what was intended by the use of such terms. It is also suggested that the age be lowered to 28. Many of the women stated that they chose to individuate or separate from their mothers either in their late 20's or mid to late 30's.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence a mother has upon the individuation process of a woman between 35 and 45 years of age. A questionnaire was distributed to participants in six women's centers in the Los Angeles area. Forty-eight completed questionnaires were able to be used to determine the results of the survey.

Based upon a limited body of literature on the mother's influence in the separation/individuation process of a child, on the sex role formation of a female, on the socialization process of a female, on a woman's choice of a traditional or non-traditional role, on a woman's attitude toward financial independence, and on a woman's choice to seek a second career or occupation, three hypotheses were tested. It was hypothesized that a woman between 35 and 45 years of age can successfully individuate only if she consciously examines her past and present relationship with her mother. It was further hypothesized that in order for a woman between 35 and 45 years of age to successfully individuate, her self concept must come to include a sense of responsibility for her own and/or her family's financial

support. In addition, it was hypothesized that in order for a woman between 35 and 45 years of age to successfully individuate, she must have achieved a means of financial support or be in the process of attaining a means of financial support.

Results demonstrated that a woman who is in the above-stated age range and wishes to further individuate, aids this process by examining her past and present relationship with her mother. The fact that a woman between 35 and 45 years of age who is in the process of individuating has a sense of financial responsibility for herself and her family was partially supported. In addition, a woman between 35 and 45 years of age who is seeking individuation supports this process by returning to work or to school.

It was suggested, for the purpose of further research, that both the daughters and mothers complete a questionnaire, that a more objective type of questionnaire be used and that the age range be lowered to 28 to 38.

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...in support of a research program in...
...in the field of...
...is to establish...
...15-25 year...
...activity...
...with their...
...with...
...questionnaire.

APPENDIX

Again, this is for the purpose of research only and you need not identify yourself.

Your participation is needed to conduct proper research. Please complete the questionnaire and return it by...

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
[Signature]
Linda B. Smith

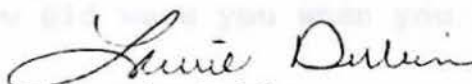
Enclosed is a questionnaire that I have prepared in support of a thesis I am preparing and completing towards a masters in counseling psychology. The questions have been drafted in relation to the purpose of my study which is to establish more information about women who are in the 35 to 45 year age group and their relationship with their mothers. This includes the relationship of such women with their mothers prior to their mothers' death. Therefore, women with deceased mothers are asked to complete the questionnaire.

Again, this is for the purpose of research only and you need not identify yourself.

Your participation is needed to assure proper research. Please complete the questionnaire and return it by

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours,


Laurie Dubin

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions will be used for research only. The purpose of this study is to establish more information regarding the relationship that women, between the ages of 35 and 45, have with their mothers. All answers will be kept confidential. Please do not write your name on any of the pages.

1. How old are you?
2. What is your birth order: Circle one
 - Only child
 - The first-born child and not the youngest
 - Second-born child and not the youngest
 - Second-born child and the youngest
 - Third-born child and not the youngest
 - Third-born child and the youngest
 - Other (specify) _____
3. Education: Circle highest level

Grade School	High School	Graduate Work
Jr. High School	College 1, 2, 3, 4	
4. Mother's education: Circle highest level

Grade School	High School	Graduate Work
Jr. High School	College 1, 2, 3, 4	
5. If you were ever married, how old were you when you married?
6. Are you presently married?
7. Are you presently employed?

8. If employed, how long have you worked?
9. If employed, state your reasons for working.
10. When you were growing up, did your mother work?
11. If your answer is yes to number 10, state her reasons for working, or if she never confided in you as to why she worked, state why you imagine that she worked.
12. Have you ever been in individual therapy?
13. If your answer is yes to number 12, state how long and at what age?
14. Have you ever participated in group therapy?
15. If your answer is yes to number 14, state how long and at what age?
16. What do you consider to be your 5 most individual traits?
17. What do you consider to be your mother's 5 most individual traits?

18. In what ways are you like your mother?
19. In what ways are you different from your mother?
20. Briefly describe your relationship with your mother?
21. In what manner does your relationship with your mother hinder or encourage you in seeking your own individuality? If your mother is deceased, in what manner did your relationship with her hinder or encourage you in seeking your own individuality?
22. Do you feel that you have separated from your mother and sought your own individual course in life?
23. In what ways has it been difficult for you to separate from your mother?

24. Are there any issues you need to work on in terms of separation from your mother? If yes, briefly state what they are.

25. To what extent do you feel influenced or restrained by your mother's expectations of you?

26. Due to any recent or past developments or feelings, do you desire to be other than in the traditional role of a woman?

27. If the answer is yes to number 26, how do you (did you) plan to seek your chosen role as a woman? i.e. continue with school, return to school after an absence, seek employment, etc.)

28. In what ways are you an independent person?
29. In what ways are you a dependent person?
30. In what ways would you like to change your dependent and/or independent state?
31. Does your mother support your independent nature and in what ways?
32. Does your mother support your dependent nature and in what ways?
33. When you were 15 to 20 years younger, did you choose to model your mother's lifestyle?

34. If your answer is yes to number 33, in what ways did you do so?
35. Did you or do you presently wish to make any changes in your modeling of your mother's lifestyle?
36. If your answer is yes to number 35, what changes did you or do you wish to make?
37. How important is financial independence to you?
38. If presently married, do you find that you are less financially dependent upon your husband as the years progress?
39. If divorced, are you financially independent or do you plan to be in the future?
40. Has your relationship with your mother influenced your thoughts, feelings or behavior in regard to questions number 37, 38, and 39 and in what ways?

41. Would you say that your mother tried to pass her identity on to you?
42. If yes, were you willing to accept it?
43. If yes to question number 42, are you still willing to accept your mother's identity as your own?
44. If no to question number 42, at what age did you decide to seek your own identity and what precipitated your decision?