Becoming a Parent: Discourses, Experience and Narratives

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For Keith and our children Maryse, Pablo and Antonio

ABSTRACT

This thesis is focussed on the question of how people become parents. Foucault's theory of discourse and ideas from Contemporary Phenomenology guided a dual approach to answering the question. Discourses from within the previous academic research literature on becoming a parent and the popular child-rearing manuals of this century were analysed. Fieldwork, over an 18 month period, was carried out with a small group of parents, in an urban New Zealand context, who were becoming parents for the first time.

In the academic literature, previous researchers worked within a discourse that asserts that the experience of becoming a parent is a (normal) crisis. These researchers argued the need to examine people's experiences but investigated these through the categories they believed relevant, abstracting people's experiences from the time, place and relationships in which they were embedded. Within the popular child-rearing manuals of this century, the overarching dominant discourse was one in which the social ills of each generation were to be remedied for the next through individual change. Initially, the dominant discourse was underpinned by ideas and practices about physical and mental hygiene and a moral order based on habits. By the middle of the century, the dominant discourse was underpinned by ideas and practices about normal emotional and cognitive development and a moral order based on social adjustment.

The material gathered throughout the fieldwork suggests that the people who participated in this research became parents through experience; through trial and error, observing and undergoing. This experience was mediated by the knowledge of trusted others, people's experiences of their own families and expert knowledge. As they narrated their accounts of this experience they used the vocabulary and judgements of the discourses of psychology and liberal feminism. They also commonly referred to a discourse of common sense. The narratives revealed that the effects of these discourses, in themselves, are neither emancipatory nor oppressive but need to be examined in the particular context of their use. As the mothers and fathers created a life for their child they reflexively engaged with both the projects of the self and the other.

The material from the fieldwork shows that people continually engage in dialogue about child-rearing, influencing and shaping others as they are influenced and shaped by others. However, the accounts that people gave of their experiences and the dominant discourses from within the academic research and popular literature constitute parenting and child-rearing as private concerns of the family. On the basis of the findings of this research it is argued that efforts should be directed towards creating a genuine democratic public culture of dialogue around issues of child-rearing.

Throughout the thesis the material from the fieldwork is used to reflect on contemporary debates about the nature of subjectivity. The research process of the fieldwork is also reflexively examined in terms of dominant discourses constituting research, and the plurality of data that constitute the experience of the researcher.

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My family and friends have also contributed to this thesis through numerous conversations about the experiences of becoming parents and also through the practical

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

During the late 1980s many of my friends, family and colleagues were having their first children. We were of a generation and social class that had tended to pursue further education, travel and careers into our thirties before starting families. I was very curious about the experiences of my kindred ones, as they became mothers and fathers: it seemed such big change as they went from being people without children to being people with children. How did they become mothers and fathers and how did they know what to do? More generally, I was interested in questions about identity and development, and so was fascinated by the ways in which people could "overnight" become, primarily, or in addition, mothers and fathers with a whole lot of new practices, ideas, feelings, concepts...another way of being. For some it seemed very problematic whilst others gave the appearance of ease and grace. I understood the biology of it all, but *how* did women and men become mothers and fathers; what were the experiences that contributed to this "sea change" and how could these experiences best be apprehended and understood?

From the mainstream body of literature drawn on for the study of human development it was clear that for many years successive generations had tried to understand and document the experiences of becoming a mother and father. For each generation of new parents there has been a new wave of investigators who had critiqued the work of those who had gone before, and then offered a fresh crop of theoretically and methodologically improved frameworks to capture the essence of new mothers' and fathers' experiences. However, although these studies claimed to describe how women and men experienced becoming parents and what beliefs are held about being a parent (Breen, 1975; Entwisle & Doering, 1981; Grossman et al, 1980; La Rossa & La Rossa, 1981; Le Masters, 1957), they did not reveal how these women and men had *become* mothers and fathers in the context of their daily lives and lived experiences.

Foucault's theory of discourse seemed a useful conceptual tool for thinking both about the repetitive description of parents' experiences by generations of researchers *and*

the ways in which people become constituted as parents through what is said and done to them in the name of their new subjectivity, as a mother or father. In particular the critical method that is suggested in the early and middle periods of his work seemed to offer ways of examining the dominant statements made about the experiences of becoming a mother and father, and how these statements gain their authority. However, as I listened to friends and family talk about the things that were said and done by the Plunket Nurse, the Doctor, antenatal class teachers, other family members, friends, support group members and books it seemed important that an analysis of the play of discourses surrounding becoming a mother or father be embedded in the context of the lived experiences of particular individuals.

This suggested a dual approach to the question. First, an examination of the discourses surrounding becoming a parent. Second, fieldwork with a small number of parents that would focus on how parents themselves represented the experience of becoming a mother, father, parent. The dual approach would enable me to explore the interplay between lived experience and discourse and what people then make of discourse. It seemed important to examine this interplay to develop a more adequate understanding of how a new subjectivity is acquired so as to understand how people's lives are both reproduced and transformed. Such an understanding needed to be developed on the basis of people's lived experience rather than a textual analysis. At the time, I argued that Foucault did not have a well-developed understanding of the subject and that some way of thinking about the nebulous ground between experience, subjectivity and discourse, in the context of daily lived experience, was needed. I turned to Contemporary Phenomenology to explore ways for doing this (Loveridge, 1990).

Contemporary phenomenology is an approach that has been emerging in recent anthropological writing, and has also been contributed to by feminist social theorists concerned with the experience of women.[1] It draws on European phenomenology,

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[1] Jackson (1996) has edited a stimulating and innovative collection of work that has its genesis within this approach. His introductory essay is particularly valuable for outlining the orientation and preoccupations of those working within this area. Hastrup and Hervik (1994) have also edited a thought-provoking collection that illuminates the central questions concerning knowledge and experience in contemporary phenomenology. Their collection also contains a useful introduction. Young's (1990) collection of essays provides another example of empirical work that has been conceptualised within the broad parameters of this approach, while

existentialism, radical empiricism and critical theory. It should "help us not only describe the nature of subjective experience for a given person or people, but to understand how this and other ways of being come about through a complex play of political, cultural, social and linguistic forces" (Desjarlais, 1996, p. 274). It insists on accepting people's experience as primary data and recognising that the research produced through fieldwork is melded through the relationships that are constructed between the researcher, as a living person, and the people worked with, as living people. This is not to say that the relationships influence the research process, pulling it slightly this way or that, but that they are foundational to and constitutive of the research. Hence, it is important to analyse the experiences of the experiencing researcher, as well as those who are the focus of the research. This is not a reflexivity that gazes back on the individual author and producer of texts but one that recognises the shared nature of experience as one experiencing subject meets with another. Peter Hervik (1994, p. 79) points out that shared experience does not imply identical experience but rather that we "attend to similar categorical conventions and practical tasks". To insist on experience as the starting point for such reflection, then, is to accept and acknowledge "That the agent of scholarship is a living person, not just a mind. This reformulates the lived body as a path of access rather than a thing…fieldwork is quintessentially an intersubjective experience"(Hastrup, 1994, p. 235).

As I conceptualised the research, did the fieldwork and analysed the various data I have attempted to test the ideas that I have engaged with against my own life experiences of the research. The constraints and possibilities we experience in doing our research belong to the same social world in which we and the people we work with live. If we are not to operate from some privileged understanding about the nature of the practice of researchers and theorists, and the knowledge we produce, it is imperative that we test ideas against our own experience as researchers. Throughout the thesis I have made some comments that relate to my own experience of becoming a mother; however, I consciously made a decision not to document and objectify the experience but to live it in the way that I live other aspects of my life, sometimes reflexively but more often in the unreflective way that we live

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Smith's (1987) exposition on "The everyday world as problematic" provides yet another example of work situated within this approach.

out and practise our cultural knowledge generally. Although, as will become apparent in Part Two, the experience of becoming a mother made me attend in a different way to the transcripts of interviews and my field notes, revealing to me aspects of experience itself which I had not apprehended before. It is this aspect of my experience that I examine in this work.

Michel de Certeau (1988, pp. 118–122) has highlighted a distinction between the discourse by which we live life, narrative discourse, and that by which we explain life, scientific discourse. I have found this distinction illuminating for thinking about the different kinds of knowledge which, as will be evident, have sat side by side, often in tension, during the various stages of this research. De Certeau has drawn on the history of the tour and the map to evoke the differences between narrative and scientific discourse. Medieval maps included map elements but predominately prescribed actions to be followed on the tour. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century the map became disengaged from the itinerary, the description of tours, to have a life of its own, erasing as it did so "the condition of its possibility". The tour, or the itinerary, which articulated the human journey-- the resting places, sites to be seen, places to pray at--the narrative experience, was gradually pushed aside by the map, a static plane projecting observations of geographical knowledge, drawn together from various sources but not acknowledging the operations which produced it. Gradually through various transformations the map became "a proper place in which to *exhibit the products* of knowledge, from tables of *legible* results" (p. 121). In this thesis I draw on both scientific and narrative discourse to understand the experiences of a small number of people, as they became parents for the first time.

In the Part One, I concentrate on the maps that have been constructed by researchers to explain the experiences of people becoming parents, and by childrearing experts to better guide parents through this experience. Chapter Two sets out the key ideas from the work of Foucault that I engage with to examine previous studies and the childrearing literature. I also identify the clearly sited co-ordinates and the badly chartered terrain in his work for research *in* the life-world. Chapter Three examines previous academic studies, exploring in particular their ideas about how experience is constituted and how we can know about experience. In Chapter Four I examine key texts in the childrearing literature from the turn

of the century. I focus on the nature of the dominant advice, how it achieved its authority, and how the literature constructed the child, the mother and the father.

In the Part Two, I focus on itineraries, narratives constructed on the basis of eighteen months of fieldwork with people becoming parents for the first time. I use these itineraries to represent the experiences of these people but also to make a case for insisting on social experience as the starting point for reflection about the nature of the social world and for exploring subjectivity. Chapter Five introduces the research. I explain in a general way the methodology I used in the fieldwork, and indicate where there is further discussion of the methodology in the chapters that follow. I examine my experiences of the initial stages of the research, using some of the analytical tools drawn on in Part One of the thesis. Changes in my understandings of experience and intersubjectivity are considered. The antenatal classes and mother support groups are also introduced in this chapter. Chapter Six and Chapter Seven have dual roles. Chapter Six asserts the importance the people that I worked with gave to experience and then a narrative of one family is used to illuminate and represent the nature of experience more generally. Chapter Seven explores narrative as a way of reflecting on experience and then the narrative of one family is used to illuminate and represent the relationship between experience and narrative. Both Chapters Six and Seven provide narrative accounts of the experiences of becoming a mother and a father. Chapter Eight provides narratives from four other families to further represent these experiences. In Chapter Nine I move between the maps and itineraries to analyse, rather than represent, the project of becoming a parent. I discuss in detail the ways in which these people's experiences of becoming parents were mediated and articulated through their own family experiences, the selective appropriation of the practices and knowledge of trusted others and the selective use of expert knowledge as they forged a *modus vivendi*. Chapter Ten concludes the thesis by summarising the main findings of the research and considering issues raised by the research in a broader research context.

PART ONE

CHAPTER TWO

Initial Points of Reference on the Map

In this chapter, engaging with the work of Foucault, I explore what a discourse analysis of becoming a mother or father might consist of and what it might offer to our understanding of these processes. I am interested here in working with the critical method suggested in his work, applying its key ideas to the life-world and, where necessary, working with ideas of other people to help fill the gaps and inadequacies that become apparent.[1] The ideas that interest me most, and which are the focus of this chapter, are Foucault's understanding of discourse, and changes in his understandings of the subject. For the purposes of organising my material I have differentiated between three phases in the development of Foucault's approach to discourse analysis and three corresponding changes in his thinking about the subject. It is important to remember that any such categorisation is to some extent arbitrary and masks the extent to which the development of a writer's ideas is a process, with particular ideas being more or less emphasised at certain moments.

Archaeology and technologies of discipline

Although there are clearly identifiable shifts of focus and understanding in Foucault's work, his project can broadly be described as an examination of the ways in which the individual in westertn culture is constituted, both as an object and a subject. In an interview published in 1982 Foucault identified three modes of objectification of the subject that he had sought to study: dividing practices, practices of scientific classification and practices of subjectification. In his early work Foucault focussed on the first two. Initially, he was interested in the ways people were given personal and social identities through the practices of social objectification, which made certain categories of people such

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[1] This is by no means an attempt to provide an introduction to the work of Foucault. For particularly interesting overviews see Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) and McNay (1994). Miller (1993) has written a fascinating biography of Foucault that also serves to introduce the main preoccupations of his work in both an engaging and erudite manner.

as lepers, inmates of asylums, prisoners and vagabonds objects of observation, and "other". As he analysed these dividing practices in various institutions of confinement, Foucault became interested in the connections between dividing practices, and the emerging social sciences. Hence, his interest in the second mode of objectification, the practices of scientific classification.

In this early work, Foucault was also preoccupied with the emergence of a new form of power in society, and with the distinctive technologies of power and domination necessary for this new form of power. Foucault argued that whereas premodern power was imposed from the top down and had recourse to force and violence, modern power was productive, local and developed initially in the "disciplinary institutions" (Fraser, 1989). Premodern power, such as the power of the sovereign, was always visible and on display. In contrast, modern power worked in reverse, seeking the seemingly gentler path of invisibility whilst making the objects of power visible (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). It was through the disciplinary institutions (asylums, hospitals, prisons and schools) that this new form of power was developed and exercised. The aim of disciplinary technology was to create a "docile [body] that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved", (Foucault, 1979a, p. 136) and it required new kinds of knowledge: detailed information both of the population and of individuals and their experiences.

In part, the social sciences developed to meet the need for these new kinds of knowledge. As dossiers of observations accumulated, a systematic ordering made "possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterisation of collective facts, the calculation of gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given population" (Foucault, 1979a, p. 190). Initially this "science of man" developed within the disciplinary institutions, and hence the procedures of investigation and adjudication of evidence were developed in and influenced by the broader context of disciplinary technologies and their techniques. At the heart of the disciplinary technologies was the ritual of the examination, a procedure involving both surveillance and normalising judgements. These procedures involved the subjection of the person perceived as the object of the examination, and the bestowing of a mantle of neutrality and invisibility on the person carrying out the examination.

Foucault asserted that it is no coincidence that we talk about the scholarly "disciplines" of the social sciences; their development was closely linked to the spread of the disciplinary technologies (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). The knowledge furnished by this science was then used to establish our understandings of human nature and the boundaries that prescribed what was appropriate human behaviour and what was not. A dominant practice emerged of categorising human activity in terms of a binary opposition: the acceptable and the unacceptable, the normal and subnormal, the sick and the healthy, the legitimate and illegitimate. Hutton described this period of Foucault's work as concerned with "the ways in which external authority shapes the structure of the mind...the policing function as it is understood in the French sense: the disciplining of human affairs by public and quasi-public agencies" (Hutton, 1988, p. 125).

The concepts of discourse and discursive formations were central to Foucault's analyses of the ways in which our understandings of human nature have been shaped and social conduct regulated in terms of the possible and the not possible. Considerable confusion surrounds the concept of discourse. In part this is due to there being different approaches to the concept of discourse and discourse analysis. In a very general sense discourse refers to any regulated system of statements (Henriques, Unwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1984, p. 105), and a discourse analysis attempts to establish the regulated and systematic internal rules of a discourse. The regulated nature of discourses reveals their social origins, and this is captured well by Wendy Holloway's definition of discourse as an interrelated "system of statements which cohere around common meanings and values...[that] are a product of social factors of power and practices rather than an individual's set of ideas" (Holloway, 1983, p. 231).

In his early work Foucault developed the archaeological method to enable him to describe the rules that governed and regulated the discourses, constituting the subject as an object of scientific inquiry and normalising practices. Foucault argued that such an analysis should not be confused with a history of ideas, which seeks coherence and continuity, but rather, it should endeavour to reveal discontinuous development, contradictions, exclusions, displacements and incompatibilities within a discursive formation (Foucault, 1972, p. 149). Furthermore, Foucault contended that the purpose of a

discourse analysis was not to unravel causes, something he considered an impossible task, but to focus on the effects of discourses in particular social and historical circumstances. In his early work Foucault considered that discourses were autonomous, and that it was theoretically possible to produce an account that was a pure description of the rules that govern discursive practices. He maintained that the methodological archaeologist was not bound by the same institutional, theoretical and epistemic bonds that governed the social practices he or she was studying (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 103).

Although Foucault wished to examine how subjects were constructed through regulatory and disciplinary techniques, at this stage he gave little attention to the subject, presenting him/her as a blank slate (Loveridge, 1990). At best, the subject was depicted as passive and docile, and at worst, as Foucault concluded in the often quoted ultimate sentence of *The Order of Things*, something that could disappear, "... erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea" (Foucault, 1970, p. 387). A number of feminist writers have pointed out that Foucault neglected to consider the gendered character of many of the disciplinary techniques, and that accounts of subjectivity that draw on the work of Foucault need to take this into account. For example, Bartky (1988) argued that although men and women are subject to many of the same disciplinary practices Foucault has described, he has treated the bodily experiences of men and women as if they did not differ at all. Bartky went on to build on Foucault's ideas about disciplinary practices to examine the ways in which a recognisably feminine body is produced. McNay (1992) argued that it is correct to criticise Foucault for not considering the different ways in which men and women's bodies are discursively produced. She cautioned however, against pursuing this line of argument to the extent that a separate history of repression for women and an eternal undifferentiated opposition between the sexes is posited:

> ...the history of the female body is not completely separate from that of the male body. Whilst the body is worked upon by gender construction, it is also inscribed by other formations: class, race, and the system of commodity fetishism. These formations may, to varying degrees, be internally gendered but they also work across gender distinctions, breaking down the absolute polarity between the male and female body. (McNay, 1992, p. 37)

Henessey (1993, p. 65), also arguing for a less reductive mode of analysis, suggested that while feminists have easily dealt with what they perceive as the gender blindness of Foucault's work they have yet adequately to consider Foucault's blindness to imperialism, and to engage with the implications of this "oversight" for a theorisation of feminine subjectivity that draws on the work of Foucault.

Although McNay contended that the gender blindness of Foucault's work should be seen as lacuna rather than a major theoretical problem, she considered Foucault's definition of the individual as a docile body, and the implicit construction of women as passive victims, as extremely problematic (McNay, 1992, p. 41–47). McNay argued that Foucault's strong emphasis on disciplinary power centred on the body leads to an oversimplified account of the ways in which hegemonic social relations are maintained and an over stable account of the way in which gender identity is formed. Foucault developed his analysis of the relationship between power and the body in a series of analyses of official discourses in formal institutions – asylums, hospitals, prisons and the psychiatrist's couch, – and it is questionable how far ideas developed on the bases of these analyses can be generalised to everyday contexts where there are not such formalised, monolithic, institutionalised bases for power. Pecheux (1988) made a similar critique. He criticised Foucault's understanding of discourse as a subjectless, epistemic structure, and has argued for a focus on the spoken everyday discourse of pragmatic subjects. In particular, he contended that Foucault's approach precluded an examination of the ambivalence and indeterminacy of everyday language as used by ordinary people.

A sole focus on official discourses may also have obscured the evidence of conflicting discourses, and conceivably have led to an overestimation of their power. It is important to consider the ways in which hegemonic constructions are resisted and disrupted and different types of freedom have been fought for and won. For example, the rigid dualism of masculinity and femininity has been constantly struggled against, both individually and collectively, and undermined in both gay and heterosexual communities. Likewise, an understanding of the individual based only on the body will be an oversimplification. As crucial as it has been to bring back the body to analyses of experience, it is important to consider those aspects of experience that are beyond the realm

of the passive body.   As will become apparent, Foucault recognised some of these problems himself in later years.

This discussion of Foucault's early work suggests several avenues of inquiry about the analysis of discourses through which the experiences of women and men as they become mothers and fathers are articulated. It foregrounds the need to identify the specific external authorities that regulate mothers and fathers, and to examine the ways in which they contribute to the shaping of discourses about the experience of becoming a mother, father, parent. What are the dominant statements made about these experiences? What ideas are foundational? What ideas are excluded?   The discussion also suggests that the ways in which the authority of these statements is achieved needs to be examined. What devices and rhetorical tropes are used to buttress the authority of these statements? What is the role played by the social sciences in objectifying these experiences and prescribing the boundaries of the legitimate and illegitimate constructions of these experiences?   It also highlights the need to examine the ideas about the individual that underpin these discourses: Do they assume an active or a passive subject? How do they conceive of social relations between men and women? How do they conceive of the body? These questions will be revisited again in Chapter Three and Chapter Four when I examine the academic and popular literature about the experience of becoming a parent.

Genealogy and technologies of self government

Gradually, a broader universe of reference developed in Foucault's understanding of discourse, and this occurred as he attempted to find a more satisfactory account of the regulation of discursive practices, an account that moved beyond the impasses of discourses being conceptualised as both autonomous and governed.   Discourses were still seen as regulatory statements, but the systematic regulation of discourses shifted beyond "internal rules", to a level of the discursive formation. A discursive formation can be said to exist "whenever one can describe, between a number of statements... a system of dispersion, whenever between objects, types of statements, concepts or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations)"

(Foucault, 1972, p. 38). The focus of a discourse analysis in this sense was to establish the conditions of existence of particular statements and those "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Sawicki captured the task well when she wrote that there is a concern with the "historical conditions that made it possible for certain representations, objectifications, and classifications of reality to dictate which kinds of statements come up as candidates for truth or falsity, which sorts of questions and answers are taken seriously" (Sawicki, 1991, p. 55).

In this period of his work, Foucault recognised that investigators are themselves immersed within and subject to the discourses they describe and hence it is not possible to produce purely descriptive accounts. He came to the understanding that the political situation and motivation of the investigator will shape the discourse he or she in turn creates through his or her analysis. Furthermore, he argued that the production of knowledge is not merely historically and socially located but inextricably linked with the exercise of power in a *productive* sense. Foucault described the relationship between power and knowledge as "...there is [sic] no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1979a, p. 27). Within this particular understanding of knowledge, the role of the intellectual was not one of freeing truth from power (for truth is already power) but "detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social and economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 133). Against a dominant view of power as oppressive this conception of power as productive has generally been considered profound and to have changed the way that social scientists have thought about the world, and their own practice. However, it has also been argued that at times the productive nature of power has been overstated, leading to a sense of power being everywhere and hence not able to be analysed in specific sites and particular forms.

To examine the significance of social practices from within them, Foucault developed the method of genealogy. At the heart of the genealogical enterprise was a focus on power as a formative force, and the part played by the combination of power and knowledge in the historical transformation of regimes of truth and power. The

genealogist's task was to destroy the notions of "origins" and "essences" of unchanging "truths", and then to examine the play of wills that work themselves out in particular moments and events in history (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Archaeology remained an important part of the genealogical project; it was still the starting point for isolating various discourses and identifying the space that defines the possible play of wills. However, this space was no longer seen as the product of discursive rules with no further intelligibility but as the culmination of long-term practices of government. In this context government refers to that "ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population" (Foucault, 1979b, p. 2). The genealogist then had to move beyond the identification of these discourses and seek to locate them within the broader context of organising practices, that is those practices with a tendency towards normalisation. An examination of the political role played by the organisation and practice of human sciences in the operation and spread of organising practices was crucial to this process of locating the discourse within those organising practices. Nikolas Rose (1990) argued that the psychological sciences have contributed to the processes of government in two distinct ways over the last century:

> First they provided the terms which enabled subjectivity to be translated into the new languages of schools, prisons, factories, the labour market and the economy. Second, they constituted subjectivity and intersubjectivity as themselves possible objects for rational management in providing the languages for speaking of intelligence, development, mental hygiene, adjustment and maladjustment, family relations, group dynamics and the like. (p. 106)

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982, p. 102) have argued that in shifting from the archaeological to the genealogical enterprise Foucault had reversed the priority of theory over practice. They considered that within genealogical enterprise, practice is more fundamental than theory. Taking a different view, Poster (1984) has argued that in Foucault's work practices and theory are interpenetrated: that the existence of one implies the existence of the other. To signal this particular understanding of the relationship between discourse and practice, Poster (1984) coined the term discourse/practice. This would seem a more adequate way of recognising the continual interplay of discourse and

practice, and the extent to which the discourse/practice couplet presupposes a non-duality between ideas and practices. Likewise, McNay (1992) argued that the important development in the shift from the archaelogical to the genealogical enterprise was that Foucault refuted the autonomy of discourse, and the material world and discourse were seen to be linked in a symbiotic relationship, "Thus, discourse or a particular discursive formation is to be understood as an amalgam of material practices and forms of knowledge linked together in non-contingent relation" (McNay, 1992, p. 27).

This recognition of the importance of practices to Foucault's understanding of discourse needs to be emphasised. Those engaging with his ideas often overlook it. Chris Weedon, taking up Foucault's ideas in relation to the articulation of subjectivity, wrote, "...it is language which enables us to think, speak and give meaning to the world around us. Meaning and consciousness do not exist outside language" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). However, this focus on language neglects the ways in which meaning is also experienced in the body, and that this is not always reducible to cognitive and semantic operations. More recently, Fairclough (1992) has drawn on Foucault's work to produce a three-dimensional conception of discourse that identifies three forms of analysis: the text, which is written or spoken language, the discursive practices surrounding the production, distribution and consumption of the text; and the social practices of institutional settings and the broader social context. The focus that Fairclough brings to the use of language within texts is useful and relevant to his concerns. However, it is important to recognise that within Foucault's work there is a broader understanding of practices that goes beyond the practices that govern language use. As has been noted, Foucault was particularly concerned with the ways in which knowledge and power have been combined specifically in relation to the body, so that the body has become part of the operation of general power mechanisms within society. Foucault put the point very strongly when he stated, "the body is also directly involved in a political field....Power relations have an immediate hold on it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (Foucault, 1979a, p. 25). If we understand then that some bodily practices are discursively produced and constrained then there are many forms of discursive practices to

be analysed, not just those that relate to language and the production, consumption and distribution of texts.

During the period in which Foucault was developing his ideas on genealogy, he was beginning to change the way he thought about the subject. Basically, this change can be described as a change from a focus on the body to a focus on the self; from a focus on techniques of the external government of the subject to techniques of self-government, a turning of attention to "the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject" (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). In some ways this may seem a radical change in direction. However, we need to remember that this was the third mode identified by Foucault for transforming human beings into objectified subjects, and that as such it represents another avenue of inquiry in his attempt to "create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made into subjects" (Foucault, 1982, p. 208).

In his initial work on technologies of the self in *The History of Sexuality* (Volume One) Foucault (1980a) was interested in the interplay between the techniques of discipline and technologies of the self. In particular, he focussed on the part played by the act of confession in the expanding technologies of control. Initially through the ritual of religious confession and then through the expansion of the methods of social science, the individual became an object of knowledge to him- herself, as well as to others. Through the telling of the truth to expert others, individuals come to survey and so better govern themselves. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) have pointed to the centrality of our unquestionable belief that we *can* tell the truth about ourselves, and the way that the relationship between the act of self-examination and the exercise of power has been rendered invisible:

> The conviction that truth can be discovered through self-examination of consciousness and the confession of one's thoughts and acts now appears so natural, so compelling, indeed so self-evident, that is seems unreasonable to posit that such self-examination is a central component in a strategy of power. (p. 175)

As a range of objectifying sciences had emerged with the spread of the disciplines, so a new range of interpretive social sciences emerged with the spread of technologies of the self. However, technologies of the subjectifying sciences, such as psychoanalysis, required the subject to *speak,* and an authoritative expert to *interpret* what the subject said,

to bring to light the deep hidden truths of experience and to unravel their meaning and implications for future behaviour. In contrast to psychoanalysis, Foucault suggested through his genealogical method that "we discover our identity not by fathoming the original meaning of behaviour precedents, as Freud taught, but rather by deconstructing the formalities through which we endlessly examine, evaluate and classify our experiences" (Hutton, 1988, pp. 136–137).

Fraser notes that the practices of the social sciences that constitute the subject as a speaking subject are like those of the social sciences that constitute the subject as a behavioural object, in that they both "involve an asymmetrical, unidirectional visibility, or perhaps one should say audibility. The producer of the discourse is defined as incapable of deciphering it and is dependent upon a silent hermeneutic authority" (Fraser, 1989, p. 23). There have been various moves within the social sciences to develop research methods that give more power to participants in the construction of what can be said, how it can be said and what cannot be said. Debates within the fields of anthropology and feminist studies in particular have left some anthropologists and feminists acutely aware of this imbalance of power and the dangers of speaking for others, and have led to calls for more egalitarian and reciprocal relationships between the researcher and the researched. (AbuLughod, 1993; Lather, 1988; Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Stanely & Wise, 1983). It is also recognised that these approaches are not without their problems. For example, Judith Stacey (1988) suggested that critical ethnographic research, with its emphasis on the experiential, the interpersonal and contextual dimensions of knowledge, self-reflexivity and the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the researched, can be seen to be ideally suited to feminist research. However, she went on to argue that there is the potential both in the research process itself and in the authoring of the ethnographic product for the researched to be subject to exploitation, betrayal and abandonment by the researcher, and that the danger of this is greater than in positivist, abstract and "masculinist" research methods (Stacey, 1988, p. 24). From a Foucauldian perspective a discourse in itself is neither inherently emancipatory or oppressive; the point is not to set up general criteria for distinguishing between "good" and "bad" discourses but to examine the effects of a specific discourse in a particular historical context, looking for the normalising tendencies,

examining the possibilities for liberation as well as domination. Foucault described his critical stance as "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous", and one that should lead "not to apathy but to anger and pessimistic activism" (Foucault, 1984a, p. 343). This suggests that the methods we employ in our research we need to interrogate their effects continually rather than assume that they are inherently non-exploitative or provide a balance of power acceptable to the researcher and the researched.

Foucault did not believe that the continual examination of one's self through the methods of the subjectifying sciences led to greater self-knowledge. Rather, he saw this quest as an effect of an obscured form of power, which makes the individual a subject in two senses of the word: "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault, 1982, p. 212). Rather than liberating ourselves, by discovering our true selves, we are bringing ourselves into conformity with the norms formulated by the human sciences and subordinating ourselves to the disciplinary authorities that enforce these norms. Rose, in an analysis of technologies of subjectivities that has been strongly influenced by the work of Foucault, argued that psychological norms, practices and language have created a "therapeutic culture of the self" in which

> Our selves are defined and constructed and governed in psychological terms, constantly subject to psychologically inspired terms, constantly subject to psychologically inspired techniques of self-inspection and self-examination. And the problems of defining and living a good life have been transposed from an ethical to psychological register. (Rose, 1990, p. xiii)

It is this ethical register that Foucault attempted to reclaim in his final work, arguing for an autonomous ethic of the self as a response to the normalising effects of modern society.

This discussion of the middle period of Foucault's work suggests some qualification and elaboration of the points that I drew out of his earlier work for an analysis of the experiences of men and women as they become parents. The analysis needs to be based on an understanding of discourse that encompasses both theory and practice and recognises the way they are interpenetrated. How are the practices of new mothers and fathers shaped by ideas, and how are their ideas shaped by practice? The role of technologies of the self in the constitution of the experiences of women and men who are

becoming mothers and fathers also needs to be examined? What are the ways in which new mothers and fathers have come to govern their own behaviour? The effects of particular discourses need to be examined rather than working from criteria that attempt to establish "liberatory" and "oppressive" discourses. To be a genealogical analysis requires going beyond the identification of internal rules of the discourses regulating the experiences of men and women as they become fathers and mothers, to identifying the historical conditions that have made some representations possible and others not possible. A genealogical analysis also demands that the role of the analyser, as one who is immersed within and subject to discourse, be reflexively examined.

Ethics and practices of the self

In the following two volumes of a *History of Sexuality (The Use of Pleasure* and The *Care of the Self)* and in a series of lectures, essays and interviews a clearer focus on technologies of the self as a means of self-creation emerged. Proceeding with his exploration of the ways in which the subject is constituted, Foucault now wished to examine

> …techniques which permit individuals to effect a certain number of
> operations on their own bodies, on their souls, on their own thoughts, on
> their own conduct, and in this manner so as to transform themselves, modify
> themselves, or to act in a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity,
> of supernatural power, and so on. (Foucault, 1985b, p. 367)

Foucault's ideas about practices of the self developed out of an examination of the ways that philosophers in the Classical and early Christian eras had thought about the self. His textual analysis led him to argue that there had been a significant change to the basis of morality from the Classical to the Christian era and that this had implications for the way that people understood themselves. Classical morality, he argued, was directive but emphasised an individual's autonomy to make a personal choice of aesthetics in their own style, as they interpreted the spirit of ethical guidance. Early Christian morality, he proposed, was based on unconditional obedience to externally imposed codes of behaviour and interminable examination and exhaustive confession, requiring a sacrifice of the self.

Put more simply, the distinction he drew was that "From Antiquity to Christianity, we pass from a morality that was essentially the search for a personal ethics to a morality as obedience to a system of rules" (Foucault, 1988a, p. 49).

Foucault's turn to antiquity, a period far removed from that of his first book in the Trilogy initially seemed somewhat surprising. However, it is clear from his work that he considered that the idea of practices of the self, situated at the level of ethical practice, was appropriate for trying to understand the way people act in contemporary society and, perhaps for finding some new way forward, "to change those technologies [of the self], or maybe to get rid of those technologies, and then, to get rid of the sacrifice which is linked to those practices" (Foucault, 1980, cited in Miller, 1993, p. 325). Furthermore, he believed that the ethics of antiquity could offer insights for a modern ethic that attempted to resist domination. In particular, he was interested in the idea of creating a life-style based on "arts of existence":

> Those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their live into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria. (Foucault, 1985a, p. 10–11)

For Foucault, the modern individual was one who invented herself or himself (Foucault, 1984b, p. 42). This was not a matter of revealing oneself to oneself, of uncovering an essential or true self, but of exploring the limits of subjectivity, interrogating the received boundaries and limits to identity, and transgressing them through the reinventing of oneself as a "work of art". Through discovering historical links between certain modes of self-understanding and modes of domination, Foucault argued that the individual could liberate him or herself from the government of individualisation, and, through self-government, achieve a relationship with the self, and so care for the self in an ethical sense. In doing this, the interests of others are considered secondary "One must not have the care for others precede the care for self. The care for self takes moral precedence in the measure that the relationship to self takes ontological precedence" (Foucault, 1988b, p. 7).

In several interviews in the later period of his life, Foucault indicated that he saw his work as part of his own biography, based on elements of his experience. However these connections were not made explicit in most of the work itself. In this later period Miller (1993) argues that there is a more explicit, albeit briefly, stated resonance between Foucault's personal concerns and his scholarly work. In *The Use of Pleasure* Foucault portrays his scholarly work as a "philosophical exercise", which was part of a process of trying to understand himself and who he might become: "At stake was knowing to what extent the effort to think about one's own history can emancipate thought from what it silently thinks, and permit it to think differently" (Foucault, 1985a, p. 9). In other places, Foucault referred to experimenting to discover "new forms of life" (Miller, 1993, p. 327) "limit experiences" (Foucault, 1985a, p. 8–9), and "taking care of himself" (Foucault, 1984a, p. 342). However, it was also clear that Foucault's idea of the self was not one of a "sovereign founding subject", an essentially "constitutive subject"; rather, the relationship between the individual and society was seen as mutually determining:

> I am interested...in the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an
> active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless
> not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that
> he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on
> him by his culture, his society and his social group. (Foucault, 1988b, p. 11)

Although some who were dismayed at this last turn in Foucault's work have argued that it represented a refutation of his previous intellectual concerns (O'Farrell, 1989 cited in McNay 1992, p. 48), it is clear that the focus on the constitution of the subject remained central. This change in orientation should be seen as a modification of Foucault's ideas, complementing not contradicting his earlier work. In part, this turn represents the outcome of self-critique, and a development that goes some way to addressing some of the criticisms of his earlier work that have been voiced by other writers:

> If one wants to analyse the genealogy of subject in Western civilisation, one
> has to take into account not only techniques of domination, but also
> techniques of the self. One has to show the interaction between these two
> types of self. When I was studying asylums, prisons and so on, I perhaps
> insisted too much on the techniques of domination. What we call discipline
> is something really important in this kind of institution. But it is only one
> aspect of the art of governing people in our societies. Having studied the

field of power relations, taking domination techniques as a point of
departure, I should like, in the years to come, to study power relations,
especially in the field of sexuality, starting from techniques of the self. In
every culture, I think, this self-technology implies a set of truth obligations:
learning what is truth, discovering the truth, being enlightened, by truth,
telling the truth. All these are considered important either for the
constitution or for the transformation of the self. (Foucault, 1985b, p. 367)

The introduction of a more active subject, involved in understanding his or herself,
would seem to offer an opening for those who found Foucault's earlier studies of the
subject too reductionist and too passive. McNay (1992) suggests there is a convergence
between Foucault's later work on an individual's attempts to shape the concerns of their
daily life and recent feminist analyses that critique accounts that fail to differentiate
between the experiences of different groups of women. In questioning the primacy of
gender, these critiques are not attempting to undermine the feminist project of identifying
and overcoming forms of gender oppression, but to strengthen it by eliminating any remains
of essentialism and acculturalism in feminist theory that might hamper that project. In
particular, the more recent feminist critiques, drawing on insights from anthropology (for
example, Moore, 1988) and history (for example, Gordon, 1988), have rejected earlier
feminist analyses that portray women as the powerless and innocent victims of patriarchy,
and that do not explore the ways in which a woman's life experience is determined by
multiple factors, which intersect in different ways, producing different effects, including
different access to power in different areas of social life within different cultures. These
critiques have questioned the extent to which women themselves feel oppressed,
recognising that many women feel that they exert power and influence over people in their
daily lives. As well as drawing attention to the need to examine the way that gender
intersects with class, ethnicity, sexuality, age and disability, these authors have questioned
the extent to which women experience every moment of their lives as "women". Fraser and
Nicholson (1990, p. 30) question the assumption that "there are no actions, however trivial,
which do not bear the traces of one's masculine or feminine gender identity". A more
adequate analysis of subjectivity needs to recognise that women and men are positioned by
a vast number of discourse/practices that vary in the extent to which they are "gendered".
Norma Alarcon brings these two aspects of critique together when she argues

> With gender as the central concept in feminist thinking, epistemology is
> flattened out in such a way that we lose sight of the complex and multiple
> ways in which the subject and object of possible experience are constituted.
> The flattening effect is multiplied when one considers that gender is often
> solely related to white men. There's no inquiry into the knowing subject
> beyond the fact of being a "woman" But what is a "woman" or a "man" for
> that matter. (Alarcon, 1990:361, cited in Henessy, 1993, p. 69)

As they sought more complex accounts of female subjectivity, these analyses were also attempting to explore women's potential for creativity and agency within social constraints. Both in the work of Foucault and these analyses there has been a move to problematise any straightforward causal connection between overarching social structures and individual practices. Social practices may be produced and constrained within a social context but not reduced to it. Foucault's concept of the practices of the self attempted to address the ways in which an individual shapes his or her life through "patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group" (Foucault, 1988b, p. 11). But how adequate is his concept of practices of the self, with its focus on style, for the task at hand?

Practices of the self, constitution and transformation

Inadequacies in the Concept of Style

As we have seen, at the heart of Foucault's theory of practices of the self was an idea of aesthetics of existence, a focus on the stylisation of one's life. However, the concept of style does not seem to take us any further than a descriptive account that suggests individuals can consciously and rationally make choices about their lives within certain constraints, and that some choices may push those constraints further than would normally be thought possible. As it stands, the concept of style privileges an isolated process of self-stylisation and doesn't explain the relationship between socio-cultural determinants and particular practices that individuals take-up as they seek to understand and transform themselves. It is also based on a fairly superficial concept of subjectivity, one that is rendered independent of the life-world and intersubjective relationships. There

seems to be no account of the role of previous lived experience nor our relationships with others, through which we know who we are, in the subsequent stylisation of the self.

McNay (1992) has pointed to the inadequacy of the concept of style for dealing with those biological aspects of an individual's being, that exist and have real effects, but that cannot be "rethought". In a different vein, Poster (1986) argued that the idea of an aesthetics of existence in the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* is based on a concept of the individual as rational and intentional, and hence remains unable to engage with affective aspects of sexual relations. He proposed that this is a result of Foucault's aversion to the work of Freud. Eagleton (1990, p. 391) put a similar point of view when he argued that "this individual is a matter, very scrupulously, of surface, art, technique, sensation. We are still not permitted to enter into the realms of affection, emotional intimacy and compassion". He concluded that there was a certain "thinness" in the conception of the self in the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*. As an extension of these arguments, the concept of style can be seen to preclude the possibility of considering the ways in which an individual's feelings, be they conscious or unconscious, may at moments be the main determinant of action. Strangely, given his earlier work, the concept of a rational, intentional chooser of style also seems to ignore the effects of the way in which the world is apprehended and experienced through a body that has "culture and meaning inscribed in its habits" (Young, 1990, p. 14).

The concept of style also seems to presuppose the possibility of autonomous thought and knowledge, which would seem to contradict Foucault's earlier formulation of an unbreakable link between power and knowledge, in which all knowledge is a product of the dominant power formation. But how does counter-hegemonic knowledge arise, and how do people have access to it? It would seem then that Foucault had not sufficiently clarified this concept of style so as to delineate what aspects of experience it relates to, it is not sufficiently elaborated to have any explanatory power, nor is its relationship to the legacy of his earlier work explored. It is possible that he would have gone on to develop this concept in a more satisfactory way but for his untimely death. The task remains, however, to find a way to consider the relationship between discourse and the self, and what

people go on to make of discourse. The self cannot merely be seen as an effect of discourse; "...it is social, differentiated, embodied and historical" (Squires, 1993, p. 12).

A Way Forward: Contemporary Phenomenology

One way of approaching the task of coming to a more adequate understanding of the relationship between discourse and the self is to return to the ground eschewed by Foucault: the nebulous ground of people's lived experience in the lifeworld. In turning to people's accounts of their experience we are seeking to approach the question of the relationship between discourse and subjectivity from a standpoint that is situated within the lifeworld, and which is concerned with the taken-for-granted-common-sense-knowledge and practical know-how of immediate social existence; the "effective and practical reality of life"(Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 27). This is not to suggest that by focussing on experience we will be dealing with a more immediate or foundational form of knowledge or a more trustworthy or authentic representation of the self that is "outside" of culture and free of discursive practices. Young (1990) argues

> The discourse we use when we describe our experience is no more direct and unmediated than any other discourse; it is only discourse in a different mode. The narrative form through which even young children learn to relate their experiences, for example, has rules, conventions and many spaces for the introduction of social assumptions and stereotypes. (p. 12)

Dewey evocatively captured the way in which our perception of the world around us is already shaped through acquired predispositions when he wrote

> Experience is no stream even though the stream of feelings and ideas that flows upon its surface is the part which philosophers love to traverse. Experience includes the enduring banks of natural constitution and acquired habits as well as the stream. The flying moment is sustained by an atmosphere that does not fly even when it vibrates. (Dewey, 1925, pp. 7–8)

Contemporary phenomenology, an orientation that draws on European phenomenology, existentialism, critical theory, radical empiricism and feminist theory provides a powerful bridge for exploring the relationship between discourse and lived experience. It insists on starting from experience in the lifeworld as primary data and recognises that social researchers are themselves incoporated into the lifeworld as a

participant. Thus, it can be understood to be reclaiming experience from classical empiricism that attempts to transcend everyday reality in order to distill higher order universal truths (Jackson, 1996). It seeks to "help us not only describe the nature of subjective experience for a given person or people, but to understand how this and other ways of being come about through a complex play of political, cultural, social and linguistic forces"(Desjarlais, 1996, p. 274). It does not claim privilege for knowledge that arises out of lived experience and practical activity but claims that it should have equal weighting to knowledge that is gained through analysis, explanation and reflection. It also refuses to claim objectivity or subjectivity as having a privileged status in determining experience but sees that these terms are "indicative of the way human experience vacillates between ourselves as subjects and as objects; in effect, making us feel sometimes that we are world-makers, sometimes we are merely made by the world." (Jackson, 1996, p. 21).

Although the retelling of experience is linguistically mediated, there are aspects of experience which are not linguistically constituted but which are apprehended and expressed in the lived body. For example, the practices that govern how (with an embrace, a handshake, two kisses, one kiss, a high-five, a hand upon the arm, a nod of the head), where (on the street, in the home, at a party, at a meeting) and when (with every encounter, once in a while, only at Christmas) we bodily greet people (our family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, doctor, team members, neighbours, mechanic, banker) are not learned through verbally expressed rules but are apprehended in daily life and become a part of us so they are things we do, on the whole, without reflecting on them. Memories too are not always linguistically constituted, sometimes they are evoked by the smell of a child sleeping on a hot summer's night, or the taste of crabs fresh from the net, or toes wriggling against sand, but nonetheless they powerfully come back to us again and again and become woven into other experiences. An analysis informed by the understandings of contemporary phenomenology affords the opportunity to attend to the way that experience is constituted not only by what is said but also by what is felt, remembered, thought, sensed and done by embodied active human beings, who are both subject to and the subjects of the discourses, in their lifeworld. In Part Two of the thesis I use the material that I have

generated from my fieldwork to illustrate more fully the nature and value of such an analysis. As will be revealed, it is an approach that draws on both the map and the tour.

Unresolved Questions of Ethics

There are, however, still further issues raised by the work of Foucault that need to be engaged with even if the resolution of these matters is to be found elsewhere. The lack of a normative basis to Foucault's work has been a constant source of criticism from a number of social theorists and feminists. It has been felt to lead to political paralysis, or even complicity in domination. Charles Taylor (1986, p. 69) argued that through his historical analyses which unmask the modern system of power, Foucault "brings evil to light; and yet he wants to distance himself from the suggestion which would seem inescapably to follow, that negation or overcoming of these evils promotes a good". Nancy Harstock (1990) made the point more strongly by categorising Foucault's work as postmodern, and arguing that such an approach is dangerous for marginalised groups to adopt. She contended it would lead to those who have been marginalised remaining at the margins. She argued that the postmodern refusal to engage with the project of moving forward to create a new and more just society is highly suspicious:

> Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic? Just when we are forming our own theories about the world, uncertainty emerges about whether the world can be theorised. Just when we are talking about the changes we want, ideas of progress and the possibility of systematically and rationally organising human society becomes dubious and suspect. Why is it only now that critiques are made of the will to power inherent in the effort to create theory? (Harstock, 1990, pp. 163-4)

As we have seen in the work from Foucault's final period there is a sense that it is possible for individuals to resist domination through stylisation of the self, and that liberation is possible through truth, although exactly what is meant by truth is unclear. Although Foucault proposes that this stylisation must occur within the patterns found in a culture, he does not elaborate the concept of style to provide a way of differentiating between those practices of the self that are suggested and those that are imposed (McNay,

1992). This kind of distinction is important to provide a means of assessing whether individuals are acting in an autonomous way, or merely reproducing patterns of behaviour that maintain social inequalities. Nancy Fraser agreed that Foucault was correct to argue that all cultural practices involve constraints, but she maintained that it is inadequate to leave it at that; there are different kinds of constraints that require a variety of normative responses:

> Granted, there can be no social practices without power - but it doesn't follow that all forms of power are normatively equivalent nor that any social practices are as good as any other. Indeed, it is essential to Foucault's own project that he is able to distinguish better from worse sets of practices and forms of constraint. But this requires greater normative resources than he possesses. (Fraser, 1989, p. 32)

McNay (1993) agreed with Harstock and Fraser that there are definite problems with the normative grounding of Foucault's ideas, but in contrast to Harstock she argued that Foucault was involved in a reworking of the legacy of Enlightenment thought, not a postmodern rejection of it. Although Foucault rejected the notion of a universal form of rationality, arguing instead for historically specific forms of rationality, he retained the notion of autonomy and the process of critique, which were regarded as essential for a state of liberty by enlightenment thinkers. Jeffrey Weeks (1993, p. 191) argued that Foucault's work towards the end of his life represents a shift from "deconstruction" to "reconstruction", from tearing apart to the hard road of renewal. In support of this he cites the following quote from an interview with Foucault:

> What is good, is something that comes through innovation. The good does not exist, like that, in an atemporal sky, with people who would be like the Astrologers of the Good, whose job is to determine what is the favourable nature of the stars. The good is defined by us, it is practices, it is invented. And this is collective work. (Foucault, 1980, p. 13, cited in Weeks, 1993, p. 190)

However, it is clear that this is another area that Foucault had not thought through fully. Perhaps the lack of attention to just how "the good is defined by us" and the " thinness" of the conception of the self that accompanies stylisation are an effect of Foucault basing his analysis on his reading of texts rather than on the basis of dialogue with individuals, known intersubjectively, living in communities.

A Way Forward: Dialogue and Ethics

Falzon (1998) argued that implicit in Foucault's work is a way of engaging with questions of ethics, but to find this we need to abandon a metaphysical understanding of ethics that prescribes normative principles from on high and think of ethics as a tool or instrument to facilitate dialogue. Dialogue, according to Falzon, is inescapable, a "fact of life". This means that we always influence others and exert power over them, but likewise we are influenced by others and transformed by them. Even where there is a state of domination, and dialogue is stopped, this can only ever be a temporary silencing of the other before buried voices erupt and interject, forcing the dialogue to begin again even if it is barely audible. Dialogical ethics then become a matter of "choosing to adopt an attitude of openness towards the other, being open to different perspectives and to ways of acting which challenge the prevailing forms." (p. 6). Falzon argued that this does not meaning abandoning existing organising principles but opposing the "absolutisation of particular forms of order, and the establishment of fixed states of closure and domination" and recognising "that the normative principles and forms in terms of which we currently act are not universal and all-embracing but instead represent one specific, particular way of organising thought and action" (p. 62). Foucault's critical reflection was based on his belief in the "necessity of excavating our own culture in order to open up a space for innovation and creativity" (Foucault, 1988c, p. 163), and Falzon argues that this can be understood as "the reflective form of the ethical attitude of openness to the other" (Falzon, 1998, p. 71). I will return to the issue of dialogue in the definition of the good at the conclusion of this thesis.

This last period of Foucault's work has suggested some possibilities for a more balanced account of subjectivity, but his insufficiently developed conception of the stylisation of the self in particular raises more issues that it resolves. There are, however, several points that emerge from the debates generated by those discussing this later period of work that have implications for an analysis of the experiences of men and women as they become parents. It is clear that it is important to consider the ways that the discourses identified as foundational to becoming a parent are experienced by women and men in their

daily lives within their lifeworld. In thinking about experience we need to move beyond linguistically and cognitively determined models and to interrogate the ways in which experience is also constituted by bodily practices, memories, feelings and the body itself. It is also important for an analysis of this kind to attend to the multiple discourses that position individuals who are mothers and fathers, and to recognise the many ways that people experience these relationships whilst also looking for common strands. Both techniques of domination and techniques of the self need to be considered. In particular, the ways in which individuals create themselves through interrogating the received boundaries and limits to identity need to be examined.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter various points have been identified that seem to suggest avenues of inquiry for a discourse analysis of the experiences of women and men as they become mothers and fathers. Some of these points relate to the identification and analysis of discourses, and some relate more to examining what individuals make of these discourses in their lived experience. In the next two chapters I will proceed with a discourse analysis of academic and popular texts that have contributed to contemporary discourses about the experience of becoming a mother and father. I will use the points that have emerged in discussion of the archaeological and genealogical methods to provide a framework for the analysis of the texts. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full genealogical analysis of these texts that can attend to all the changes that have occurred in the social and political context during the period examined. The points that relate more specifically to the ways discourses are experienced by different individuals will be taken up as I engage with the data collected during the period of fieldwork in Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine. My intention is to engage with Foucault's ideas about discourse and subjectivity where they are useful for my purposes but to go beyond them to overcome some of the weaknesses and difficulties in his work that the discussion in this chapter has highlighted.

CHAPTER THREE

Discourse Analysis of Academic Literature

I have argued in Chapter Two that a distinction can be made between Foucault's earlier work, grounded in the archaeological method, and his later work, informed by the genealogical method. Archaeology remained an important part of the genealogical project; it was still the starting point for isolating various discourses and identifying the space that defines the possible plays of wills. However, this space was no longer seen as the product of discursive rules with no further intelligibility but as the culmination of long-term practices of *government*. The task of the genealogist is to move beyond the identification of discourses and seek to locate them within the broader context of those practices with a tendency towards government through normalisation (Foucault 1979a). An examination of the political role played by the organisation and practice of human sciences in the definition and dissemination of normalising practices is a crucial part of this process. The task, then, of this chapter is to examine the discourse and practices of the human sciences in the definition and dissemination of normalising practices surrounding becoming a mother, father and parent.[1]

On the basis of the discussion in Chapter Two it is clear that there are two key aspects to consider: the ways in which the experience of mothers and fathers has been constituted and the "staging" of the knowledge produced, including the social relations and practices that have been a part of the construction process. What are the discourses that have come to form the language of government of new parents? What ideas are foundational and what ideas are excluded? How is the subjectivity of family members constituted with the birth of a first child? What are the practices and devices used to buttress the authority of the research? The literature that exists on various aspects of mothers, fathers and parents is now vast. In view of the particular focus of this study I have

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[1] This Chapter does not attempt to locate these studies in their historical, political and social context. This is an important task for future research but beyond the scope of this chapter and thesis. Nikolas Rose's (1996) genealogical analysis of the self provides a rigorous and illuminating example of the possibilities for this kind of analysis.

concentrated mainly on texts that were concerned with *the experience of becoming a mother, father or parent for the first time*, and that were based on *original research*. I have included considerable detail about the research as evidence of the points that I go on to make about the staging and the architecture of these scholarly artifacts. Some consideration is given to theoretical texts that have been frequently drawn on by researchers as they set out the framework for their research.

The account that I give of this literature has been produced and constrained by many factors, such as the direction in which my early ideas led me, the paths that I then followed through the literature available, developments in theory I was interested in testing against existing literature, and undoubtedly my own experience as a mother, which has enabled me to apprehend the intersubjective nature of experience in both daily life and in the research process. It is but one story that could be told of this literature. However, in so far as certain ideas and practices are so recurrent in the literature, it will be a story that should cover terrain not too dissimilar from that covered by others attempting to provide a discursive map of the psychological and sociological literature on becoming a mother, father and parent. I will begin with the first set of studies I encountered and then move out from there to look at writing that refers to itself as psychological, followed by that which refers to itself as sociological.

The Le Masters Labyrinth

As I outlined in the introduction, my interest in the question of people becoming parents was in part stimulated by the sense that it was somehow seen as problematic. Perhaps it is not surprising that when I began to examine previous studies on the topic a number of them seemed to lead me to LeMaster's work on parenthood as crisis. LeMasters has been identified by various authors as either one of the first (Rapoport, Rapoport and Strelitz, 1977, p. 141) or the first (LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981, p. 19) to postulate parenthood as a crisis. As will become apparent, there are other significant discourses concerning the experiences of those becoming parents. However, no other piece of research has generated such a labyrinth of further studies, so it is worthwhile spending

some time examining this group of studies and the means by which they have gained their authority.

In 1957 LeMasters published a paper, "Parenthood as crisis". In this he presented findings from a study he did with a non-probability sample of 46 urban middle-class white couples who had given birth to their first child within the previous 5 years. After conducting a joint unstructured interview with the parents, LeMasters, in consultation with the parents, assigned a "crisis score" for the couple, ranging on a scale from 1 (no crisis) to 5 (severe crisis). He reported that 83% of the couples experienced an extensive (4) or severe (5) crisis. He concluded that the young couples had received very inadequate preparation for their parental roles and that they had romanticized notions of what parenthood involves.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s there were a number of replications and variations of this study to "further check the reliability of this generalisation and to determine the reliability over time", (Hobbs & Cole, 1976, p. 725). Likert-type questionnaires replaced the interview and checklists of items were administered with the questionnaires in various orders and combinations to more non-probability, or random, or black or white, or lower class samples (Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965; Hobbs, 1968; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Hobbs & Wimbish, 1977; Russell, 1974). The in-house critique of this literature focussed on the extent to which various samples would yield results that would be generalisable, variables that would enable reliable prediction of difficulty and issues of researcher effects. Cultural variables such as ethnicity and class were controlled through random samples or included in a reductive fashion with samples being described as black or white or middle-class or lower- class. The crudity of these categorisations is exemplified in Hobbs and Coles' (1976) subanalysis of "28 couples in which the husband was a college graduate, and therefore considered to be middle-class" (Hobbs & Cole, 1976, p. 726). LeMasters (1957) study was faulted for the size of the sample and "probable experimenter effects" (Miller & Sollie, 1986, p. 130). Implicit in these practices, which are invoked to transcend the world and so achieve a state of objectivity, is the assumption of an individual who is outside history and culture, and whose variance from the norm (white and middle-class) can be controlled by random or categorical assignation.

Written within the conventions of their times and their particular understanding of the nature of knowledge, these papers exhibit many of the rhetorical devices commonly used to engender a sense of objectivity. Scales, redolent of the objectivity implied in the methods of the natural sciences, were used to measure experiences, collapsing and reducing a multiplicity of moments, sometimes contradictory and frequently diverse, into a single score said to represent those experiences. In some instances, panels of experts judged the experiences of the couples to provide the crisis scores. Frequently, the experiences of two people were combined to provide a single crisis score. Various statistical procedures were then carried out with the crisis scores and other selected variables such as parents' age, parents' education, number of children desired, worry about wife's loss of figure, etc., to search for variables that could be said to be related to difficulty in adjusting to the first child (Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Hobbs & Wimibish, 1976; Russell, 1974).

The writers removed themselves from their work by referring to their previous work through their surname, "the writer" and "we" (used to refer to an individual). Likewise, the use of passive sentences, such as the one that follows, masks the presence of a particular individual who listens from a position circumscribed by history and biography: "Listening to them describe their experiences it seemed that one could compare these young parents to veterans of military service – they had been through rough experiences but it was worth it" (LeMasters, 1957, p. 355). But who is listening, what experiences does he or she bring to the conversation, in what ways do his or her personal experiences and academic inheritance nominate the categories through which these experiences can be known? In other words, in what ways has the "object" of investigation been constituted by the intersubjective moment of the research, which includes the researcher's subjectivity? By 1977, when LeMasters published his book *Parents in Modern America*, academic conventions had changed to provide for the constrained recognition of the personal experiences of the researchers. We begin to have a partial understanding of the LeMasters who was listening in 1957:

> Now that his military service is well in the past, the author of this book can say truthfully that he enjoyed his years in the U.S. Naval Air Corps and that he would not have wanted to miss the experience. But it is also true that on almost any day of those three years he would have accepted his immediate discharge had it been offered. This feeling is very common to the millions

of men who served in the armed forces during World War 2 (or any other war, for that matter). We think the sentiment also describes very accurately the feeling of millions of fathers and mothers (LeMasters, 1977, p. 19–20).

Following the conventions of the time Le Masters still used the third person to engender a sense of detachment as he moved swiftly to generalise from his experience to that of nameless others. There was no legitimate space in which to reflect on his own experience or what the experiences of others revealed to him about his own experience. Throughout his book LeMasters continued with the military metaphor, talking of the need for parents to be well informed before they enlist and referring to married people who do not have children as draft-dodgers.[2] LeMasters did not provide us with a military metaphor for children but the quote he chose for the frontispiece from Andre Mauroise's *The Life of George Sand,* suggests that for him they could well have been the combatants:

> The relationship between parents and children is no less difficult, no less fraught with drama, than that between lovers. The growing child, developing into an independent individual, surprises and annoys its parents. What was once a charming plaything becomes an adversary. (quoted in LeMasters, 1977, p. vi)

Frequently, the research that sprung from the original LeMasters publication in 1957 did not lend support to calling the first experiences of becoming a parent a crisis (Hobbs, 1965, 1968; Hobbs & Cole, 1976). However, over time the discourse has come to have its own truth-value. As will be apparent in the discussion of the literature that follows, in more recent publications the view of parenthood as crisis is accepted, and normalised. Researchers reporting on more recent research, based on different methodologies and with a different orientation still refer to the original study by LeMasters and the studies his work generated (Cowan, 1988; Entwisle & Doering, 1981; Grossman, Eichler & Winickoff, 1980, LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981; Mancuso, Heerdt & Hamil, 1982; Miller & Solies, 1986). Because of its influence I have begun this part of my analysis by referring to LeMaster's work.[3]

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[2] In fundamentalist Christian literature on parenting in the 1990s the experience of not having children is referred to as "planned barrenhood".

[3] LeMasters himself acknowledged the impact of his research in a footnote in his book *Parents in Modern America,* "The writer was first made aware of the widespread interest in parental problems by the reception given this paper. Feature stories appeared in such newspapers as the *New York Times* and the *Chicago*

Theoretical Precursors

As influential as his research has been, it would be incorrect to locate the source of the discourse of parenthood as crisis in the experiences and work of LeMasters. Clearly the social and historical context were such that a discourse of parenthood as crisis was possible but to establish these connections is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, there is another major strand within the academic literature that has contributed to the production and reinforcement of the discourse of parenthood as crisis and this needs to be considered. Some psychoanalysts, writing on pregnancy and the relationship between the mother and the newborn child, have also construed becoming a mother as a "normal maturational crisis" (Bibring, Thomas, Dwyer, Huntington, & Valenstein, 1961, p. 15) and a "normal crisis in the search for a female identity" (Pines, 1978, p. 19). This particular psychoanalytic formulation of this process has fed into the way in which the process has been constructed more generally within psychology. [4]

Psychoanalytic formulations of the process of becoming a mother (and father) were informed by clinical work with pregnant patients who were undergoing analysis because of their distressed state. Crises were defined as "turning points in the life of the individual, leading to acute disequilibria which under favourable conditions result in specific maturational steps towards new functions" (Bibring, 1959, p. 119). The crisis was conceived of as intrapsychic and invoking conflicts that women (and men) have not resolved from their earlier family experiences. Frequently, there was a clear link made between the concept that becoming a parent is a crisis and hence a moment for therapeutic intervention. Cowan (1988, p. 110), drawing on the work of Bibring claims:

> The pregnant state exerts a regressive pull, reawakening repressed wishes
> and fears, which demand readjustment of psychic priorities and the working
> through of unresolved infantile conflicts. Fortunately the state creates not
> only the germs of the disease, but also the environment for the cure. While
> the regression induces symptoms that even in relatively healthy women look

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Tribune; the paper was summarized for a group of newspapers in Australia; several hundred reprints were requested from all over the world; as late as 1968 (11 years after publication), feature stories were still appearing in mass magazines and metropolitan newspapers based on the findings of this paper" (LeMasters, 1970:11). However, the research paradigm of the time precluded his reflection on the effects of this impact.
[4] As someone who was first introduced to psychology in the late 1970s, when it was becoming more social in orientation, I have been surprised in going back to this literature at the extent to which the experience of becoming a mother or father was thought of as having biological foundations.

like a borderline psychosis, the regression also produces a receptive and introspective state highly responsive to therapeutic efforts (Bibiring, 1959).

The crisis was seen to be the psychological counterpart to changes occurring in the biological substratum (Benedek, 1959). A specific interdependence was posited between the psychological and biophysical changes in this "fundamentally biologically determined maturational crisis." (Bibring et al., 1961).

Therese Benedek built on the work of Bibring, and in a book co-edited with E. James Anthony, titled *Parenthood: Its psychology and psychopathology*, she elaborated what she refers to as psychobiologic theories of pregnancy, motherhood and fatherhood (Benedek, 1970a,b,c,d). The foundations of these accounts are largely biological, with differences between individuals explained as the result of the integration of memory traces of childhood intrapsychic conflict. Transitional processes form the keystone of these accounts. Transitional processes were defined as those processes "which motivated by the phasic libidinal development of the child reactivate in the parent conflicts originating in the developmental phase of the parent" (Benedek, 1970d, p. 186). They were seen as a source of further development or of a pathologic condition for the child and parent, depending on how the conflicts were resolved.

The strong biological foundations to these accounts are well illustrated in the chapter called "The psychobiology of pregnancy". Benedek, built on the work of Helene Deutsch (1945) who, on the basis of psychoanalytic observations, generalised "that a deep-rooted passivity and a specific tendency toward introversion are characteristic qualities of the female psyche" (Benedek, 1970a, p. 139). Benedek went on to argue that these propensities were observed in a more intensified form in women directly after ovulation. On the basis of these observations, Benedek asserted:

> the emotional manifestations of the specific receptive tendency and the self-centered retentive tendency are the psychodynamic correlates of a biologic need for motherhood. Thus, motherhood is not secondary, not a substitute for the missing penis, nor is it forced by men upon women 'in the service of the species', but the manifestation of the all-pervading instinct for survival in the child that is the primary organiser of the woman's sexual drive, and by this also her personality. (Benedek, 1970a, p. 139)

In the following chapters, titled "Motherhood and nurturing" and "Fatherhood and providing", Benedek charted out the relationships between motherhood, mothering and motherliness, and fatherhood, fathering and fatherliness. When read together, the complementary nature of motherhood and fatherhood (and women and men, and the public and the private) is emphasised:

> Fatherhood and motherhood are complementary processes which evolve within the culturally established family structure to safeguard the physical and emotional development of the child. (Benedek, 1970c, p. 167)

and

> ...the basic difference between the sexes should be pointed out as revealed by the stresses of fatherhood in contrast with those of motherhood. The basic conflict of motherhood is inherent in the psychobiologic regression of pregnancy, and in the pains and dangers of partuition. The conflict itself does not involve society, the world around, directly. The basic conflict of fatherhood is not within the procreative function itself but in its derivative, in the father's function as provider. This has always required work of one kind or another. In modern, urban civilisation, work includes ever greater segments of society and ever-increasing complexity of interdependence of extrafamilial contingencies. (Benedek, 1970c, p. 182)

Mothering behaviour was determined by physiology (a response to hormonal stimulation) and highly evolved instincts, and also personality, which developed through intrapsychic processes and environmental influences. It was part of being properly feminine:

> Motherliness as a normal characteristic of femininity, of woman's psychosexual maturity, and as a part and parcel of motherhood belongs to those enigmatic features of woman's psychology that have eluded investigation. (Benedek, 1970b, pp. 154--55)

However, fatherliness was determined through instinct:

> Fatherliness is an instinctually rooted character trend, which enables the father to act toward his child or children with immediate empathic responsiveness. Fatherliness is not rooted as directly as fatherhood itself in the instinct for survival in the child, yet it is derivative of the reproductive drive organization. (Benedek, 1970c, p. 175)

The possibility of socioeconomic conditions altering the experience of fatherliness was acknowledged (Bendedek, 1970c, p. 178). However, the main argument was primarily that

fatherliness had instinctual roots, both in terms of a drive to reproduce and in a drive to provide and develop a relationship with children (Benedek, 1970c, pp. 167–8). The biologic roots of fatherhood were seen to lie in a man's instinctual drive to survive, and in particular to be survived by a son (Benedek, 1970c, p. 171). Fatherhood was also seen as a man's means of achieving a competition with his own father, through also becoming a father.

Within these psychoanalytic accounts,[5] biology was posited as foundational to both the experience of becoming a mother or father and to being a woman and a man. Changes in physiology and instinctual behaviour were seen largely to determine the experience of becoming parents and the behaviour of women and men. In the case of the mother, there was a drive towards conceiving and bearing children, which was a precursor to the drive to nurture children. For fathers, there was also a drive to reproduce, which was a precursor to the drive to provide for his family and form a relationship with his children. Individual differences were explained in relation to intrapsychic processes and conflicts arising from within early family experiences. Cultural values and practices were not considered to be involved in the constitution of men and women and fathers and mothers; the biological substratum gave rise to its psychological counterpart. Implicit in the formulation of becoming a mother as a normal crisis of development or a maturational crisis was the unarticulated assumption that women who do not become mothers are not normal or are not completely mature, advanced or developed. These formulations were generated on the basis of "psychoanalytic work with neurotic women" (Bibring, 1959), with the experiences and concerns of those considered "abnormal" defining what was normal.

Empirical studies: Psychological

The discourse of crisis in the work of Bibring and Benedek was expressed as a theoretical account, based on insights gained through clinical experience. The discourse of crisis was also evident in the work of researchers who sought empirically to document the

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[5] There are of course variations in psychoanalytic approaches. "Psychoanalysis is not a homogeneous entity" (Parker, 1995, p. 143). However, the link between femininity and maternity, or more specifically maternity as a developmental goal of femininity is common and has produced a maternal norm, which leaves many women feeling abnormal. Parker (1995, p. 143) argues that the problems in psychoanalysis to do with motherhood and femininity are "embedded in and determined by the history or psychoanalytic theory-making".

experiences of becoming a mother, father and parent, framing their research within the psychoanalytic tradition. In this next section I will consider three different empirical studies, which have drawn on the discourse of psychoanalysis to conceptualise the research. These studies are almost a decade apart and reveal an increasing recognition of the need to consider the work of culture in the experience of becoming a mother. However, in the case of the first two studies, any substantive engagement with culture was precluded by the dominant theoretical discourse, and culture remains blocked out as a feature on the map but with no details charted. Likewise, with the experience of the researchers themselves. In each of these studies, and in many of the studies that I have read about people as they become parents, it is clear that either the personal experience of becoming a parent, or the experience of someone with whom they are closely connected, has been the original stimulus to doing the research. The rhetorical devices of traditional empiricism assert that these experiences remain outside the research process, that they are not objective and so they are not legitimate. What is fascinating in these studies is the way in which, nonetheless, the experiences of the researchers, at some point, found a place in the discussion. In some cases, personal experience awkwardly burst in despite the intentions of the researchers to remain "objective", and in other cases it was there more as a shadowy presence, invisibly structuring the account or implicitly revealing the traces of the researchers' own experiences.

Breen:

The discourse of crisis was frequently articulated at a more specific level in terms of adaptation, which is again a biological concept. In the research that she did for her book *The Birth of a First Child*, Dana Breen set out empirically to "test the idea that the biological and psychological event of becoming a mother sets in motion interactive processes which can be adaptive or maladaptive" (Breen, 1975, p. 59). In setting out the points of view that informed her research she drew on the work of Bibring and Benedek as examples of the framework she would adopt:

> Important concepts which pertain to the study of the person-as-changing and
> which are useful to consider in the context of pregnancy and the birth of a
> child are those of "crisis" and "developmental stage". With the birth of her

first child, the woman is confronted with an objective, important and irreversible event. In this sense my research relates to studies of crisis situations if we retain from "crisis" the connotations of urgency and irrevocability. Even more appropriate though than crisis in the context of pregnancy and birth is the notion of the developmental stage. This notion is used by such different authors as Erikson and Piaget and implies the ideas of progression and total structure...Developmental stages, that is, passages from one level or form of organisation to another, have been described in childhood and are inherently related to biological maturation...The birth of a first child seems to be such a biosocial event, requiring cognitive, emotional and social reappraisal and restructuring encompassing both external events and internal ones which have been mobilised. It seems justified to look upon it as a turning point, possibly leading to a new developmental stage. (Breen, 1975, pp. 8–9)

Breen did her research with 50 women pregnant for the first-time, and 22 non-pregnant women in a control group. The pregnant women were interviewed at the beginning and end of their pregnancy, and 10 weeks after the baby was born. Very little detail was given about the nature of the interviews other than to note that they were "vital in creating a relationship which allowed the women to share their experience with me"(Breen, 1975, p. 79). At the same time as each of the interviews, Breen used a variety of techniques, tests and measures to test her ideas systematically.[6] Combining the data from the doctor's ratings, the depression questionnaire and the neonatal perception inventory, Breen then assigned the women to three different groups: well-adjusted (22%), medium-adjusted (42%) and ill-adjusted (36%). The findings from the other measures (Kelly's Repertory Grid, Thematic Apperception Test and Franck Drawing Completion Test) were discussed both in relation to these three groups, and in relation to individual cases. An

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[6] The women constructed a Kelly's Repertory Grid generating constructs for elements including significant others (stipulated by Breen) and the ideal mother. Asking what was the most important quality for a mother also generated a maternal construct or motherhood construct. They also completed the Franck Drawing Completion Test, a test which claims to be a culture-free method of tapping the "more latent aspects of femininity and masculinity, and in particular, aspects of the body image..." (Breen, 1975:72) and they were administered card 7 from the Thematic Apperception Test, a card believed to elicit projections from women that would reveal their acceptance or non-acceptance of their pregnancy. The non-pregnant women completed the same procedures over the same intervals. In addition, the pregnant women completed Pitt's depression questionnaire 10 weeks before and after the baby's birth, and the Neonatal Perception Inventory 10 weeks after the birth. The former was designed to identify women suffering from postpartum depression, and the latter asks a woman to compare her own baby with the average baby on a number of scales. The women's obstetricians also provided ratings of the women's pregnancy, labour and delivery, the health of the baby and the woman's adjustment.

extensive appendix provided detailed statistical analyses of the various measures, operational definitions and hypotheses. A glossary of medical and psychological terms was also included.

Breen reported her findings through a combination of statistical analyses and case study material, and then discussed her findings in relation to other research and writing on the subject and references to her patients seen in psychotherapy. Breen asserted that 78% of the women in her research presented some problems and went on to argue:

> If we think of "normality" as referring to what is the norm, then we could say that it is normal to experience difficulties at this time. What is probably more correct to say is that women are, at this time, in a state of particular stress and upheaval and therefore particularly sensitive to experiencing difficulties. It may not in any case be so appropriate to talk about pathology if problems are so prevalent at this time. (Breen, 1975, p. 93)

Breen then proceeded to consider changes in self-concept, perception of family members and preoccupations for the women in the well-adjusted and ill-adjusted groups. Much of this involved analysing material from Kelly's Repertory Grid, focussing on perceptions of self and mother before the birth and after the birth. This material was articulated in terms of "good" mothers and "bad" mothers. Good mothers and bad mothers were defined statistically in terms of the distance between mother and ideal mother in comparison with two other elements on the grid (Breen, 1975, p. 96). Breen found that those who were well-adjusted saw themselves as more similar to their own mother after the birth of the child than they had early on in the pregnancy, and they perceived their own mothers positively after the birth of the child. She argued that those women who have a "good mother image" were able to use it in the mothering of their own child, and so value themselves as mothers (Breen, 1975, pp. 99–100). "This is in line with the psychoanalytic notion of 'identification with a good mother image'" (Breen, 1975, p. 114). The ill-adjusted women saw themselves as less similar to their own mother after the birth of their child, and there was a greater tendency for these women to value themselves less positively as mothers after the birth.

Breen had predicted that women in the well-adjusted group would use more constructs related to motherliness after the birth of the baby than ill-adjusted women

because they would become more accepting of motherhood once the baby was born. However, it was ill-adjusted women who increased their use of these constructs. Breen explained this with reference to the extent to which the women were preoccupied with motherliness:

> For the women in the ill-adjusted group, there is, after the birth of the child, an increased preoccupation with motherliness construed in more idealistic terms as loving, kind, patient, unselfish and never loosing their temper. This corresponds to the stereotype of the all-sacrificing-contented-never-angry-mother. It is the classical smiling mother and baby representation which the advertisers exploit and perpetuate. For the well-adjusted women, on the contrary, this image becomes less important after the birth of the child when a good mother is felt to need diligence, hard work, reliability and a liking to be at home and with children. This more realistic picture of the situation takes into account the ability to cope with the work involved while being basically satisfied with domesticity. (Brenn, 1975, p. 118)

Within Breen's work there seems to be a lack of clarity over the possibilities that biological and cultural explanations might offer in thinking about femininity and the experience of adaptation to motherhood. In the early stages of the book Breen stated "it seems to me that the only possible starting point if we are to understand femininity is at the biological level" and that her "basic postulate is that femininity refers to those qualities which make for good adjustment to the biological female reproductive role" (Breen, 1975, p. 14). Later she underscored this essentially biological understanding of femininity: "I think that it is in relation to the female body and biology only that we can understand femininity"(Breen, 1975, p. 150). However, when she discussed her findings with regard to adjustment she introduced another distinction between cultural and psychological explanations, as if psychological aspects of femininity are constituted intrapssychically and separately from culture. She argued that during pregnancy the image of the all-sacrificing mother was culturally determined but that after the birth it persists or increases because of personal psychological reasons that relate to the woman's own experience of being mothered (Breen, 1975, p. 126). In her conclusions she emphasized the psychological explanation of "good adjustment to the biological female reproductive role":

> In sum, those women who are most adjusted to childbearing are those who are less enslaved by the experience, have more differentiated, more open appraisals of themselves and other people, do not aspire to be the perfect

selfless mother which they might have felt their own mother had not been
but are able to call on a good mother image with which they can identify,
and do not experience themselves as passive, the cultural stereotype of
femininity. (Breen, 1975, p. 193)

Breen did not go on to reflect on what the findings of her research might suggest
about the framework for her research and the relationship of the cultural to the
psychological.   The inclusion of a cultural dimension was a marked departure from the
work of Bibring and Benedek.   Nonetheless, the dominance of the assertion of a causative
relationship between the biological substratum and its psychological counterpart left no
possibility for Breen to explore more fully the relationship between the cultural and its
psychological counterpart.   Another aside, which was not explored in the conclusions, is the
effects of the research measures.   In the introduction, Breen stressed that she was taking a
stance in saying she was concerned with changes in women's self-concept with the first
birth.   She felt that it was more productive to emphasize change and development rather
than to focus on static immutable features.   Despite the research measures not
differentiating as she had expected, she did not reflect on whether the measures measured
what they purported to:

The emphasis is on how women deal with change through an important
event in their life...The fact that none of the measures differentiated between
those who were later to experience difficulties and those who were not *in*
early pregnancy, shows that we are clearly dealing with processes centering
around the meaning of the birth. (Breen, 1975, p. 192)

Constrained by the biological foundations of the discourse and the requirements of
the scientistic tendency to objectify the cultural, Breen focussed on the birth itself, the next
biological marker in the process.   However, there was a contradiction here, as she revealed
that it was the meaning, the cultural construction of the biological event, that was
important.

Grossman et al.:

Five years later, in 1980, Francis Grossman, Lois Eichler and Susan Winickoff
wrote *Pregnancy, birth and parenthood.*   Grossman et al. (1980, p. 4) clearly located their

research within the discourse of parenthood as crisis: "The process of becoming parents seems best understood as a time of normal developmental crisis with accompanying upheavals in physiology, roles, values and relationships (Bibring, 1959; Le Masters, 1957)". However, with crisis as a given, their attention turned to adaptation, again a biological construct: "More specifically, the present study focused on certain psychological and physiological factors that are important to the experience and adaptive success of couples as they have a first child or as they enlarge their families" (Grossman et al., 1980, p. 8). Referring to the work of Deustsh, Bibring and Benedek, they argued that psychoanalytic theorists have tended "to view adaptation to pregnancy and motherhood as a largely intrapsychic task, the completion of which is a necessary component of full maturity and ego development" (Grossman et al., 1980, p. 4). Fathers, they argued, have been neglected by research but they presume that many of the factors influencing women would also influence men. These authors saw that their specific contribution was to deepen "our understanding of the relative contributions which various factors – psychological, physiological, sociocultural, and marital – make to the way a couple copes with the pregnancy and early parenthood" (Grossman, et al., 1980, p. 20). In particular they wished to contribute to theoretical understandings about childbearing, to identify factors in early pregnancy that could predict problems in the future, and that could be the focus of preventative intervention programs. They also wanted to compare the experiences of first time parents with those who have other children (Grosman, et al., 1980, p. 7).

Grossman et al. did their research with 84 married couples, and nine additional women whose husbands declined to be involved, over a period of 18 months. The couples were recruited from private obstetricians and hospital obstetrics clinics in the early months of the pregnancy and were predominately "middle- and upper-middle-class families, with some lower-middle-class families represented"(Grosman et al., 1980, p. 9). The families were seen five times over 18 months: twice during the pregnancy, after the baby was born, 2 months after delivery and at one year. Each time they were visited by two interviewers, one who was familiar and one who was unfamiliar. It was hoped that this would "maximize the comfort for the family and yet reduce the bias in the observations" (p. 8).

An appendix was provided giving details of the various measures that were administered to the participants during the interviews.[7]

To evaluate the women as mothers they were both observed in a sustained interaction with their children, and interviewed to assess their feelings about their child and their competence and confidence as a mother. The observation ratings were described as representing a "clinical judgement of the woman's relationship" (Grossman et al., 1980, p. 132). A good mother was defined as "one who was emotionally involved in a loving way with her infant, was sensitive to her child's physical and emotional needs and skilled in meeting them, encouraged her child's development, and had a comfortable sense of her own competence" (Grossman et al., 1980, p. 133). Fathers were interviewed only and given a score to indicate their levels of judged competence and relatedness with their toddlers. Ultimately, the authors felt that the interview material did not allow them to differentiate between higher and lower quality fathering.

The findings from the research were reported in chapters that address different periods during the pregnancy and the first year of the child's life. Most of the chapters dealt with the mothers but there were two chapters on fathers and one on the infants. The chapters generally followed a pattern of reviewing the findings of previous studies and then moving on to the results of the research. The greater part of the presentation of the results consisted of examining the relationships between the variables, the predictability of certain variables and the factors which appeared to influence different variables, with reference to tables of correlations. For example:

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[7]. These included the Cox Adaptation Scale (Cox, 1970), the State and Trait Anxiety Index (Spielberger, Gorush and Lushene, 1968, 1970), The Pitt Depression and Anxiety Scale (Pitt, 1968), Conscious Motivation for Pregnancy (Gofseyeff, 1977), Bem Masculinity and Femininity Scale (Bem, 1974), Modified TAT (Lakin, 1957), The Revised Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Inventory (Loacke and Wallace, 1959), Premenstrual Tension Scale (Shader, DiMascio and Harmatz, 1972), Medical Risk (Winickoff, 1977), Social Support Questionnaire (Johnston, 1971), Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes and Rahe, 1967), Social Desirability (Crowne and Marlowe, 1959), Symptoms Scale (Erickson, 1967), Brazelton Assessment Scale (Brazelton, 1973) Reciprocity Between Mother and Infant (Price, 1975), Bayley Scale of Infant Development, Mental Development Index and Psychomotor Index, and the Repression-Sensitization Scale (Byrne, 1961). Other scales and measures were developed by the authors for the purpose of the research, to measure things like marital style, sexual activity and satisfaction, religiosity, identification with mother, marital adaptation, couple preparedness, complications, medication, emotional well-being, adaptation to spouse, observed maternal adaptation, interview measure of maternal / paternal adaptation, physiological adaptation of infant, observed adaptation of infant, interview measure of infant's adaptation. (Grossman et al, 1980:257-272)

> The best predictor of the state of the marriage at one year post partum was the state of the marriage at previous contacts. A woman's marital adjustment during the first trimester of pregnancy and at two months postpartum was a very strong predictor of overall marital adjustment at one year (see Table 6, "Marital Adjustment"). Psychological factors also predicted strongly (Grossman, et al., 1980, p. 125).

Throughout these chapters there was very little sense that the relationships examined between the phenomena were determined by theoretical considerations set out in the introductory chapter. Once created, the variables took on a life of their own with their existence being the main rationale for examining them in their various permutations. Excerpts from interview transcripts were given to illustrate things such as different styles of perceptions of motherliness, or different styles of coping.

After examining the myriad variables, the authors concluded by attempting to identify those factors that best predicted adaptation and those that did not. Even at this point it is difficult to grasp what it all means, as some variables predicted for pre- but not post-partum psychological health, or for psychological health but not mothering, or for maternal adaptation but not for marital adjustment, etc. However, they were quite clear on one aspect of their findings, that the most "consistent and striking sets of findings" was the difference between those having their first child and those who have other children:

> As we have seen at every point in the study, for primiparous women and their husbands, pregnancy and early parenthood are indeed a crisis of considerable proportions wherein many of their resources – psychological, sociocultural, physiological and marital – are called into play....For experienced parents, in contrast, aspects of their emotional make-up and of the quality of their marriage are far less important in predicting successful outcomes (Grossman, et al., 1980, p. 252).

They argued that these findings should not only be a comfort to parents contemplating having more than one child, but also for social planners who would be reassured that the programmes and support that they plan for inexperienced parents would have benefits in early parenthood and throughout the parenting years.

Although Grosman et al. reported that their findings showed new parenthood was experienced as a crisis, it didn't seem to have been as much a crisis as they originally believed it should be. In the conclusions they slipped between their scientific findings and

their own views and beliefs without examining the relationship between the two. Basically, there was a feeling that parents had not really told it as it was:

> Our data show that men and women who denied the more negative aspects of their experience had an easier time throughout the period covered by the study. We believe, however, that there is a dimension of richness of experience that is more available to people who are more aware of all aspects of their emotional lives, including their fears, doubts and conflicts. Our data certainly confirm our sense that pregnancy and early parenthood, while usually full of joy and rich in meaning, also entail major adjustments and inevitable strains.... Although many of the couples were able to describe some of these difficulties, we sense that their reports were self-censored, that the crisis they were experiencing was even more difficult than they were willing to describe, that even these generally privileged couples were at least somewhat tyrannized by the myths of parenthood. This study was undertaken partly because of our strong belief that the analysis of normative data is essential to a realistic understanding of the experiences involved in pregnancy and early parenting. The idealised image of parenthood only serves to block our vision and to burden us with additional and unnecessary efforts to live up to the ideal. It is only when we come to understand the reality of the experience involved will we be able to teach and prepare our young in a realistic way for the undertakings of adulthood. It is only when the mythical joy is eliminated that a more real sense of richness and satisfaction can emerge in the very important experience of new parenthood. (Grossman et al., 1980, pp. 254–255).

These concluding views about pregnancy and parenthood in these last few paragraphs suggest that there was a gap between their research findings and their own experiences as mothers. In the opening lines of the preface the authors described themselves in the following way:

> As four of us were mothers or mothers-to-be we did not fit the traditional conception of the disinterested scientist-researcher. Rather we were strongly committed to the view expressed by Levine (1974) that "every investigation in the social sciences takes place within a social context that to a greater or lesser degree influences not only the outcome of the study but also the design, the nature of measurement and form in which the research is reported" (p. 663). Thus it seemed to us entirely appropriate that we would have a clear personal involvement in our topic and that we would openly acknowledge that commitment. (Grossman et al., 1980, p. ix)

However, they did not respond to the challenge in the view expressed by Levine, and interrogate the influences and constraints on their work. They briefly mentioned the way in

which psychoanalysis freed them from experimental strictures but did not place enough value on experimental validity. They also referred to the work of Sarason in emphasising the importance of history and the social context, and the lack of congruity between their own experiences as women and the distortion and misrepresentation of those experiences in psychological theory. Unfortunately, they did not go on to reflect on the way these influences shaped the design and research methodology and presentation of findings. Overall, the research was still formulated and presented as objective, acontextual and ahistorical. Although they indicated a personal involvement in the topic, it was only in the concluding paragraphs that there was any sense of what that might be. At the end, I sense that these researchers, like LeMasters, had found their own experiences of parenthood more demanding than the processes of scientific inquiry at the time allowed them to admit.

Kaplan:

Ten years later, in a work titled *Mothers' images of motherhood*, Meryl Kaplan (1992) set out "to explore how mothers themselves make meaning of motherhood and to focus on their images of motherhood, their desires and experiences" (Kaplan, 1992, p. 2). Kaplan is the one author in the set of studies reviewed here who did not refer explicitly to the experience of becoming a mother or father as a crisis. She wrote of the "dilemmas of personhood" associated with being a mother (p. 4), and that it is "highly significant" (p. 18). In the first chapter, which outlined the conceptual framework, there was an indication that this resonated with her own experience:

> This book grows out of my own experience as a feminist and career woman.
> My life was changed and disrupted in wondrous and difficult ways by
> motherhood. In 1980, when my son was born, I had only one friend who
> was "like me" and a mother. The notion of a lack of "role model" fails to
> describe the experience...What I found was that motherhood on any day was
> not simply a matter of a role and prescription – what should I be doing? –but
> of desire, a profound pull toward motherhood and toward my child that I had
> not fully anticipated. (Kaplan, 1992, p. 3)

She then moved on to examine the ways in which women and mothers have been conceived of in recent history, and the gap between women's experience of motherhood and cultural constructions of motherhood. This led her to consider contemporary constructions

of mothers and mothering in the American feminist literature on the psychology of women. She argued that it was useful to use this literature as a focus for her study because it has been so influential and because of the positive view it holds of the "Mother" (Kaplan, 1992, p. 10). In particular she focused on the work of Chodorow.

Chodorow proposed a version of object relations theory that incorporates Mahler's separation/individuation theory. According to Chodorow's account, boy and girl infants initially share a similar feeling of being merged with the mother but their relationship with their mother becomes internalized differently. Girls are mothered by a person of the same sex and because of their similarities girls come to identify with their mother. As a consequence they "experience themselves as continuous with others" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 169), and do not form firm ego boundaries. They also develop an orientation that stresses the importance of caring, nurturance and relationships. Furthermore, femininity and feminine role activities are apprehended in the everyday world of a girl's life. In an attempt to differentiate themselves from their mothers girls turn to their fathers, but they do not need to reject their mothers completely. Boys are mothered by someone of the opposite sex and they need to separate and dis-identify from their mothers to establish a sense of themselves as males. As they attempt to differentiate themselves from their mothers and remind themselves that they are like their emotionally more distant fathers, boys have to repress their early feelings of connection to their mother and reject female aspects of themselves. The identification that boys form with their fathers is more positional than personal because the father has been relatively inaccessible, performing his male role activities away from where his son lives his life. Female mothering then, according to Chodorow, is seen to produce female connectedness and male separateness.[8] Later girls will have to reject the mother as a primary love object in order to become heterosexual, but

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[8] Chodrow's account has received a great deal of attention. It has been regarded positively for positively connoting femininity and also for providing a basis for arguing that men become more involved in parenting. It has also provided a way of thinking about the depth and intractability of sexism that was absent from theories of sex role socialisation. However, it has also been criticised for assuming that gender is dichotomised across cultures, and so reproducing the structure of sexual difference inherent in western thought. It also assumes that a relatively constant deep self is formed in childhood through interactions with parents and that a gendered self colours everything one does (See Nicholson and Fraser (1990), Parker (1995) and Whitford (1991). This account also fails to consider the possibility that the experience of parenthood may change people, and that they may not wish to reproduce the mothering they received. Likewise, there is no

this is difficult to do and a girl tends to retain the primary love triangle of herself, her father and her mother. Her needs will be further satisfied by creating a new triangular situation with a husband, in which her children will satisfy her relational needs. Men satisfy their needs for nonrelational activities by participating in the nonfamilial world of work. In her research, Kaplan was concerned to see if the object relations of the women in the study fit Chodorow's model. On the basis of the review of Chodorow's work and other feminist literature on the psychology of women, Kaplan chose object relations, relationality and traditionality to organise her analysis.

Kaplan did her research with 12 older white women who were married, middle or upper-middle class, living in New York, highly educated, who had established careers before becoming mothers, were first time mothers and had been mothers for about 2 years. The study was also designed to link up with other on-going research at the university's Children's Centre. The final sample of 12 comprised 5 mothers from the Children's Centre and 7 who were referred by friends of friends. Six were the mothers of girls and 6 were the mothers of boys. The women were contacted by telephone and invited to participate in a "study of mother's experiences of parenthood and of key relationships in their lives" which would involve interviews with the "opportunity to discuss topics relating to motherhood and some psychological testing" (p. 23). Kaplan felt that it was important to do research with the mothers of toddlers because most of the research on experiences of motherhood had focussed on the period from pregnancy to the early months of the child's life. She argued that mothers at this stage are no longer new to parenthood but they are still grappling with issues relating to motherhood.

The women were interviewed twice, four to six months apart. The first interview was the "Parent Development Interview" (Aber, et al., 1984, cited in Kaplan, 1992, p. 27), a structured interview developed as part of the intake process for families enrolled at a centre for Toddler Development. Questions were also included that related to the subject's parents, partner, and images of good mothers and bad mothers. The second interview involved the administration of selected standardised measures, which Kaplan referred to as

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sense that there may be different nuances in the way that the subject position of mother is constituted from one generation to the next.

the reference measures. [9] The transcribed stories from the TAT were analysed by a clinical psychologist who knew the subjects were adult women but was blind to their other characteristics and the purpose of the study. An open-ended interview was then conducted with questions designed to elicit material about object relations, relationality and traditionality. The interview material was analysed with statements categorised according to themes

> such as "connectedness", "self-sacrifice", and "own mother as object" which came from existing theory. Themes like "images of good mother", "loneliness," "inability to connect with child", and "sense of children having either positive or negative power" were introduced through the review of interview material. (Kaplan, 1992, p. 29).

Attention was also paid to tone, and distinctive patterns of speech through the rating the interview material according to the Assessment of Qualitative and Structural Dimensions of Object Representations scale. Coding reliability was assessed for coding of the reference measures. Individual profiles were then built up for each subject and these followed a standardized format to enable connections to be made between the subjects. The profiles consisted of an introduction, covering the woman's own family, the history of her work and her marriage, her transition to parenthood, the tone of the interview, analysis of the material concerned with object relations, relationality and traditionality and analysis of the reference measures. To complete the case study, a within-subject comparison was then made between the analysis of the reference measures and the other material, with particular emphasis given to the reference measures. Comparisons of the individual case studies were also made with reference to different subgroupings: mothers of boys and girls, and mothers of centre and non-centre children. Finally, a cross-analysis of all the individual case studies was made referring to the work of Chodorow. On the basis of the object relations analysis, Kaplan proposed three constellations of subjects: good relations mothers; powerful connections mothers; and engagement with conflict mothers. Kaplan assigned each mother to one of these categories, discussing each of them in considerable detail. [10]

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[9] Gilligan's dilemma (1982), Newberger working mother dilemma (1977) and pictures 1,2,5, and 7GF from the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Henry, 1951).

[10] I found these categorisations presumptuous and judgmental. I wondered how it was possible to make these kinds of judgements about people after meeting them twice, and how the women themselves felt after being

Kaplan (1992, p. 20) started out by claiming that she was concerned with "questions of how the mother makes meaning of motherhood". By "attending to their experience" she hoped to find the ways that "motherhood can be considered creation rather than reproduction". However, by basing her research so closely on Chodorow's theory Kaplan attended to the theoretical categories instead of "attending to their experiences" and the way they make their meaning. Hence, rather than an exploration of the experiences of these women making meaning of motherhood, with part of this being a reflection on how they fitted Chodorow's model, Kaplan's discussion was totally driven by the theoretical categories and preoccupations of Chodorow's work. Her focus was not the meanings of these mothers but the structural and systematic properties that a Chodrovian analysis reveals them to have.[11] In the individual profiles Kaplan built up around each person there were discrepancies between the material gathered through the "reference measures" and the open- ended interviews, and these were explored in her discussion, however, "particular emphasis was given to what new material the reference measures added to the case study material" (Kaplan, 1992, p. 36). The effect of this was to give priority to the clinical interpretation of the reference measures over the meaning the women themselves made in the open-ended interviews. Questions about how these women construed the experience of motherhood in the context of their daily lives as lived were precluded by the use of the various scales and interpretations of their meanings by expert others. Kaplan assumed that there is more to being a mother than these women understood, and thus diminished the agency and integrity of her participants. Essentially, the effects of her method are patronising.

The women who participated in this study tended to give negative presentations of mothers and positive presentations of fathers and husbands, and Kaplan argued that this

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invited to participate in a "study of mother's experiences of parenthood, and of key relationships in their lives". For example "Group Three: Engagement with conflict mothers. The women in this group all present their mothers as unresponsive to their interests and tend to describe them as demanding, judgmental, task-oriented and overly invested in propriety. Julia, Denise, and Linda fit in this group as do Myra, Kathryn and Lauren, all special cases. These women all find relationships with other women problematic. The mothers of daughters in this group (Linda, Lauren, and Myra) all see their children as intrusive and disturbingly demanding. In addition, the mothers in this group tend to feel inadequate and sensitive to criticism and rejection" (p. 197).

[11] This is not to suggest that this itself is not a topic worthy of consideration but rather that it is mistaken to claim that this is the meaning that mothers gave to motherhood.

tendency is at odds with the dominant model of American psychology of women (Kaplan, 1992, p. 184). Only two women spoke of being adequately mothered and present their mothers as nurturant, caring and responsive. The others variously spoke of feeling unmothered, wishing for but lacking intimate connection with their mothers, describing their mothers as demanding and unresponsive, and interested in propriety, controlling impulses and niceness (Kaplan, 1992, pp. 184–186). Fathers, in contrast, were described as dependable, warm, and compassionate but at the same time the women indicated that their fathers were not so involved in the family, and were remote and unable to compensate for mother-daughter difficulties (Kaplan, 1992, pp. 186–187). Kaplan argued that her findings reveal that gender distinctions are murkier than theories like Chodorow's suggest.

Chodorow's model assumes that the maternal qualities that women have experienced as children become internalised as the sense of the maternal that they themselves reproduce. However, in ten out of 12 cases, the women made a distinction between their images of the "good mother" and their representation of their own mothers. This led Kaplan to argue that issues of desire, resistance and cultural meaning need to be introduced into contemporary models of female object relations. Kaplan suggested that the negative presentations of their own mothers suggests subjects' images of motherhood can be understood in terms of the mother-child relationship of their desire; as if they are moved by their own experience but share a cultural meaning of motherhood, a cultural fantasy:

> Overall, these modern women do not subscribe to the traditional notion of
> the all-giving, ever-present, selfless Mother but also do not question many
> assumptions of traditional social arrangements. Instead of seeing the Mother
> as ever-present, seven of the subjects emphasize the Mother's psychological
> availability and ability to be on-call. Instead of the Mother being all-giving,
> they speak of Her as effective and capable of being used by the child when
> needed. Instead of seeing motherhood as a necessarily full time job, subjects
> with full and part time employment suggest that a good mother could work
> outside the home and still be used by her child.
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> The availability subjects describe is very much what many of these
> women felt they did not get from their own mothers: responsiveness to needs
> defined by the child. Comments about the Mother as accepting, listening,
> tolerant of unavoidable messiness and problems inherent in childhood seem
> to provide further elaboration of this notion of availability and suggest the

importance of the mother accepting the child for who s/he is. (Kaplan, 1992, p. 189)

In contrast to Chodorow's thesis of a specifically female tradition of mothering and reproduction produced from one generation of women to the next, Kaplan proposed that even in her rather homogeneous group there were a variety of object relations configurations, with women constructing alternative images of the good mother that were in direct opposition to their own mothers. She suggested that the emphasis on female connection in feminist theory represents a desire rather than women's actual experience. Furthermore she argued:

> This celebration of female connection and the dignifying of the difference between women and men have tended to leave unspoken some difficulties in connection. In the process of emphasizing relationality we have promoted a vision of "good" relationships and of mother-child histories that do not speak the whole history. (Kaplan, 1992, p. 204)

Kaplan argued that to understand her research subjects it is important to consider the historical and social moment in which the subjects were children: at the height of the "feminine mystique", when their mothers were isolated overburdened and undersupported. These women desired to be different from their mothers, and this desire had been supported by the questioning of traditional values by the feminist movement and moves towards equal opportunities for women with the expansion of the economy, and educational and work experiences which are similar to their spouses. This desire to be different did not lead to questioning the institution of motherhood itself but questioning other mothers. Kaplan argued that "While motherhood is personally meaningful, it does not lead to social critique or the basis for connections outside the family" (Kaplan, 1992, pp. 201–202).

Summary

The dominant discourse within these psychologically based studies is that the experience of becoming a mother is a crisis. For the one study that included fathers this was also the case. A sense of crisis is the experience that is singled out of a range of experiences as foundational. Over the 20 year period spanned there is a shift in the locus of the crisis, from an emphasis on changes in the biological substratum to oppositional

cultural meanings. In the earlier accounts, subjectivity is construed as having strong biological foundations, with development leading to a more evolved, progressed, mature state of being. Childhood relationships to parents are also considered foundational to subjectivity but in terms of intrapsychic processes, not as a matter of intersubjective processes that are on-going and negotiated in a particular cultural context. Hence, subjectivity is conceived of in terms of biological and intrapsychic processes occurring within the individual, who remains an island to his or her self, in a place from nowhere. Kaplan's study is much more clearly located in a framework that assumes that cultural constructions of the Mother and women's relationships to other family members are foundational to the experience of becoming a mother. However, having chosen, as the focus of her work, a theoretical model that assumes a static view of culture, the reproduction of mothering from one generation to the next and cultural categories as given, she precludes the possibility of exploring the very process which she set out to study: the process by which the mothers make meaning of motherhood. As with the other studies, a strongly dichotomised view of gender is foundational, as is the assumption that gender is the main determinant of subjectivity and colours everything that people do.

In each study there are unexpected findings that suggest the need to explore meaning. There is a great deal of confusion as to what to do about this as the theoretical frameworks do not incorporate a role for culture or work from a model which assumes a static notion of culture. Each of the accounts also produces a disembodied sense of subjectivity. The experiences of the people worked with are abstracted from their context through observations into categories that are then combined into reductive identities such as "ill-adjusted mothers" or "good mothers" or "engagement with conflict mothers". These categories have the power to be productive and regulative of subjectivity, but do not speak to us of the complex, nuanced, multifaceted, situated in time and place, embodied experiences of women as they become mothers.

In each piece of research, one of the main aims has been to get the people involved to share their experiences of becoming mothers. There is, however, a failure to take experience itself seriously, and ultimately people's own accounts of their experience are not trusted as accurate and information gained through "objective measures" is privileged. A

range of models, scales and measures are used to produce an "objective" reflection of participants' reality, determining what will count as experience, imposing choices and connections and assigning the interpretation of the real meaning of the experience to the expert. Many of the scales and measures come with procedures that buttress the epistemological position of traditional empiricism that there is a boundary between the observer and the observed, that the observer is outside of the object observed, that the object of investigation exists independently of any subject, be it the researcher or the researched, and that what is observed is independent of the process of observing it. Radical empiricism, in contrast, denies the distinctions between observer and observed, values the interactions and interplay, and, by recognising that one's own experiences are foundational to understanding[12], includes the experiences of both the researcher and researched as primary. Both Grossman et al. and Kaplan came to this particular research question because of their own personal experiences of pregnancy and being mothers. Instead of exploring intersubjectively the social reality of becoming a mother as experience, these researchers have explored scholarly artifice that they think is relevant to this experience. The experience and the artifice are not one and the same.

Empirical Studies: Sociological

Oakley:

In 1979 Anne Oakley published *Becoming a mother* which she described as "a portrait of how it feels to have a child in the late 1970s in a large industrial city. It is a book about parenthood through the eyes of *women*" (Oakley, 1979, p. 6).[13] She began the book with a piece titled "Preface – and a Personal Note". In the opening paragraphs she attributed her interest in the " transition to motherhood" to work she had done previously on women and their attitudes to housework. However, in the pages that follow she introduced

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[12] This is not to suggest that the radical empiricist does not reflect beyond his or her own experience. There is a continual moving between all domains of knowledge, including that acquired through practical activity and experience, as well as that which relates to the practice of the intellectual discipline drawn on.

[13] Oakley refers the reader to an academic version of her research, "Women confined: Towards a sociology of childbirth", which quotes tests of significance for the statistics quoted in "Becoming a mother". In all my reading of academic literature about this topic "Becoming a mother" is cited much more frequently than "Women confined".

herself and reflected on her own experiences of childbirth and early motherhood. "I am a feminist, an academic sociologist, and a woman with children. I was not a feminist until I had children, and I became a sociologist as an escape from the problems of having children" (Oakley, 1979, p. 2). She described how she experienced the birth of her children and her early years of motherhood, and that these experiences were so different from what she had expected. She reflected on the way that experience of the birth itself set the scene for an experience of early motherhood, which she found depressing and oppressing. "I did not understand that I was delivered of my identity at the same time, prevented from being the central figure in the central drama of my life. The baby flourished but it was a long time before I could remove the barrier of his birth from my relationship with him" (Oakley, 1979, p. 3). She referred to the work of C. Wright Mills to support her view that "academic research projects bear an intimate relationship to the researcher's life, however 'scientific' a sociologist pretends to be" (Oakley, 1974, p. 4).

Oakley researched the experiences of 66 middle-class women who were all booked to deliver their first babies in the same hospital. The women were interviewed four times: 26 and 6 weeks before the birth, and 5 and 20 weeks afterwards. Oakley attended six births. Throughout the book she also drew on material from a 6-month period spent in the same hospital observing encounters between doctors and patients. When she began to work with the interviews, she felt that the women's own words said it much better than a sociologist ever could, so she decided to make the bulk of the text excerpts from the interviews, interspersed with text written by herself to "signpost the reader through the accounts" (Oakley, 1979, p. 5). She felt that some readers might consider that the portrait of motherhood given is too bleak. She argued that she does try to show the positive side but,

> In some ways, too, the picture is deliberately black. What many of the women who were interviewed said was that they were misled into thinking childbirth is a piece of cake and motherhood a bed of roses. They felt they would have been better off with a clearer view of what lay in store for them. I have constructed the book around this conclusion, perhaps amplifying it somewhat, because only in that way are messages made impressive. But the insight itself is authentic – theirs, not mine, even if it does help to interpret the way I felt back in 1968. (Oakley, 1979, p. 6)

Oakley set out the theoretical positions that informed her meaning of the "institution of motherhood". She drew on Marxist understandings of the economy to foreground the relationship between motherhood and the reproduction of the labour force. Claiming that motherhood seemed to lead to depression and a lowered sense of selfworth she questioned the Freudian assertion that motherhood provides an escape route from the mire of female inferiority that results from the lack of a penis, and is the pathway to maturation for a woman (Oakley, 1979, p. 13). She went on to examine the medicalisation of childbirth and concluded this section by asking how the experiences of first childbirth affect a woman, as a mother and as a person. She closed the chapter by arguing that birth is considered a biological event only to hospital administrators and statisticians; for women who have a past and a future it has social meaning and it is the meaning of the first birth that is so important:

> And it is a turning point, a transition, a life crisis: a first baby turns a woman into a mother, and mothers' lives are incurably affected by their motherhood; in one way or another the child will be a theme forever. (Oakley, 1979, p. 24)

The remaining chapters follow in chronological sequence, moving from women's experiences of finding out they were pregnant through to women's reflections on the lessons they have learnt during pregnancy and the early months of motherhood. The chapters dealing with the women's experiences with the medical profession during the pregnancy, birth of the child and stay in hospital painted a picture of the medicalisation of childbirth and domination and control of women by experts who know better. In the chapters that follow on the early days at home and feeding the baby a picture emerged of anxiety and difficulty as the norm:

> Perhaps the question should be not, why do some mothers get depressed, but why do some mothers not get depressed? Should we not express surprise at easy satisfaction with the maternal role (the experience of the minority) rather than at anxious despair (the fate of the majority)? (p. 142)

Although the dominant narrative is one of difficulty, a number of the interview excerpts did not support this, and although 84% of the women considered that becoming a mother was different from what they had expected and that it was too romanticised, only

36% actually indicated that it was a difficult experience. In one of the chapters, Oakley examined fathers' involvement during the pregnancy and birth and in the care of the baby and housework. Mothers' satisfactions with their husband's involvement, and the impact of the baby on the marital relationship were also considered. It is interesting that although not many mothers reported a great deal of help from fathers, just slightly more than half of the mothers were satisfied with their involvement. However, Oakley claimed the birth produced a "peak of masculine domesticity" after which men become less involved and mothers less satisfied with the father's role. "Wife nags at husband, husband moans at wife, and the rosy dream of the little family degenerates into a domestic nightmare" (p. 211).

Oakley was concerned to portray the experience of becoming a mother as women see it. However, she was also prepared to speak for men, asserting that the entire process and experience of becoming a parent has much less meaning for a man than a woman (Oakley, 1979, p. 210). She equated fathering with the biological act of insemination, and asserted that although the roles that society carves out for men are shaped by history and circumstance, every society has the problem of making men feel necessary, "Looked at another way, the problem for men is how to share the experience" (ibid.).

Overall, the picture that emerges from the interview excerpts and signposts chosen by Oakley is contradictory. The interview excerpts revealed a tremendous variation in the way becoming a mother was experienced, but Oakley herself did not really emphasize this variation in her commentary. The signposts were presented as if they were "glue", helping to link separate bits of interview material together but the overall effect was to create a metanarrative of becoming a mother as a time of anxiety and difficulty. This points to the pitfalls of a weak understanding of reflexivity which refers to personal experience but which does not systematically scrutinise and analyse the experiences of the researcher as data in the same way that the experiences of those researched are analysed. It is as if Oakley had grasped the importance of attending to experience through her own experiences, and the way in which experience is constitutive of theoretical knowledge:

> If any single phrase can sum up the message of becoming a mother it is this:
> the value of experience...in fact experience does alter the way people
> (experts and others) behave: this is part of the scientific method, that theories
> should be tested empirically, not just once under artificial conditions, but
> constantly in the real world of heat and cold and light and dark – of contrasts

and instabilities and unpredicted, unforeseeable moments. It is *from* their own experience in this world that most people (who are not scientists) develop their theories, build up generalisations, become confident about asserting particular things to be generally true. (pp. 307–308)

In writing towards a position that takes experience itself seriously (at least for women), Oakley was writing against the dominant discourse of her discipline. However, the discursive "tools" to enable her to go beyond that and make an argument for systematically interrogating her experiences along with knowledge gained from other view points, such as the mothers with whom she did her research, the medical people she observed, theoretical frameworks and other empirical studies, may not have been available to her.

La Rossa and La Rossa:

In 1981 LaRossa and LaRossa published *Transition to parenthood: How infants change families.* LaRossa and LaRossa located their research squarely within a sociological framework; they also proposed to study the transition to parenthood within "the sociological imagination"[14], and to use a qualitative design as a means of carrying out an exploratory study of "early parenthood as parents see it" (p. 11). However, early in the book they started referring to their research as "our examination of early parenthood as a continuous coverage system." (p. 48). They argued that the great majority of studies of the transition to parenthood had been conceptualised within an individualistic approach, and that this has led researchers to concentrate on attitudes to such an extent that social patterns and processes and the sociohistorical conditions were ignored. Their research was carried out with 20 white middle-class couples, obtained through pediatricians and contacting couples from a list of recent births. Half the couples were having their first and half their second baby. Couples were interviewed together at 3 months, 6 months and 9 months after the birth of their baby by an interviewer employed to conduct interviews "which would be essentially open ended and conversational" (LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981, p. 35). The interviewer was a single, childless 29- year-old white, male psychology graduate, someone

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[14] The "sociological imagination" refers to Mills (1959) project of examining the dialectical relationship between biography and history.

who could take the role of a person who was ignorant and needed to be taught (p. 36). The authors became pregnant during the research, which they initially thought was "cute". However, they then realised that their own experience of a transition to parenthood would strengthen their analysis. They refer to the study as a "participant informed study", with their own experiences giving them "a greater understanding of the couples' thoughts feelings and actions" (p. 39).

In a chapter called "Baby care: Fathers versus mothers", LaRossa and LaRossa set out three sociological frameworks they relied on to interpret their data: the *conflict* orientation; the *choice and exchange* orientation; and the *symbolic* orientation. They argued that a conflict orientation is called for because of the helplessness of the human infant. They proposed that caring for a baby requires a system of continuous coverage, and that this means there is a scarcity of free time for the parents, leading to a conflict of interests, and frequently, conflict behaviour. The choice and exchange orientation, they argued, was pertinent because it assumes that people seek rewarding situations and relationships while avoiding costly ones. LaRossa and LaRossa used these assumptions to explain the way couples organised their commitments to various situations. The symbolic interactionist orientation was called for as a means of "getting 'inside' peoples lives" and understanding the meaning they make of their world. Other substantive distinctions used to construct their framework were also set out. These distinctions were: play and work; primary, secondary and tertiary attention; helping and sharing; role distance and role embracement; intrinsic and extrinsic values; and public and private behaviour.

The first chapter that drew on the research material was concerned with the ways in which mothers and fathers negotiate the continuous coverage of care for their children while ensuring that they have enough down time for themselves. LaRossa and LaRossa found that after the birth of the first child there was a tendency for men and women to move out of what they perceived as an egalitarian division of labour into a traditional division of labour. This was a phenomenon that had been reported by a number of other researchers, so LaRossa and LaRossa constructed a theory of traditionalisation to account for it. Their theory was based on the proposition that culture follows conduct; that initially people make excuses for why their behaviour is more traditional than their beliefs but eventually their

willingness to excuse and justify their behaviour rather than change it will lead to them adjusting their beliefs to fit their conduct (LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981, p. 96). They argued that to put it simply, traditionalisation means that under conditions of scarcity "men become more sexist".

The next four chapters provided case-study material of four different couples, chosen from the sample of 20, to elaborate the framework that had been constructed in the first part of the book. In the final chapter a conflict model of the transition to parenthood was proposed, with a diagram charting the relationships between causal propositions and contingency propositions. The discussion of the model mainly teased out the ways in which the contingency propositions are proposed to alter the causal properties. References were made to other studies or parallel situations of continuity of coverage of care, such as in hospitals. The occasional reference was made to the parenting styles of the parents in the case-study, but there was no substantial engagement with the case-study material to show how it both illuminates and is illuminated by the model.

In this research, "scarcity of time" was singled out as a foundational experience. Without doubt it is an aspect of the experience of becoming a parent, but it seems to be a very particular point from which to build and elaborate a model. It is interesting to note the following excerpts from the instructions to the interviewer. In the first set of instructions, letting the couples lead the interviewer was stressed:

> The key to this type of study is to listen. At first, you will feel that you are getting data on anything and everything. Few things may seem relevant. It will be difficult for you to decide when to let the couples ramble and when to change the subject. However, by letting the couples lead you through their lives, we'll be able to get their story, not some story we've dreamed up. (LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981, p. 240)

In the instructions to the interview for the second interview there was an increasing sense of ambivalence about letting the couples lead. The second set of instructions commences with the following:

> Listening to a number of the tapes, and reading the two that have been transcribed as of now (couples 4 and 5), I am struck by the importance of the variable time. A few of the couples express this variable in terms of their having less time to do what they want to do now that the baby has arrived. Other couples center on the issue of scheduling. At least one woman has said

that she feel that she now has more time for herself. I am tempted to focus the study in this direction. Already I have begun to think about how a paper on time and family life would be organized. Already I am imagining how the temporal dimension fits into the problem of social order. (LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981, p. 241)

However, the basic tenet of the research was then reiterated "let the subjects lead you rather than vice versa" (241). This was followed by a quote from Lofland (1971) that argued that with in-depth interviewing the researcher will have *a general idea* of what types of things will make up a person's account but that they will still be interested in seeing what the person will provide themselves. In the instructions for the third and final interview, letting the couples lead the interviewer was reiterated. The issue of time was raised again, a hypothesis stated (that the couples see the routines they established since the birth of the child as natural and God-given rather than constructed by themselves) and the interviewer was instructed to be sensitive to comments about time. The final notes in the instructions were to do with debriefing.

In these comments, we see a tension between letting the couples tell their stories and the researcher wanting to test out particular ideas and theories. However, even when the couples are to lead it is presumed that the researcher will have a "general idea" of the account. The researcher giving instructions clearly values the comments the couples are making about time but it was not clear why this was the case. Perhaps it was a reflection of the way that academics and researchers live their professional lives, with a great deal of attention to time and constraints on time. In this account, subjectivity was construed as having strong cognitive foundations, with rational choices governing behaviour and social patterns and processes.

Lewis:

In 1986, Charlie Lewis published *Becoming a father*. Lewis wanted to examine "fathering from the man's point of view" and to "discover something about the 'social institution' of fatherhood, by asking men to describe in full the nature of their roles and the depth and breadth of their experience"(Lewis, 1986, p. 12). Lewis began the book by reviewing previous studies on fathers. He made a distinction between the "emergent"

perspective and the "differentiation" perspective. He argued that the studies, which fall within the emergent perspective, make three interrelated claims:

> Firstly, that there has been a dearth of literature on men's family roles until very recently; secondly, that the father's role has been very limited in previous generations; thirdly, and most importantly, that contemporary men are considered to be increasingly involved in family life - no longer on the periphery, they are at last becoming 'fathers'. (Lewis, 1986, p. 1)

In contrast, the differentiation perspective holds that men and women continue to have sharply differentiated roles in family life, with women's role being defined in terms of the home and children, and men's role being defined in terms of their involvement in the economic world. Lewis proposed that this view has been held by conservatives wishing to explain the organisation of the "traditional nuclear family" in terms of complementary roles (involved mothers and supportive fathers) *and* radicals wishing to explain social inequalities between men and women in terms of women's oppression in the home.

Lewis rejected both of these views as obscuring our understanding of fatherhood. He argued that evidence does not support the emergent father perspective (Lewis, 1986, pp. 2–7). According to Lewis, although the number of studies on women far outweighs the number on men, there were a larger number of studies on men as fathers than many contemporary authors have suggested. Lack of longitudinal data and massive social changes, he argues, mean that it was impossible to measure changes in father involvement. The evidence available suggested that historically there has been a plurality of family structures, and that variations in fathers' involvement within a generation may be greater than between generations. Lewis proposed that historically each generation of researchers has made similar arguments about the greater involvement of men in family life, but in different terms. The literature in the 1920s and 1930s spoke of "companionate marriage", while the 1940s saw the advent of the "developmental family", the 1950s the "modern father", and the 1970s the "emergent family". Lewis also rejected the differentiation perspective, on the grounds that the conservative accounts were simplistic and are not supported by data, and that the radical accounts exaggerated the divisions between parental roles (Lewis, 1986, pp. 8–9). Although Lewis rejected the emergent and differentiation perspectives it is clear that to some extent they constrained and shaped his research in that

they identified certain concerns as valid and acted as reference points for much of his discussion. One common theme in previous studies that Lewis did identify and accept as foundational was that men experience their role with "perplexed bewilderment" (Gardner, 1943, p. 16, cited in Lewis, 1986, p. 9).

After the review of previous research, Lewis introduced his own research as setting out to "examine fathering from the man's point of view" (Lewis, 1986, p. 11). The 100 fathers interviewed by Lewis were selected at random from Child Health Department list of registered births, and were interviewed once when the child was a year old. The final sample comprised 60 fathers of first-born children and 40 fathers of second-born children, with 25 men in each of four different social class groups. In designing the research, Lewis drew on the interdisciplinary work around fatherhood that was emerging in the 1970s, the work of Newson and Newson's "descriptive sociological investigation" of childrearing (Newson & Newson, 1963), and Anne Oakley's (1979) research on becoming a mother. The interval schedule was based on one used by Newson and Newson (1963), and the interviews were coded to yield both quantitative and qualitative material for analysis.

Lewis divided the discussion of his interviews into two parts. The first part dealt with the fathers' involvement with the child from the time of the pregnancy until the end of the first year. The second part located the material in a broader context of the fathers' marital relationship, and re-examined a number of issues that have been raised in other studies. Lewis drew interview material together to portray fathers' experiences as complex, contradictory and changing in response to the growing child. He argued that in the initiation to fatherhood men have a very ambiguous role. Although the men became "engrossed" with their newly born, "official" activities, rituals and attitudes kept fathers at a distance from their offspring right from the start. Fathers' participation was then clearly limited by physiological and cultural guidelines that were sanctioned by both parents (Lewis, 1986, p. 111) so that in the early months most men had to be content with "being involved from a distance" (Lewis, 1986, p. 116). Towards the end of the first year, however, men came to relate to their child more closely. A number of them became more involved in childcare tasks to "help" their wives and to facilitate more contact with their child. Men also placed high priority on playing with their child. Lewis argued that, in part,

playing was a way of dodging the more demanding chores of parenthood but that it was also about establishing a reciprocal relationship with the child, that had hitherto been perceived as impossible (Lewis, 1986, pp. 117–118).

Lewis also referred to previous studies that have conceptualised the arrival of the first child as a crisis for the couple. His brief reference to other crisis literature reveals the way in which the researchers themselves seem more troubled than the people becoming parents with the disruption, the conflict and the disequilibrium. There is a sense that the people themselves accept this, and do not consider that they need expert intervention:

> While the term "crisis" might exaggerate their psychological states and also deny and (sic) positive experiences during the transition, it is clear that some disruption in the routine and the emotional atmosphere of the family almost inevitably take place (Rossi, 1968). At times this has a deleterious effect upon a marriage. Couples commonly stress their relative isolation or loss of freedom. In keeping with previous authors (eg. Oakley, 1979) I shall argue that this can have a harmful effect upon the couple's relationship. Nevertheless, a repeated theme in the interviews suggested that couples regard this disruption as being in some way of *benefit* to the relationship. (Lewis, 1986, p. 132)

In the end Lewis settled for talking about becoming a father being experienced as "a feeling of disequilibrium" (p. 164). He argued that the men in his study described many contradictions in the way their duties were defined and perceived, for example feeling that they needed to spend time at work providing for their families and being involved in childcare.

All the fathers reported that becoming a father had influenced them in some way. Lewis identified three themes apparent as men elaborated on this change. First, their role was seen as fulfillment or an achievement; second, fatherhood had changed their outlook by forcing sacrifices for the child; and third, the child was seen as an investment for the future who would achieve ambitions the father had not fulfilled himself and who would be a friend in later life (Lewis, 1986, pp. 162–164). A number of the mothers who were in attendance at the interviews expressed their surprise at the extent to which their husbands "helped" them with childcare and household tasks and were convinced that their husbands had deeper relationships with their children than other men (Lewis, 1986, p. 149). Lewis argued that although women clearly did much more of the housework and childcare, it is

important to go beyond men's reluctance and consider the ambiguities in fathers' experiences to explain men's involvement as fathers. Furthermore, he argued that there are also benefits for women in these arrangements, "As primary care-givers, mothers have to perform these chores but by way of compensation they are conceded the role of 'experts' in the domestic sphere" (Lewis, 1986, p. 111). Lewis emphasised the extent to which the participants in the research believed that parental roles should be divided and actively strove to perpetuate the traditional differences in sex roles (Lewis, 1986, p. 184). Lewis concluded:

> Certainly true symmetry between spouses cannot occur without major societal reorganisation. Yet two major institutions which are resistant to such change are motherhood and fatherhood themselves. Each clings on to its responsibility for childcare and the world of work respectively. While a belief in social change is a strong motivating force behind research and theory on the family, the mothers and fathers cited here give this a low priority, if they consider it at all. (Lewis, 1986, p. 190)

Summary

In these sociologically informed studies the discourse of crisis is again foundational to constructing the space in which the experience of becoming a parent is represented. The notion that meaning is socially constructed is also foundational to these theoretical frameworks. However, the motor and pathways of construction lie in society, which is external and separate from the practices of individuals. Hence, meaning is socially constructed but given by society. There is no sense that individuals make, elaborate, contest or refuse meaning in their daily lives as a continuing process; for example, "the social institution of motherhood" or "the social institution of fatherhood" come with meanings, but these meanings are not thought of as being continually negotiated or embellished or taken up in particular ways by individuals.

In exploring the meaning of being a mother or father, each researcher wanted to provide an account as "seen through the eyes of women", or "as parents see it" or from a "man's point of view". However, there are a number of ways in which these accounts fall short. The metaphors these authors have used to convey the sense that they are revealing the participants'experience all pivot around a disembodied visualist paradigm. Objectivist

science has privileged the visual sense. However, as Stoller (1997, p. 3) has so evocatively argued, smell, taste and sound (and I would add touch) contribute profoundly to the construction of experience. This would suggest in order to understand the experience of becoming a mother or a father it is important to attend to the whole range of ways in which people both experience and communicate about their experiences, and not restrict or reduce our methods or metaphors of inquiry to the visual.

Moving beyond the dominance of the visual, these authors have encoded the experience of the mothers and fathers into the theoretical categories and concerns which are the preoccupations of the researcher. The meaning that was given by the mothers and fathers has been translated into the fixed co-ordinates of a place that is abstracted from their life-world, obscuring the fact that meaning does not exist in such a place, "it is always meaning *for* someone in a particular social space"(Hastrup, 1994, p. 236). As this translation occurs, the accounts become flattened and the emotion is removed. This is not to argue that it is inappropriate to talk about people's experiences in relation to theoretical categories. The point is that we need to be clear that this is what we are doing. It is not the same as producing an account of "how parents see it" or "from a man's point of view".

Once again, two of the authors of these studies state in their preface or introduction that they came to research becoming a mother or father because of their own personal experiences of pregnancy and becoming a mother or father.[15] However, for the remainder of the book, their own experiences are bracketed off and they assume a neutral authorial style that refuses their own lived experience and the intersubjective nature of the research process. The experience of pregnancy or becoming a parent has been powerful enough to move these researchers to admit a personal connection in a research landscape that reveals no personal landmarks. But they are constrained by the dominant discourse of objectivist research to conduct their research as if from a God's-eye view upon the world, and to act as if their own experiences have not in any way constituted their research questions, their expectations of their findings, their relationships with the people they had worked with, or the way they have written about their research. Hastrup (1994, p. 235) reminds us "The agent of scholarship is a living person, not just a mind". At times, unvoiced statements

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[15] This is the case in the literature in general about parenting, not just the studies examined in this chapter.

about the researcher's own experiences cut across attempts to align theoretical positions with the views of respondents, but because there is no legitimate way of bringing them into the objectivist research space they remain at best an ill-defined viewpoint and at worst a smudge on the map. I suggest that these accounts of the research would have been richer, clearer, and less fraught with contradictions, if it had been possible for the research process to be acknowledged as an intersubjective experience, between the researcher and the researched, giving rise to reflection on both the experiences of the researcher and the researched, and not a one-way extraction of data.

Conclusion

The idea that becoming a parent is a crisis has been a dominant discourse, shaping research on this topic within both psychology and sociology. The crisis is understood to result from biological changes, which affect their psychological counterpart or because of oppositions in cultural meaning. The idea that a gendered sense of self colours experience is also foundational. Furthermore, the idea that the experience of becoming a parent is best apprehended through objective research measures and by a researcher who objectively observes his or her research subjects in a distant manner is also foundational. What do these discourses and practices effect?

Benhabib (1986) maintains that the etymological roots of crisis and critique are found in the Greek "κρίσίς", which means dividing, choosing, judging and deciding. She argues that crisis refers to "dissent, controversy, but also a decision that is reached and to a judgement that is passed" (p. 19). Generally, the research literature uses crisis in way that speaks of a critical turning point because something is wrong. Although a turning point may have positive outcomes, there is a tendency to focus on the negative outcomes and the need for intervention. For example, in *Coping with Life Crises,* crisis is defined as "a critical juncture – a key turning point – during which individuals and their families are uniquely open to the positive influence of professional caregivers" (Moos, 1986, p. xxi). The ease with which it is possible to establish the experience of becoming a parent as a crisis within the space carved out by these studies is reflected in Rapoport's position. He argued that in studies of the "transition to parenthood" the term normal crisis be adopted

because becoming a parent is considered a normal event (Rapoport, 1963). What are the other experiences of becoming a parent that have been suppressed by this discourse and considered abnormal?

A discourse of parenthood as crisis then produces a tendency towards an understanding of becoming a mother or father as a crisis located within the individual and his or her family, with intervention by professional caregivers legitimated and normalised. As Rose (1990) suggests, these practices transpose the project of living a good life from an ethical to a psychological register. They also illustrate the relationship that Foucault argues exists between the social sciences and social services in the production and regulation of the population. However, the question remains as to what extent these practices "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucualt, 1972, p. 49) in the lived experiences of people as they become parents. The studies reviewed have claimed that they wished to examine the experiences of mothers and fathers but have quickly shifted to examining categorisations and models they believed relevant to those experiences, including, as previously noted, a view that it is gender that is foundational to constituting a person's experience. Furthermore, through invoking the practices of objectivism, they have investigated the experiences as if they could be isolated from time, place and the relationship between the researcher and the researched. This provides an account from one viewpoint, but not from within the social world in which experience is lived. As de Certeau observed (see Chapter One), the map comes to have a life of its own, no longer interlaced with the itinerary, and dissociated from the conditions of its own making (de Certeau, 1988, p. 120).

CHAPTER FOUR

Child-rearing Manuals: Changing Maps

Introduction

At the beginning of this century people referred to it as the "century of the child". Beekman (1977) attributed the phrase to Ellen Key, derived from the title of a Swedish work on social improvement. This phrase is seen to have expressed both the contemporary focuses on children and child study, and the aspirations of parents that they could change the world through their children (Beekman, 1977, p. 113). The turn of the century also marked the scientisation and proliferation of advice for parents on how to rear their children. In the material that follows, I examine changes in child-rearing literature for parents since the turn of the century, as a window to some of the ways in which children, mothers and fathers have been constituted throughout this century. [1]

On the surface, the dominant tale told by child-rearing literature throughout this century is an epic, in which the social ills of each generation are to be remedied for the next through individual change. In the initial episodes of this epic it is mothers who are cast in the lead role, but in the later it is children. In their leading role, mothers are variously cast as heroines or villains. Generally, fathers are cast in a minor role, although at times they are given a supporting role. Both, but mothers in particular, are held responsible for overcoming or causing a variety of social problems through the way they raise their children.

For each episode of the epic I have shaped the discussion in terms of the avenues of inquiry that were identified in Chapter Two. Hence, I have focussed on the dominant advice given, how the advice was buttressed and given its authority, and how the literature constructed the child, the mother and the father. I have also addressed the historical conditions that have, in retrospect, been highlighted by various commentators as explaining the changes that occurred. There are problems with this. For example, our explanations, historical or contemporary, are never neutral and they are written both from assumptions that are held and towards positions that we wish to argue, for particular purposes. Also, these matters are in a sense over-determined and impossible

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[1] It is important not to confuse what these texts prescribed as appropriate practices or ways of being a mother or father with what people actually did or experienced.

to attribute definitively to particular causes. And none of this is tidy; discussion of the changes in the literature is organised in decades but they maybe glimpsed in one decade before emerging more fully in another; influential historical and social moments span decades and amplify or negate the experiences of previous decades; the writers of child-rearing advice contradict themselves within editions, and they adjust their positions between editions. The commentary on the literature, be it academic or popular, tidies all this up into a cohesive tale. I have felt the urge to do this myself.

However, to focus only on what the literature has said without acknowledging the social and historical context is to tell only part of the story. My response to these problems of dealing with the historical material is to stress that we need to remember that we tell ourselves these stories for particular reasons. The interesting question then becomes: *what is effected by the particular stories that are told?* In effect, this epic of the amelioration of social ills through changes to individuals' parenting practices is a tale that absolves collective responsibility for the rearing of children whilst demanding individual acquiescence to prescribed codes of conduct.

The particulars of the analysis that follows will reveal that throughout this century there has been a major shift from a discourse about physical and mental hygiene and a moral order based on habits to a discourse about normal emotional and cognitive development and a moral order based on social adjustment. This change supports the distinction that Foucault drew between techniques of external and self government in the constitution of the subject. However, this analysis also suggests that the constitution of the subject is not a process determined by discourse; personal biography and agency cannot be ignored. As will be evident in the analysis that follows, the writers of the popular literature on child-rearing can be seen to have produced their texts at the intersection of discourse, their own lived experience and the lives they were living towards. It would be naïve to suggest that the parents who read these texts did not also actively make something of them, against the backdrop of their lived experience and the lives they were striving toward (Loveridge, 1990).

Child-rearing Manuals 1900–1920

The dominant tale of increasing isolation of families both during and after the Victorian period is accorded two conflicting impulses. On the one hand it is considered to have broken the cultural link between generations, leaving parents free to try out new ideas. On the other hand it is considered to have left the family vulnerable to changes in fads and fancies in childcare. Either way, it afforded the opportunity for the responsibility and results of the way children are reared to be laid at the door of parents, rather than the community. Christina Hardyment claimed that the initial reactions to Darwin's *On the origin of species* had emphasised that children's natures were genetically determined, and hence there had been a muted interest in babies: "all that was left in these tedious aboriginal years was the donkey-work of civilising the unholy young apes" (Hardyment, 1995, p. 92). However, Hardyment goes on to argue that by the early twentieth century there had been a shift to a more optimistic tone in popular discourse about heredity. Inherited possibilities could be realised or discouraged by upbringing, hence the study of the child became a vital prerequisite of parenthood, and not merely an academic pursuit.

This newly found interest in the study of the child can also be understood as meeting the need for a new kind of knowledge about the population and individuals that was necessary for the exercising of the modern form of power. As was revealed in Chapter Two, Foucault (1979) argued that the "science of man" was born within the disciplinary institutions, such as prisons, hospitals, schools and asylums. The ritual "examination" was at the heart of disciplinary technologies and involved both surveillance and normalising judgements. The initial procedures of investigation and adjudication of evidence of the "science of man" were influenced by the practices of these institutions. This is seen in the early endeavours of The Child Study Movement, which proposed to observe children's behaviour so as to ascertain healthy and normal development, and consequently a finer control of these processes. As will become clear within the following discussion, some of the initial and later data collection and experimentation of The Child Study Movement was conducted in hospitals, orphanages and mental asylums. The new forms of knowledge were not only connected with providing detailed information of both the population and individuals but also with the empowerment and legitimisation of particular professionals, such as sociologists, educationalists, and psychologists (Hendrick, 1990).

Although The Child Study Movement had started documenting the growth and development of children, Beekman (1977) and Ehrenreich and English (1978) suggested that at the time parents' attention was being focussed on their children very little was known about them in a "scientific" sense[2]. They argued that as a result of the dominance of technology in every other domain of life production, techniques of regularity, repetition and scheduling were advocated as the means to guarantee the production of consistently good children. Regular schedules would achieve efficiency and discipline. Training children (and their wills) by instilling correct habits would build up appropriate neural pathways and structures. This would lead to the eradication of inherited weaknesses and the nurturing of positive characteristics which would speed the species on the way to ever-higher plateaux of evolution. Although the points made by Beekman and Ehrenreich and English are valid, I would argue that this discourse of the "mechanical child" needs to be understood in the context of the broader discursive formation of modernity with its emphasis on rationality, social progress, science, the domination of nature, the control and regulation of the body, and the management of emotions (Hamilton, 1992).

In the United States of America, Dr Emmett Holt's book *The care and feeding of infants*, published from 1894 until 1943 (after 1924 by L. E. Holt, Jr), was the most popular blueprint for producing the "mechanical child" (Beekman, 1985; Hardyment, 1995). The ideal routine advocated in the book was based on Holt's experience of care and feeding routines in a hospital for orphaned infants where babies, lying side by side in rows of cots, were fed all at once at the same time (Hardyment, 1995). This abnormal situation and the drills deemed necessary for orphanage discipline formed the basis for a model, that was prescribed for normal family life. The book provided very detailed information, particularly in the areas of feeding and physical growth. Very specific instructions were given as to when and how long to feed, and babies were to be returned to their cots after feeding so they were disturbed as little as possible. After the first couple of months at the night-time feed babies could be fed in their cots as long as the bottle was held by the nurse until it was empty. Scientific formulae and methods for milk production were included, along with percentage breakdowns of the fat, sugar and protein contained in the various age specific series of formulae.

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[2] Throughout the analysis of the child-rearing literature of this century it is apparent that there is a time lag between when certain ideas and knowledge emerged within academic circles and when they became part of the currency of the popular literature. On the basis of New Zealand research, it also seems that there

Other aspects of behaviour such as crying, toilet training, and bad habits (masturbation, thumbsucking, nailbiting, nose picking, dirt eating) were also dealt with. Habits were conceived as extremely forceful, with bad ones needing regularity and discipline to eradicate, and good ones needing regularity and discipline to be acquired (Hardyment, 1995, pp. 125–138). Various gadgets were marketed to assist with this disciplining of the body. Aluminium mittens with muslin cuffs that could be pinned to the baby's sleeve were designed to allow movement of the hands within them but prevent them being put in the mouth, scratching or touching the genitals. Thigh spreaders, made of leather straps connected by a metal bar, were designed to prevent the infant masturbating by rubbing his or her thighs together. These gadgets can be understood as tools of disciplinary technology that were part of the external regulation and creation of a "docile (body) that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved"(Foucault, 1979a, p. 136).

In the United Kingdom and New Zealand Truby King's *The feeding and care of the baby,* first published in 1908 as a pamphlet and then in 1917 as a book, came to be regarded as a virtual "bible" for child rearing (Hardyment, 1995; Kedgley 1996).[3] While it was also very influential in Australia, King failed to convert those involved in the Australian infant welfare movements to his methods in the way that he had in the United Kingdom (Mein Smith, 1997). Both Dally (1982) and Hardyment (1995) argued that in the United Kingdom the "Truby King Baby" remained the ideal and his methods the method of child-rearing through until the 1950s. Kedgely (1996) maintained the same was true in New Zealand.

King was born of an upper-middle-class family in Taranaki, New Zealand. His parents lived out the idealised nineteenth century conception of marriage, with a distant father, and a mother immersed in the cult of true womanhood and family life centred on the child (Olssen, 1981). King's family had suffered from tuberculosis and he was left blinded in one eye and with a lopsided face as a result of tuberculosis (Mein Smith, 1997). After a brief career in banking he trained as a doctor in Edinburgh where he graduated top of his class in 1886, and became the first medical graduate to complete a degree in public health. In 1887 he married Isabella Cockburn Millar who had been dux of Edinburgh Ladies' College. Isabella had been deformed by rickets and was unable to

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was a time lag between when new ideas emerged in the popular literature and when they were taken up as regular practices by the majority of mothers.

[3] Kedgely (1996) claims that King was given a copy of Holt's book *Care and feeding of infants* in 1906 and that his own book bore a strong resemblance to it and was undoubtedly influenced by it.

have children. They adopted a daughter Mary, the child of a widowed nurse (Mein Smith, 1997). Isabella supported King's work in a variety of ways. When Mary grew up she too supported King's work.

King was active on an extraordinarily wide range of fronts. He was the Medical Superintendent for Seacliff Mental Hospital near Dunedin in New Zealand, but was also involved in research on malnourished cows and the scientific principles of feeding animals and plants. His experimental work with plants and animals and the history of his mental patients at Seacliff as largely bottle-fed led him to believe in and advocate strongly that babies should be breast-fed. He experimented with different feeding regimes for babies at the hospital but he also recognised that bottle-feeding was more popular and so developed his own "humanised" milk.

He also enlisted the support of influential and well-off men and women in Dunedin to champion his cause. In 1908 he attended a public meeting convened by a group of these women, and at the end of this meeting a society was formed to promote the health of women and children and support King's work. Lady Plunket, who was the wife of the Governor General, goddaughter of Queen Victoria and mother of eight gave her name to the cause and so it became known as the Plunket Society. Other branches were soon established, and by 1914 there were 50 in towns and 4 in the main centres (Kedgely, 1996). King believed the aim of the society should be to train mothers scientifically by teaching them in their own homes. So he began training nurses in his "scientific" system of infant management who then set out with the society's pamphlets to give advice and instruction in the home, and monitor infants' growth. By 1947, 85% of all Pakeha babies were a "Plunket baby" (May, 1997, p. 40).

King later opened schools for mothers, called Karitane Hospitals. He and Isabella wrote a weekly column for newspapers called *Our babies*, published under the pseudonym Hygiea, which, by 1913, was printed in 50 newspapers throughout the country, distributing 200,000 copies per week (Olssen, 1985). The government supported King's work, by coming to provide a third of the Plunket Society funding and commissioning him to write *The expectant mother and Baby's first month*, a book that was given to every applicant for a wedding licence. King always maintained that some of the Plunket Society's funding needed to remain voluntary otherwise it would seem to be an agency of the state, with compulsory inspectors, intruding into the private domain.

Basically the "Truby King Baby" can be described as a baby of routines who was to be kept somewhat at a distance. Babies were to be fed by the clock, at a specified

time and for a specified time with a clear period of 4 hours to have passed between the end of one nursing period and the beginning of the next. This routine was to ensure that both when and for how long a baby was fed were kept constant, and overfeeding avoided. The weekly weighing and measuring of babies by the Plunket Nurse would reveal whether or not the regime had been followed. Crying for reasons of hunger was to be ignored, and if mothers had checked that there were no obvious reasons for discomfort then crying in general was to be ignored; to attend to a crying baby beyond this basic routine was spoiling the baby and indulging the mother. Babies were not to be fed during the night and as well as sleeping for 8 hours during the night they were expected to sleep at regular intervals during the day. Babies were also to be bathed in cold water daily at a regular time, and to be trained from 2 months, using soap stick as an enema if necessary, to move their bowels by being "held out" (over a potty) by 10 o'clock in the morning. Mothers were advised not to give their children much physical comfort and not to be manipulated by a crying baby, as this would lead to bad habits. Playing with babies and holding, cuddling and soothing them were likely to spoil them, creating adolescents and adults who were self-indulgent, unproductive and lacking in moral self-control.[4]

The effect of Truby King's work was contradictory. He set hygienic standards and practices of mothercraft, that saved many infant lives at a time when infant mortality was a major concern. He renewed interest in breast-feeding, and through his advocacy made it acceptable again. He established The Plunket Society and its nurses who were major sources of advice for mothers whose support network had been ruptured. Furthermore, he set out to raise the status of motherhood and restore women's confidence. However, he constantly gave a message that mothers were incompetent and that they should not trust their own experience or the advice and experience of other mothers but follow the advice of the experts. "Don't be led astray by other mothers, however kindly, merely because they themselves happen to have brought up a number of children" (cited in Kedgely, 1996, p. 55). This crusade also engendered a sense of guilt and inadequacy in those mothers who, for whatever reason, were unable to follow his exacting standards.

Given their personal histories of both having suffered from common health problems of the day, Isabella and Truby King's drive to crusade for infant welfare is

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[4] Some women claim they successfully raised babies under this regime while others talk of feeling distress while listening to babies crying or guilt when they altered the regime (May, 1992; Kedgely, 1996).

understandable. However, to explain why this drive took the form of quest for regulation and normalisation we need to examine broader discourses of the day. Again, I would suggest that this crusade needs to be understood in the context of the discursive formation of modernity. In particular, the discourses of the emerging Child Study Movement, referred to previously, and of racial degeneracy are relevant. Reflecting about society and the realm of the social is one of the characteristic features of modernity in contrast with earlier forms of thought (Hamilton, 1992). Enlightenment thinkers believed there was one path to civilisation and that all societies could be found somewhere along that path. The societies of " the West" were seen to be advancing to the summit of civilised development, while "the Rest" (non-western) were at the lower levels of the path (Hall, 1992). Those near the summit needed to maintain purity of their breeding stock to maintain western progress, civilisation, development and rationality.[5] In New Zealand, where the colonisers aspired to be part of the West, infant mortality rates had initially been high. Then the birth rate started falling amongst Pakeha, and particularly Pakeha middle-class families, while poor and Maori families, deemed unfit for reproduction, were still having large families. The eugenicists, convinced of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and people of British descent, were concerned about the levels of fitness and the purity of the nations racial stock. As King explained in his book *Save the babies*:

> The Plunket Society in New Zealand was one of the first organisations in our Empire to recognise the germ of degeneration that had begun to sap our own vitality. It saw that if we could not do anything to check the falling birth-rate, we could do something locally to lower our infant death-rate, and to improve the mental and physical characteristics of our future generations. (King, 1917)

It was felt that the key to solving this state-threatening situation was to reverse the trend for middle-class women to seek education and employment, and to convince them that motherhood was a true and noble vocation, a duty of national importance, and their biological destiny. The conventional wisdom of medical science maintained women had a fixed amount of vital energy which would be drained by education and employment, leaving insufficient energy for pregnancy, childbirth and feeding of

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[5] Hall (1992, p. 313) notes that in Enlightenment discourse the West was the model of social progress, "And yet, all this depended on the discursive figures of the 'noble vs. ignoble savage' and of 'rude and refined nations' which had been formulated in the discourse of 'the West and the Rest". So the Rest was critical for the formation of western Enlightenment – and therefore of modern social science. Without the

infants. It was also believed that civilisation had destroyed women's mothering instinct but the accumulated knowledge of previous generations was also not to be trusted. The solution, King believed was to elevate motherhood as a craft or science.

King's crusade resonated with the anxieties, desires and interests of various groups. Dally (1982) explained Truby King's appeal in terms of his having captured the spirit of the time, with a fatalistic attitude toward infant death giving way to a new more scientific attitude. Lyne Milne, in a thesis on the Plunket Society, argued that King touched upon humanitarian and political concerns of the age and harnessed them to infant care (cited in Kedgely, 1996, p. 48). Reiger (1985) and Kedgely (1995) argued that many mothers went along with the routinised regime, which would have often been very difficult to follow, because they were convinced that the scientific basis to the advice justified the adversities. Phillipa Mein Smith (1997) contended that King's success in promoting his system needs to be understood in terms of his winning approval at the highest imperial levels. As a charismatic and medical man his views were listened to, but his version of infant welfare included an imperial mission and corresponded to imperial values of discipline, order, and self-effacement for a "higher" and noble cause. Mein Smith claims that the power of the royal seal of approval cannot be underestimated: "From the Great War until 1950, a certain status attached to raising a Truby King baby among those to whom a British (colonial) identity mattered" (Mein Smith, 1997, p. 88). [6]

Within the child rearing manuals of this period then, the "child" is constituted by multiple and contradictory discourses. The dominant discourse of industrial child rearing constructed the child as a machine, albeit a small one, to be programmed. Evolutionary discourse positioned the child as a link to a higher evolutionary plateau, and nominated the first 3 years of life as extremely important. Social reformers elaborated this discourse further by positing the child as the means for control over society, emphasising the child's capacity to be moulded, particularly in the early years. Less dominant, but extant, was a view emanating from The Child Study Movement of the child as having special defining characteristics; innocent, gentle, spontaneous and in need of protection.

Rest …the West would not have been able to recognise and represent itself as the summit of human history."

[6] Lady Plunket was the goddaughter of Queen Victoria, and the Duchess of York's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, appeared in an advertisement in the press as a Truby King Baby (Mein Smith, 1997).

Mothers were also constituted in contradictory ways. Initially through the scientific education of maternal instinct they were poised to achieve "professional motherhood", a true vocation and a noble calling. Stanley Hall, one of the founders ot the Child Study movement, and his colleagues had welcomed a partnership with mothers in child studies; they were positioned to be potential research assistants. After the turn of the century, the younger generation of scientists rejected mothers as partners as they believed their maternal instinct, sentimentality and emotionality made them unable to be objective enough (Ehrenreich & English, 1978; Hardyment, 1995). However, they did consider that with the keen, analytic vision of fathers to guide them and the expertise of the professionals, women could be semi-skilled workers, following instructions on the training of their children. Reiger (1985) argued that between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there was a change in discourse of parenting from one of economic provision and moral guidance to the child being constituted as a new object of socialisation and motherhood a nationally controlled activity.

Fathers, by constrast, were constituted in the child-rearing manuals more by what was not said than what was said, with the silence suggesting that they should not be involved in the care of babies and young children. Hardyment (1995) proposed that the evidence of the manuals suggest a distant role for fathers. In America, The Child Study Associations advocated the observation of real children by real parents in the interests of the establishment of an accurate Science of Childhood. There were examples of men who had done this, such as Darwin himself, and it was cast within the realm of the scientific rather than the domestic, so that it would not have seemed an inappropriate area for a man to be involved with. Sully, another of the Child Study researchers, specified it was more appropriate that the information be collected by fathers but, due to their restricted leisure time, mothers, under their guidance, could be used as collaborators (Hardyment, 1995).

Child-rearing Manuals 1920–1930s

The period after World War One is characterised as dominated both by fear of social unrest and anxiety at the anticipation of World War Two. Widespread testing throughout the process of conscription for the First World War focussed attention on the "quality" of children, both overseas and in New Zealand. During the period of reconstruction that followed the First World War research and guidance work in the

United Kingdom and the United States focussed on the physical and mental health of children, juvenile delinquency, the practices of mental hygiene and parent education. Money was available for large-scale research projects and nursery schools attached to child-study institutes based in universities. This work was sponsored by philanthropic organisations such as the Laura Rockerfeller Memorial and the Commonwealth Fund. New alliances were forged between medicine, education and welfare, creating a fervour of activity around observing and charting the growth of the normal child. Reiger (1985) argued that in the hands of philanthropists the reforming strategies concerned with health, education and social adjustment were directed at working-class families but once professionals became involved they became part of programmes aimed at family life in general. In this period the benefits of a scientific upbringing aimed at promoting control and routine were initially advocated, but towards the end of this period there was a shift from the dominance of behaviourism toward an interest in emotions and relationships and normal growth and development.

Beekman (1977) and Hardyment (1995) argued that World War One brought an end to the optimistic belief that rearing children was a matter of physical engineering. They both claimed that in the aftermath of destruction and suffering wrought by the war people struggled to understand the individual's contribution to the war, and it seemed that some form of social engineering was needed to keep human emotions under control. Initially, there was a greater emphasis in the literature on eliminating differences between children and encouraging social conformity. Habits were seen as the vehicle for regulating physical training and moral training. Against this background, the work of the American behaviourist John Watson was seen as complementary to Truby King's but whereas "King approached via the stomach, Watson via the brain" (Hardyment, 1995, p. 165).

John Watson started his work as an animal psychologist, studying homing birds and monkeys before moving on to observing and experimenting on infants, the majority of whom were orphans or abandoned children in institutions and hospitals. He was sacked from his professorship at John Hopkins University following an affair with a student and his divorce from his wife. He then had a brief and successful career in advertising before publishing his book *Psychological care of infant and child* in 1928, dedicated: "To the first mother who brings up a happy child". Watson saw this book as the "new testament" to John Holt's best selling "infant bible" of the nation (Hardyment,

1995). Beekman (1977) attributed the book's success to Watson's understanding of how to sell something, gained through his experience in the world of advertising.

Watson's book aimed to help mothers master the essentials of behaviourism so they could become "a professional, not a sentimentalist masquerading under the name of Mother" (Watson, 1928, cited in Hardyment, 1995, p. 173). Although Watson's advice was very similar to many of the mechanistic psychologists of the time, Watson's work is renowned for its explicit and extreme indictment of expressions of tenderness and love between parents and children. Watson aimed to produce self-reliant adults who could stand alone. Those who had been indulged by caresses and cuddles were, in his view, prone to invalidism, hypochondria, the "mother's boy syndrome" and nest habits in adulthood (Urwin & Sharland, 1997).

Like many of his contemporaries, Watson was deeply, if ambivalently, influenced by the work of Freud. Much of their writing was informed by Freudian discourse about sexuality and concerned with avoiding Freudian-style traumas, whilst at the same time refusing to acknowledge Freud explicitly and openly. Concepts from Freud that were not sexual, such as his trinity of personality, were explicitly integrated into the writings on mental hygiene for babies. These writers believed that all problems connected with sexual impulses could be avoided by removing love and affection from children's lives. Watson believed that the "love response" would emerge even when mothers guarded themselves against it and so advised them to keep away from their children for large parts of the day:

> The child sees the mother's face as she pets it. Soon the *mere sight of the mother's face* calls out the love response. A touch of the skin is no longer necessary to call it out. A conditioned reaction has been formed. Even if she puts the child in the dark, the *sound* of her voice as she croons soon comes to call out a love response. This is the psychological explanation of the child's joyous reaction to the sound of the mother's voice. So with her footsteps, the sight of the mother's clothes, of her photograph. All too soon the child is shot through with love reactions. (Watson, 1928, cited in Beekman, 1977, p. 150)

His view was that children would probably be happier reared in institutions than with their own parents. This suggested alliance between the state and child rearing is considered to be one of the factors that caused Watson's work to be rejected. Also, the economic collapse in 1929 is seen to have made the preaching of the values of productivity and efficiency as central to child-rearing somewhat suspect. However, in

the later 1920s and early 1930s behaviourism was still popular in Britain and the United States (Urwin & Sharland, 1997).

Beekman (1977) argued that Watson's concepts continued to have influence beyond the 1920s but by the end of that decade a change in the style of child-rearing manuals could be detected, with an interest in the emotional interactions of parents and children emerging. Urwin and Sharland (1997) argued that there were two contenders to take over behaviourism's dominance of the child-rearing literature: one was the normative tradition, born out of The Child Study Movement, and the other was the New Psychology.[7]

The title of Grace Adams' book, *Your child is normal* illustrates this change in emphasis to the concern with the normative. Adams proposed that "Parents need less of the theories generalised from the memories of neurotic grown people and more facts based upon competent observations of competent normal children." (Adams, 1934, cited in Beekman, 1977, p. 161) Dr. Arnold Gesell was one of the most important innovators within this field, using film, photographs and the one-way screen to observe and document extensively the processes of growth and development. His first major work on child development, published in 1925, was *The mental growth of the pre-school child: a psychological outline of normal development from birth to the sixth year, including a system of development diagnosis*. Beekman (1977) suggested that the language of the book was a major hurdle for the general reader, and it had only a limited audience. [8] Following in the tradition of the child-study movement, Gesell urged mothers to keep charts of their babies' crying, feeding, dreaming, elimination, sleeping so they could really learn the basic characteristics of their infants (Gesell & Ilg, 1943). Although this is suggestive of "mother as scientist", it was cast very much as a passive role, making charts and following, not leading, the development of the child.

Charlotte Buhler, who worked in Vienna and was influential in the United Kingdom, also made a contribution to the development and promotion of development

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[7] The New Psychology referred to an eclectic body of thought arising from medicine, experimental psychology, welfare, and the legal profession that recognised emotions, the will and the passions as part of an individual's psychology, not just things to be controlled through conditioning. It also acknowledged that children could experience conflict within their daily environment.

[8] Later, influenced by the Aldriches, Gesell and Ilg went on to publish *Infant and child in the culture of today,* which was designed to be more accessible, and also contained descriptions of the child's behaviour day. If people say they reared their children according to Gesell this is the text they are most likely to be referring to (Beekman, 1977). The link between method of child-rearing and democracy is made explicit on the cover of this text where it states "A realistic discussion of the specific techniques for effective child guidance and psychological care in a democratic culture."

scales. Her work was based on observations, made through a glass wall, of orphans and foundlings in institutions. As well as being concerned with physical growth and intellectual achievements, she focused on social adaptation and co-operation and conflict. Her work produced "temper tantrums" and "troublesome twos" as objects of scientific study, and resulted in them being included in developmental scales (Urwin & Sharland, 1997). Urwin and Sharland (1997) argued that the production of developmental norms did not displace behaviourism but rather mapped onto it, producing milestones for the achievement of good habits through appropriate training.

In the context of the child-rearing literature the effect of developmental milestones can be understood as techniques of discipline, providing "neutral" and "objective" measures for the categorisation of the normal and the abnormal, the healthy and the unhealthy, the acceptable and the unacceptable, the legitimate and the illegitimate.[9] Furthermore, they combined techniques of external *and* self-government as they positioned parents as monitoring the development of their children and *their own* role in ensuring that development was normal. The turn to the subjectifying sciences of the New Psychology, which required the subject to speak and an authoritative expert to interpret, and so bring to light the deep hidden truths of experience, can be seen as representing an increasing dominance of the incorporation of technologies of self-government. In Chapter Two I argued that Foucault proposed that through the telling of the truth to expert others individuals come to survey and so better govern themselves. Foucault saw the quest for greater self-knowledge as an effect of an obscured form of power that makes the individual a subject in two senses of the work, "subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge"(Foucault, 1982, p. 112). With the shift in emphasis from habit to psychological norms and emotions in the child-rearing literature, the problem of how to live the good (family) can be seen, as Rose (1990) suggested, to have moved from a metaphysical and religious to a psychological register.

A number of converging reasons are given for the emergence of an interest in the management of children's emotions. The social turmoil that followed the First World War, the realisation that under very stressful situations ordinary people could behave in ways that transgressed what had been considered normal, and the anxieties that accompanied the anticipation of the Second World War focussed attention on children's aggression, destructiveness and irrational fears. The New Psychology gained a place by

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[9] The question of whether parents experienced these milestones in this way is another matter.

giving meaning to these aspects of children's behaviour and by emphasising mother love. Post-war legislation aimed at enhancing the mental and physical health of children reinforced these as legitimate concerns (Urwin & Sharland, 1997).

Within the framework of the New Psychology, children's behaviour that had been considered antisocial was recast as emotional dilemmas. Although most experts in the child-rearing literature were still preaching that undesirable habits were to be eradicated through training and routine, dissident voices were beginning to be heard and listened to. In the United Kingdom, Susan Issacs in *The nursery years* (published in 1929 and republished four times before the Second World War) was focussing on understanding children's emotions and emotional difficulties *from the child's point of view*. In the United States, in 1938, Anderson and Mary Aldrich published *Babies are human beings*. They combined scientific observations about normal development (as revealed by Gesell and his colleagues) with encouragement for parents to enjoy their babies. Urwin and Sharland (1997), Hardyment (1995) and Beekman (1977) all claimed that this text crucially changed the whole childcare book market and paved the way for the revolution in child-rearing that was to come with Dr. Spock.

In this "episode" a significant shift in the dominant discourse occurred. In the 1920s and 1930s the works of King and Watson were dominant but there was the foreshadowing of a sea change towards a more permissive style of child-rearing. In the initial phases of this period, children were construed as raw material to be shaped through the suppression of impulses and the instillation of good habits via conditioning. The child was to be made to fit the world into which he or she was born and he or she was to be self-sufficient. Towards the end of this period, the child is construed as not only having an intellectual and physical life but also an emotional life. As attention turned to the all-round child there was a change in discourse away from character as a moral matter, related to physical and mental hygiene, toward social adjustment as a psychological matter, related to normal development and emotional relationships.

As children became construed as emotional beings and not merely a bundle of conditioned responses, there was a concomitant shift away from an emphasis on distance between parents and children to the emotional interactions between parents and children. In the new order, the mother's responsibilities were broadened to include emotional and psychological aspects of behaviour as well as physical and mental. Her role was to observe and guide play, adjusting the environment as necessary. Ehrenreich and English (1978, p. 219) described the change from the previous regime:

In early twentieth century "scientific phase" the mother had been the representative of the expert in the home, imposing his regimes on the child. But now it is the child who acts as a junior representative of the expert, instructing the mother in the routines of daily life.

In the interests of social development, mothers were also to become a comrade and playmate of the child, a chum. Hardyment (1995) argued that during the 1920s fathers were offered less responsibility for or companionship with their babies than in the pre-war years. The actual absences of fathers due to their participation in the war may have exacerbated the tendency for fathers to be absent from these texts. However, contra Hardyment, Coltrane (1996) argued that in America during the 1920s and 1930s both men and women were more focussed on the emotional importance of the family, and men were encouraged to focus on love and involvement instead of discipline and authority.

Child-rearing Manuals 1940–1950s

If the FirstWorld War was seen to have shifted child-rearing into the discursive field of psychology, the SecondWorld War was seen to have opened up the possibility of statements from within the discursive field of politics. Fears of social chaos and dictatorship have been identified as recurrent themes for people in general both before and after the War. To defend democracy against fascism, it was argued that its principles had to be extended into home-life. Increasingly the rigid inculcation of habits was associated with Prussianism and a totalitarian state, whereas nurturant parent-child relationships and the centrality of the family were construed as allied to democracy (Beekman, 1977). In much of the child-rearing literature at the time of the War, a deep polarisation was etched between the German people and the American people: the soulless, authoritarian, autocratic, despotic in discipline, and oriented to the state contrasted with the affirmers of individuality, democracy, reciprocity, guidance and understanding, and the family as the fundamental unit of culture (for example, Gesell and Ilg, 1943). However, these were also years in which people's feelings of intense grief over the losses and separations (due to deaths, concentration camps, and evacuations from the city to the country) are considered to have given rise to a deeply felt concern to minimise the effects of separations and disruptions and promote an emotionally stable environment.

During the period of reconstruction that followed the war there was also a preoccupation with the restoration of families as the route to the restoration of the nation. Driven by ideology of the family, rather than the lived reality of many families, tremendous pressure was exerted on women to resume their "original" place in the family (Singer, 1992). Ehrenreich and English (1978) asserted that women were advised to return to their essential dependence on men and stay at home and make their marriages work by catering to men's wishes so that not only would families be happy but the social order would become stable again. Wolfenstein (1951) argued that immediately following the war years there was a celebration of indulgence that was to negate the previous years' austerity and this was to give rise to a new child-rearing discourse which she termed the "fun morality" and which others have called "permissive education". It was the child-rearing discourse, which, in a way that had not occurred previously, established the mother as the primary source of emotional stability (Singer, 1992; Unwin & Sharland, 1997). In the 1950s however, the move to a more conservative order was accentuated as fear of communism began to loom in the middle-class psyche of America, Australia and New Zealand. The Soviets' launch of Sputnik in 1957 was seen to give them a position of dominance, and for American children in particular this was seen as the end to the indulgent years. Limits, cognitive development and stimulation were emerging at the end of this period as infants and toddlers found themselves part of the space race and an order that considered that American youth had gone soft. [10]

In marked contrast to the previous period, the child-rearing literature of the '40s and '50s concentrated on infant's rights to have their needs and wants satisfied. Babies and children were seen as driven by instinctual urges, sexual strivings, aggressive impulses and bodily needs, facing conflicts and clashes between their inner worlds and the constraints of the external world, feeling both love and hate for parents at the same time. The management of these conflicts was considered to be crucial not only to the formation of their character but to their future as healthy citizens who would know success in love and married life. But use of external force, authoritarianism and repression were rejected as a means to control the child's aggressive impulses because they were seen as characteristic of systems headed by dictators such as Germany and the Soviet Union. In general, feeding and sleeping schedules were to be done away with

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[10] Beekman (1982) argues that the war years and those immediately following it were the most permissive in child-rearing.

and the needs of the child followed. Frustration of the child was to be avoided at all cost. Toilet training became a potential for emotional trauma. Crying became something that was to be resolved through undivided maternal attention. Babies were understood to cry because of a need. It was impossible to spoil a baby by attending to needs, including the need for mother's loving attention. The baby who cried and didn't get attention was now the spoiled baby. Mothers were to enjoy their babies, to delight in the various aspects of caring for them and provide them with spontaneous, unconditional, all-engulfing love. The basis of this love was understood to be instinctual, a force of nature and so, in contrast to the previous period, mothers were to follow their feelings and instincts.

The person who is most commonly associated with the popular dissemination of these ideas is Dr Benjamin Spock, an American paediatrician. He was born at the turn of the century into a well-off family, with six children. His father was a lawyer and his mother ruled the house and is considered to have had extreme, although not eccentric ideas about child-rearing. Spock said that he felt scared of his mother and "we were made not only to toe the line and feel guilty all the time but we were made to behave differently from other children" (Bahaire, 1997). He met and married his first wife Jane in 1927. She was from a well-educated family who were much more liberal than his own, and it was she who introduced him to new ideas, such as the work of Freud and Marx, and who stimulated his political imagination. Spock completed his medical degree and then went on to train as a psychoanalyst. He set up his own paediatrics clinic in 1933 and he and Jane had two sons. He then went on to publish a book, which he hoped would help stop the next generation from suffering the kind of childhood that he had experienced. He began working on *The commonsense book of baby and childcare* in 1943 and it was published in 1946.[11] Jane was a close collaborator on the book. As well as taking the dictation for the manuscript it is she who is considered responsible for the tone: the reassuring, comforting, friendly, easy to understand, written-as-spoken-nature of the book (Bahaire, 1997).

Spock went on to becomes a university lecturer, changing posts several times, and at the end of the 1950s he had his own TV show on child-rearing. In the 1960s he joined the anti-nuclear protest group and became a figurehead for the anti-war

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[11] It was published in paperback under the title *The Pocket Book of Baby and Childcare* for 25 cents with the hardback selling for $3.00.

movement, touring university campuses and speaking out against US involvement in Vietnam. In 1968 he was found guilty of charges of conspiracy to help draft dodgers, but the convictions were eventually overturned. However, his reputation amongst the general public was damaged as he became the butt of conservative politicians who wanted to discredit his ideas and to blame him for the anti-establishment orientation of American young people who had been raised permissively.

Jane and Benjamin Spock became estranged throughout the 1950s, in the 1960s she suffered from mental illness and alcoholism, and she and Spock parted in the early seventies. Spock remarried in 1977 and died in 1998, aged 95, weeks before the updated seventh edition of *Baby and childcare* was due to be published. His sons, John and Mike, claimed that there were two sides to Spock: the public warm, wise and benign family man, and the private Victorian father, who never kissed or hugged them. John Spock described his father, Benjamin, as having been like his mother in the way that she made her children feel scared and guilty and wasn't affectionate. John felt that he himself had been like his own father with his children:

> This whole process of behaviour cascading down through the generations
> is not something we can mould and change just by the desire to do so.
> You can't just be a different person than you wish or be a different
> person than the person that you were raised (Bahaire, 1997).

Hardyment (1995, p. 223) claimed that *The commonsense book of baby and childcare* "is a best-seller only outsold by the Bible". In his analysis of the various editions, Beekman (1982) commented on Spock's agility in subtly changing his message to meet the mood of the times. Spock in his introduction to the 1957 edition explained that he had moved to a more balanced position, after parents were getting into trouble through the swing to permissiveness.[12] Hardyment argued that his latest edition was amongst the most disciplinarian of the ones that we have around today (Bahaire, 1997).

Baby and childcare arrived in New Zealand in the date 1940s;. Spock's ideas had already had some airing through the private publication in 1950 of *The sources of love and fear* by Dr Maurice Bevan-Brown. Bevan-Brown was a Freudian by training and had worked for eighteen years in the Tavistock Clinic in London before returning to Christchurch. In his book he was critical, without mentioning names, of a previous

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[12] Beekman argues there was more to it than that, and makes an interesting comment on the use that is made of child-rearing texts in general: "Balanced or not, this is only part of the story. Historically, what people have sought in child-raising books is not balance but the reaffirmation of their ideas and sensibilities; the 1950s were certainly a more conservative time than the 1940s". (Beekman, 1982, pp. 200–201).

school of thought that had encouraged mothers to ignore their instincts and to leave babies to cry; "This doctrine is pernicious and dangerous" (cited in Kedgely, 1996, p. 176).[13] Bevan-Brown is credited with being the catalyst who radically transformed infant care in New Zealand, bringing to attention the importance of the emotional needs of children (Kedgley, 1996). Throughout the 1950s in New Zealand most women still continued to rely on Plunket Nurses and *Modern mothercraft* [14] but the Plunket ideology was beginning to be challenged by mothers as well as experts. The style of motherhood in which mothers sought to train and control their children according to a schedule was still dominant but a new style was afoot in which women saw themselves responding to their instincts and the developmental needs of the child as a psychological being (May, 1992).

Various reasons are given for the immediate, widespread and longstanding uptake of *Baby and childcare*. Beekman (1982) argued that one reason for its appeal was that in post-war America there was much of migration from the countryside and cities to the suburbs, which often left young families at a distance from extended family members. The information provided was also very comprehensive and specific and the index more detailed than any previous book. The opening lines to the 1946 edition: "Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do", and the general validation of "common sense" also set a completely different tone from that of previous books that had privileged the knowledge and authority of the expert. Furthermore, the text was written in a way that was relatively free of jargon and accessible. Rima Apple (1987) suggested that one of the messages that was masked by the user-friendly tone of the book is that mothering is not difficult provided women follow the expert's advice. Beekman (1982) also argued that despite the seemingly open tone there is frequently a firm position being put by Spock, and that it is one that generally has its foundations in psychoanalytic thought.

The growth in the interest in Freud's work is attributed to the resonance between his emphasis on the harm that could be done to the adult personality through bad experiences in infancy, particularly separations and frustration, and the general anxieties that parents had about the effects of prolonged separations for their children during the war. However, the strong focus on the special psychological needs of the infant and the

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[13] King, at the end of his life, had requested Bevan-Brown to be his successor in taking over the stewardship of the Plunket Society

[14] This was the current Plunket text, originally written by Mary King but at this point update by Helen Deem.

mother as the source of emotional stability is attributed to John Bowlby's insistence on the importance of the mother-child relationship. Raised by a nanny in an upper-middle class family in Cambridge, England, John Bowlby was one of six children. He is said to have been very reticent about his early years (Hardyment, 1995). After graduating from the University of Cambridge in 1928 he worked in a school for maladjusted children while considering what to do next. Bretherton (1992) argued that it was his experiences there that persuaded him of the importance of early family relationships on personality development and set him on a path of professional development as a child psychiatrist.

Bowlby's work drew on Freudian ideas about instinctive behaviour but also on some aspects of Melanie Klein's object-relations theory to move away from the notion of drives. The influence of ethology, particularly those studies concerned with bonding between animals and their young, is also seen in his work. Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) contended that post-war liberal reformers were concerned to move away from theories such as social Darwinism that emphasised the inevitability of war as evolutionarily necessary and to focus on the environment and things within it that were amenable to interventions and change. They argued that although Bowlby claimed to be working within the psychoanalytic tradition, his turn to environmentalism, centred on the mother transformed it beyond recognition.

In 1951 Bowlby published *Maternal care and mental health*, a report that had been commissioned by the World Health Organisation to attempt to gain some understanding of the situation of children who had been orphaned or separated from their parents by the Second World War. The report quickly sold out, and in 1953 Bowlby published an abbreviated form of it written for a popular readership, *Child care and the growth of love.* [15] Bowlby argued that maternal deprivation not only caused irreparable damage to the child but to society in general and any form or upbringing outside the home should be regarded as a threat to public health. "Deprived children, whether in their own homes or out of them, are a source of social infection as real and serious as are carriers of diphtheria and typhoid" (Bowlby, 1951, p. 157). Based on the Kleinian view of the baby as controlled by innate psychic forces and capable of feeling strongly opposing feelings for the mother, in 1956 Bowlby went on to argue that during separations from the mother these ambivalent feelings became unbearable, and led to despair and anger which destroyed the ability to regulate feelings of love and hate

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[15] As evidence of its popularity I have a copy on my shelves, bought at a second-hand booksale, which was copy number one in set 10 of the local Central Districts Play Centre Association Library.

(Bowlby, 1979). On the basis of his research on children in institutions and foster families, and work by Spitz in hospitals and orphanages, he advocated continuous maternal care, tolerance of ambivalent feelings, and the disavowal of punishment (Singer, 1992). Once again, a truly abnormal situation was the bedrock for a model that was prescribed for normal family life.

Hardyment (1995) argued that from 1953 onwards most important child-rearing manuals made reference to Bowlby's findings, and his influence continued well into the 'seventies. Riley (1983) suggested that any critique of his work needed to take account of the context in which he wrote. Bowlby himself did not argue that babies would become neurotic if their mothers went out for a while, but the ideological post-war climate popularised his work in a way that was instrumental for a set of assumptions about women's involvement in the labour market. Nonetheless, his work had very contradictory effects. On the one hand, out of humane concern he stressed the mental health of children, in which few others were interested. This reinforced a tolerance and understanding of children's emotional lives, which had been beginning to emerge in the previous years. He gave value to the feelings that many women had felt for their children but which had been negated. He also reasserted the importance of mothers who had been officially undermined by the previous regime of child-rearing advice. However, his work in general, and the concept of maternal deprivation in particular, tied women to their children, buttressed a construction of the normal mother from which any variation was seen to be pathological and abnormal, engendered a sense of guilt where the norm was not followed and occluded any examination of the position and experience of fathers. In so doing, the lives of women, children and men were effectively limited, albeit in different ways.

Another important authority, working in parallel to Bowlby, was Winnicott. He was also influenced by the work of Klein. During the war years, Winnicott gave broadcasts in the United Kingdom in which, like Churchill, he spoke directly to the mothers of the nation (Unwin & Sharland, 1997). During these he used metaphors from management, animal taming and war to encourage mothers to accept the furious feelings inside their babies and to help the child manage these by being tranquil, empathic, tolerant and continuously available. If the mother was not present, it would appear that the child's fantasies of destroying his or her mother would have come true, which in turn would cause guilt, which in turn would make the child harder to control and behave in anti-social ways.

The child, by virtue of his or her right to develop physically, mentally and emotionally, was the dominant figure in the discourse of permissive education. The child was variously presented in much of the American and English psychological literature as emotionally fragile (Beekman, 1982), unstable, capable of feelings of intense love and hate, and potentially a tyrant or follower of a dictator (Reily, 1983) and affectionate, dependent and scintillatingly intelligent (Hardyment, 1995). Hardyment also referred to a less dominant construction of children as savages needing to be turned into civilised beings.

At the beginning of this period, mothers were construed as contributing to nation building through their part in re-establishing the security of the home. However, Ehrenreich and English (1978) and Mathews (1987) argued that towards the end of this period American "Moms" were blamed for emasculating their sons and their husbands by secretly accreting more and more power and psychologically castrating the male in general. Working mothers were also blamed for juvenile delinquency. Singer (1992) argued that with a greater tolerance of the emotional life of the child there was greater intolerance of the wishes of women, apart from motherhood. For both Winnicott and Bowlby, mothers, through their permanent love and care, were to be the child's "psychic organiser" and to regulate and control their emotions. Rose (1990) argued one of the effects of the dominance of psychological norms, language and practices was the creation of a "therapeutic culture of the self", which demanded self-examination and self-inspection by mothers. The strong emphasis on psychological norms, language and practices in this period can thus be understood as part of the techniques of government of the self.

During this period the distant figure of the father was replaced by a more playful, companionable figure (Phillips, 1987) who was to provide a home, food and a link to the outside world (May, 1992) but not actually have any responsibility for the care of children. The father was also not open to the same censure as the mother if he did meet the ideal. In America, fear of the feminising influence the home might have on young boys led to calls for fathers to interact with their sons and "teach them to be real men" (Coltrane, 1996, p. 43). The new points of reference in the dominant discourse of the way parents were to raise their children are most clearly delineated in the work of Spock: he advocated that "emotional depth" and "keen intelligence" be fostered through "daily stimulation from loving parents". The spirit of these remains dominant in the literature today, although different terms are used.

Child-rearing manuals 1960–1970s

Commentating on the 1960s in the United States, Walter Cronkite (1998) stated:

> The 1960s undoubtedly were the most turbulent decade of this century.
> There were the assassinations, the race riots, the Vietnam War. It was an
> incredible decade....The generation gap was clearly apparent in the 60s
> as the youth revolution took place and the entire moral upheaval that
> some of us didn't understand and didn't participate in...During the
> period I made the declarative statement I don't care for their hair, I don't
> care for their looks, I don't care for their clothes, I don't care for their
> behaviour, I don't care for anything about them! I don't think there was
> ever a more difficult parental period in our history as there was for us
> who had teenage children in the 1960s...The times were changing fast.
> Young people wanted change, women and minorities wanted change.

Sonja Davies, writing from New Zealand of the 1960s, said

> The sixties brought with them a change in the air. After that decade
> nothing would ever be the same again, or so it seemed. The young
> stopped accepting and started questioning parental authority and the
> system. Even the music change; songs of protest were heard throughout
> the world. [16]

Both these cultural commentators captured what have been identified as two
defining features of the 1960s that were experienced widely within the western world,
albeit in slightly different years and with national variations. They were years which
have been characterised as dominated by social turmoil and radical critique as the
hegemonic cultural order was challenged by the anti-war movement, the civil rights
movement, the women's movement, the green movement, teenage culture and those
seeking sexual revolution, psychedelic experiences and things generally described as
counter-cultural. They were also portrayed as a moment of rupture in the emotional
configuration of the home as the relationship between parents and teenage children in
general became extremely problematic: the authority of parents and the acquiescence of
children were open to negotiation.

In amongst all this, the role of women and the status of motherhood again came
to the fore. Mathews (1987, p. 218) argued that in the United States the complex of

social, cultural and historical factors from post war through into the '50s was the seed bed for the catalysation of a "problem" that had been generations in the making. By the 1960s, many of the women who were supposed to be emotionally supporting their families and seeing to the psychological well-being of the Nation were demoralised and knew exactly what Betty Friedan (1963) meant when she wrote about "the strange, dissatisfied voice stirring within her" that wanted to talk about "the problem with no name". This period has been described as one in which it became increasingly untenable, both psychologically and economically, for middle-class families to afford the domestic ideal of a mother at home. Middle-class mothers began to enter the paid work force along with the poor, black, widowed, divorced, and determined women who had always needed to work.

New Zealand in the 1960s was rapidly changing into an urban society with ill thought-out suburban development that took no account of the needs of women and children and that accentuated the loneliness and isolation of child-rearing in the home. The economy was prosperous and families spent money on household appliances and consumer goods. However, Ausubel, an anthropologist who did research in New Zealand at this time, observed that the time that American women had gleaned as free time through labour saving devices was reinvested by New Zealand women into do-it-yourself projects connected with the home. New Zealand mothers, he felt, were very serious about raising their children, not expecting enjoyment or emotional satisfaction (Ausubel, 1960). Kedgely (1996) argued that many mothers were young, inexperienced, had very little support and felt they had lost an identity of their own. The emergence of talk of suburban neurosis in 1968 and research on the situation of women began to challenge the hegemonic stereotype of the happy domestic housewife and mother in New Zealand. In a study of New Zealand mothers in 1963, Jane and James Ritchie (1970) concluded, "The reality is that motherhood in New Zealand too rarely brought women the experience of joy." In a follow-up study in 1977 they concluded that in the 1970s child-rearing was more pleasurable than it had been in the 1960s (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1978).

By the mid-1970s, political parties had co-opted some of the rhetoric of the protest movements, particularly in relation to civil rights, gender and ethnic equality, and the environment. Fashion co-opted the counter-culture style of the 1960s. Helen

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[16] It is interesting to note here that the focus in these quotes represents a broadening of interest from infants and young children to the recently invented teenager.

May, writing generally of the situation in New Zealand, argued "Thus what began by some in the late 1960s as an ideal of radical change by a few had become an exercise in piecemeal change within the mainstream systems." (May, 1992, p. 209). However, the women's movement was still gathering momentum, questioning every aspect of women's lives. Within the movement, motherhood was questioned in a way that it had not been before and dominantly positioned as a source of oppression. Both within and out of the mainstream, women's groups worked on the problems of equality of the sexes, women's rights to equal pay and opportunity in the work place, and economic independence. Kedgely (1996, p. 238) argued that "The new ideas of women's liberation affected all women to some extent, whether they agreed with them or not". In particular, the roles of men and women, their relationship to each other and to work and child-rearing began to emerge as issues that could not easily be made to disappear.

The child-rearing literature in this period diversified into a number of more specialised texts that were assumed to complement a more comprehensive text, such as Spock's *Baby and childcare*. Some of the texts concentrated on different age groups (e.g., *Between parent and teenager*), while others were more specialised in terms of the aspect of child-rearing on which they were focussed (e.g., *Single children*). Drawing on the work of the Swiss psychologist Piaget, manuals began to give detailed descriptions of infants' development, particularly in the cognitive domain. Ways of playing with, talking to and generally stimulating babies were included and the growth of cognitive skills became an overarching concern. Mothers began to be referred to as the "first teacher". Bonding was also dominant in the manuals at this time. Initially, on the basis of work done on animals by two Australian researchers, Klaus and Kennell, attention was focussed on ensuring that mothers and infants had instant skin-to-skin contact immediately after birth to ensure emotional closeness and prevent child abuse. Hardyment (1995) argued that although "instant" bonding was discredited by academic research as soon as it became a commonplace ritual in maternity wards in the early 1980s, it was very influential at the time and it has taken sometime for it to be rethought in the popular literature. Later, in the late 1980s, bonding was used to refer to the process of attachment that occurs within the first year of a child's life.

Initially, there was a swing away from the permissive tone of the previous era, with critics denouncing the practices that had created the "Spock-marked" youthful rebels. Spock himself retracted some of his advice, acknowledging in 1968 that infants could be spoilt, even in the first few weeks. Beekman (1982) argued that the child-

rearing experts psychologised what had been a political uprising, labelling it a generation gap. From within this psychological discourse they then concentrated on techniques to provide parents with skills for helping family members understand each other, to communicate more clearly, to implant inner controls for responsibility, and to put the discipline back in child rearing. However, this was a period, Ehrenreich and English (1978) contended, in which the experts themselves lost status. In the memories of living women, they had changed their minds and quarrelled amongst themselves too often. They also proposed that The Child too fell out of favour. Their "failure" in the Korean War, "betrayal" in the Vietnam War and anti-establishment activities and attitudes meant the child was no longer "the hope of the future, the mechanism of evolutionary progress, the symbol of America, the goal and purpose of all women's lives" (Ehrenreich and English, 1978, p. 264).

In the 1970s in New Zealand, Dr Neil Begg (the Director of Plunket) reworked the Plunket publication *Modern mothercraft* into *The New Zealand child and his family* (Begg, 1970). It was much more flexible in its approach, advocating breast-feeding on demand and that the needs of the child determine his routine. Begg's construction of the infant drew on understandings from Freud and Bowlby and the ethnologist Konrad Lorenz. The infant he claimed, started life as a blank slate but, "Early in his life the baby learns a few vivid rules of social experience which colour all his later beliefs and attitudes." (Begg, 1970, p. 24). Although Spock at this time was including a section, albeit tentative, on combining paid work and parenting, Begg was exerting a position that placed the mother-in-the-home as the key individual in the rearing of children and the establishment of the good family. Likewise, in 1968 Spock included a section on fathers caring for their children and argued for more equal involvement in parenting. Begg, however, still positioned fathers as the providers of income and the link with the outside world.

By the end of the 1970s, New Zealand women had a far greater choice of child-rearing literature to choose from and manuals were beginning to appear that self-consciously proclaimed that they were written by women who had raised and cared for children. Penelope Leach's *Baby and child* (published in 1977) became very popular in New Zealand and signalled a return to the discourse of enjoying babies, asserting a mutual pleasure in the parent-child relationship, and reinstating motherhood as a creative, devoted, worthwhile job and babies as deserving of undivided and unlimited care, attention, stimulation and love. However, in New Zealand most women still relied

on Spock's *Baby and childcare* or their Plunket Nurse for advice (Kedgley, 1996). By the end of the 1970s, Plunket Nurses were being encouraged to be more flexible, not to consider themselves as experts talking to ignorant mothers, and to consider the needs of the mother as well as the baby.

Mothers throughout this period were positioned in contradictory ways. On the one hand they were still expected to give their lives over completely to their children, and in so doing provide stability and well-being for society. On the other hand, the ideas being expressed by the women's movement and the focus on the workplace created tension for some women, which they expressed as being made to feel inadequate and worthless for staying at home. For others these ideas made sense of the confusion and frustration they had been feeling and resolved them to change their situation (Kedgely, 1996).

Within the child-rearing literature, various possibilities, albeit within a fairly narrow range, were beginning to be expressed about how fathers might be more involved for caring for their children. These were generally added on to the father's role of financial provider, playful companion and mediator of the outside world. The positioning of fathers in the feminist literature was more contradictory; some writers positioned men as the root of all oppression and pulled away from involvement with men, while other writers tried to pull men in to full and equal participation in child care.

Child-rearing Manuals 1980–1990s

These last two decades have been a period in the western world in which families have had to adapt to fluctuating, but for many, adverse economic conditions. Accompanying this has been a move to the right politically and a dominant discourse of neo-liberalism emphasising individual choice and individual responsibility.[17] Previously, from within a discourse of social democratic liberalism that emphasised individual rights and social obligations, there had been a commitment from the state to providing adequate health care, education and housing. Within a dominant discourse of neo-liberalism these are now seen increasingly as the responsibilities of individual

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[17] Although there are some indications, as various political leaders take up the discourse of the Third Way, that we are about to see a shift in the governments of the western world to a more centrist position, it is not yet clear as to how this will affect families.

families, and the state has retreated to a more regulatory role. In New Zealand, this has been a harsh experience for children from low income families as deregulation, a reduction in the role of the state, a belief in the power of self-regulated market forces, user pays and targeting have seen a whittling away at services for families and children that had been provided throughout the last thirty years. Growing unemployment and increases in the costs incurred raising a family in the new economic and political order have seen an increase in the number of families living in poverty. Single parent families in particular have been hit very hard by these changes, and are the fastest growing family type within New Zealand (Kedgely, 1996). World wide there have been a number of reports and books that have drawn attention to the way public policy and private indifference allow young children to live lives stunted by poverty, violence, disease, and alienation (for example Kozol, 1995; National Commission on Children, 1991)

Against this backdrop, the dominant discourse surrounding women being full-time mothers or working outside of the home has shifted from being articulated in moral terms or a choice about lifestyle and personal fulfilment to a discourse about balancing the monetary and non-monetary needs of the family, although echoes of the former discourse remain. In New Zealand, women's employment expanded by 15% between 1981 and 1991 (Kedgely, 1996). In the United Kingdom and the United States, Ehrereich (1990) claims that there is a trend for some professional women to decide not to "have it all" and to leave the office and decide to live on "his US$75,000" . However it is not clear that this is a trend in New Zealand. The most numerous famit type is where the father is the sole income earner, and this group has an average income of NZ$40, 710 (Statistics New Zealand, 1994)[18]. Family incomes for low and middle-income families are clearly constrained.

In the 1990s a new discourse has emerged about the amount of time that parents spend with their children. The time that western families in general have to spend with each other has shrunk by forty percent in the past generation, and studies in America now indicate that parents spend on average 17 hours per week with their children, compared with 30 hours in 1965 (Kedgely, 1996). Americans talk about "parenting deficit" and Penelope Leach (1994) writes of it as a "parenting crisis". Commentators vary on the extent to which they attribute it to economic stress or women and men

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[18] The average income here masks the difference for ethnic groups, for example, Pacific Island families where the father is the sole income earner have an average family income of NZ$24, 286.

putting their own needs and goals ahead of their children.[19] David Elkind (1994) maintained that whereas the modern nuclear family was characterised by an imbalance in which the needs of women were not recognised, the permeable postmodern family is imbalanced because the needs of children and adolescents are not being met. As a consequence, he argued, children do not have "the social envelope of security and protection that shielded earlier generations"(p. 8). Children have coped with this because they are resourceful but, as a result, he contended this has encouraged parents and society to provide less security and protection.

In the early 1980s, there was a notable shift in the discursive field constituting fathers. Fathers were no longer positioned as merely mediating the child's experience in the outside world and providing an income for the family and psychological support for the mother. Men were positioned to become much more intimately involved with the primary care of their children. This was seen to be not only for the benefit of children and mothers, but also for men themselves. Spock himself wrote that men needed liberating and "I believe it would greatly benefit American men, our families, and society, if men would elevate family and feelings to the highest priority" (cited in Hardyment, 1995, p. 339). [20] However, reviewing the trends in the literature in the 1980s and 1990s Hardyment (1995, pp. 344–5) argued that by the early 1990s fathers' ability to intensively care for young children or the desirability of this began to be questioned in some of the child-rearing literature:

> Recession –conscious baby-care books in the 1990s have eased up on the demand for fully participating fathers…You pays your money and you takes your pick. The strength of these books is that they provide a range of soothing get-out clauses for those who are finding it hard to live up to popularly touted aspirations for shared parenting.

Only two percent of fathers in New Zealand choose full-time fatherhood with their partners being the income earner (Kedgley, 1996). However, as will be evident in the

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[19] A recent article in the *Listener*, by Pamela Stirling, titled 'Family Business', examines changes in the Human Resource Policy of some large corporations that aim to give their (executive) employees a better balance between work and family. The companies articulate these policies in terms of "competitive edge in attracting staff", "competitive cost saving structures", "flexibility and accountability", which suggest that the needs of business rather than families are still the dominant discourse. One effect of this is to preclude a consideration of the situation of families where the parents do not have jobs or are in job markets not concerned with a need to attract and retain staff and therefore offer flexibility.

[20] Jock Phillips (1987) writes of the cost of the narrow definition of the male stereotype as it developed in New Zealand. He details various cultural myths that have been maintained through the stereotype and the personal cost to men, but does not explore the effects of the loss of opportunity to care in an intensive way for children.

analysis of particular texts, a space has been won in the literature for a different kind of involvement from fathers than in previous episodes of the child-rearing epic.

Along with the general ethos of the 1980s and 1990s that has emphasised choice there has been yet a further expansion in the variety of child-rearing manuals and books available along with a raft of TV chat shows and documentaries, specialist parent magazines, articles in popular magazines, supplements in newspapers, phone lines and web sites all concerned with information about parenting. There have also been a number of movies (Kramer vs Kramer, Parenthood, Mrs Doubtfire, Three Men and a Baby, etc.), which have been very popular. In general, there is a sense that parenting has somehow been problematised and moved into the public arena.

Penelope Leach's *Baby and child* and Christopher Green's *Toddler taming* are manuals that have continued to be popular with New Zealand mothers, along with Kate Birch's *Positive parenting* (Morris, 1992). However, the range of specialist literature from La Leche's texts on breast-feeding to books on Green Parenting, Working Mothers, Single Fathers, Non-Sexist Parenting, to Night-time Parenting, etc., is inexhaustible. Hardyment (1995) argued that the most striking new emphasis in the manuals is a change from concentrating on the child alone to a concern with child and parents.[21] Sections are included that deal with difficulties that couples may have between themselves as they adapt to having a child, and also material on divorce, step-parenting, and single parenting. The manuals also include some reference to the historical changes that have occurred in child-rearing fashions.

Because this literature is now so vast, in this last section of this chapter I will focus on the texts that were used by the families with whom I did my research. These were *Baby and Child*, by Penelope Leach, *Toddler Taming* by Christopher Green, *Nighttime parenting: How to get your baby and child to sleep*, by William Sears, *The sleep book* by Katy Macdonald and *Positive parenting: From toddlers to teenagers* by Kate Birch. Primarily these authors have constructed the care of the infant as a psychological problem, emphasising the need for parents either to understand their children's development so they can respond to them appropriately, develop appropriate skills so that they can manage aspects of their children's behaviour children, or both. Penelope Leach argued that "The more you understand him and recognise his present

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[21] Leach goes so far as to argue that the points of view of parents and children are the same, but gives dominance to the child: "So taking the baby's point of view does not mean neglecting yours, the parents', view point. Your interests and his are identical. You are all on the same side; the side that wants to be

position on the developmental map that directs him towards being a person, the more interesting you will find him" (Leach, 1988, p. 8). Kate Birch argued against an ages and stages approach because she believes it stops parents from seeing the children as themselves, but offers a "system of child management designed to help children become 'their own people'; it is not a system for controlling children, but rather a system for developing potential in both parents and children." (Birch, 1984, p. 2). Christopher Green drew on both developmental understanding and skills: "To enjoy toddlerhood you need to know what to expect, then tuck some toddler taming techniques up you sleeve and go for it." (Green, 1990, p. 10).

In contrast, to the literature that was directed at parents earlier in this century, which clearly indicated that "doctor knows best", these writers paradoxicallly established their authority by emphasising that they were not experts. They claimed they were not another expert but were there to increase parental confidence; some referred to a general sense of confidence, while others referred to the confidence parents have in their instincts or commonsense. In various ways, they talked about the experts' fall from grace: that parents have been bombarded with "shoulds" and "oughts" (Birch, 1985) from "misguided" experts (Sears, 1985), told to do things by the book rather than by the baby (Leach, 1988) and subjected to an "orgy of academic nit-picking" (Green, 1990). However, as Green goes on to demonstrate, this admission did prevent him from going on to offer his own "expert" ideas:

> but behind this glizty window dressing of childcare there are hidden
> some solid and vitally important ideas. It is these ideas which provide
> the foundation for strong and emotionally secure children...There is no
> doubt that our children thrive best when they feel loved and wanted; live
> in a happy, tension-free home; are given a good adult example; receive
> clear, consistent child care; and are brought up by parents who are
> confident. (Green, 1990, p. 1)

Despite this disclaimer regarding their status as experts the authors went on to list their credentials and academic qualification, make references to their medical practices, areas of research, professional experience, affiliations in the field of child development, published books and videos, sponsorships from institutions, and directorship and membership of associations and committees. The authors' own experience and the experiences of other parents they had contact with were also used to

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happy, to have fun...I am on the same side, too. So, although this is a book, it will not suggest that you do things 'by the book' but rather that you do them, always, 'by the baby'". (Leach, 1988, p. 8).

establish credibility. For example, Penelope Leach vouched for the trustworthiness of her advice in the following way:

> So a large part of this book is devoted to helping you to find ways that work for you. Some of them came directly to me from my own mother; some of them were learned the hard way on my own children; most of them came from the thousands of other parents who let me watch them coping. (Leach, 1988, p. 15)

William Sears explained that he had learnt through his experience in his medical practice and his and his wife's struggle to develop their own parenting style and

> ...then one day a wise colleague took me aside and confided that when he wanted to know the answer to a difficult question on parenting he asked an experienced, intuitive mother. Eureka! Over the next twelve years this is just what I did. I learned from experienced mothers. (Sears, 1985, p. xiv)

The authors also used general statements about the nature of society and other cultures to legitimate their point of view. Again there is an interesting contradiction. Global statements were made about the changes that occurred in the nature of our own society, suggesting that this is why such parent education material is needed, but very little was said about the diversity within our own societies and the implications of this for the way people parent. Generally, society was charged with the recent breakdown of the extended family, which is seen as the traditional support system for parents. There was no evidence offered to support their views that the extended family has broken down, nor that as a consequence people feel unsupported. While some of the books included a special chapter on the situation of single-parent families, there was no sustained inclusion of the wide variety of social situations, in general, in which people find themselves parenting. The texts were written as if the reader is a generic parent who wishes to do the best for his or her child, but there was no real recognition that the circumstances in which people find themselves parenting can vary. However, at other moments, references to practices of parenting in other cultures were made to legitimate the view being put by the author. These references tended to be made in a very global manner without considering the details of the context in which the practice occured. For example, William Sears wrote "Isn't sleeping with a baby an unusual custom? Actually just the opposite is true. Babies sleeping with parents is the usual custom around the world." (Sears, 1985, p. 35). However, he did not consider whether this is on a firm mat, or a hammock, or alongside each other on rugs, and at what age, etc.

Although these books were directed at parents, there is still a strong sense that it is mothers who will be doing the primary care giving. Penelope Leach had no specific entries for mothers or fathers but almost all of the pictures in the book to do with the care of babies showed a baby and mother, and in sections dealing with the absence of fathers or going to work it is clear that the "you" she was addressing throughout the book was a mother. Green, under the heading father, had entries for divorce, returning from work, and sharing child care and for mothers, blamed by professionals, demoralised, depression after marriage break-up, teenage and working. William Sear's book was called *Nighttime Parenting* but the instructions in the text, such as how to nurse a baby to sleep, and a special chapter on Nighttime fathering, with tips on when to take over, suggest it was mainly directed at mothers.

The positioning of the child in these texts was informed primarily from dominant psychological discourses. Leach painted a picture of the newborn's behaviour as a series of instinctual responses and reflexes, and that initially following "your body's commands and your baby's physical reactions are your best guide to handling him" (Leach, 1988, p. 38). As the new-born turns into the "settled baby", Leach construed whatever they do as part of ensuring that they survive whilst teaching the reader how to parent. Her view of the toddler was based on the Piagetian view of the child as the little scientist, and their emotional lives being lived as "an emotional see-saw with anxiety and tears on one end and frustration and tantrums on the other...It is the violent emotions of this age period which so often lead parents to talk despairingly of the 'terrible twos'" (Leach, 1988, p. 336). Sears's view of the child was influenced by the notions of temperament, needs and stimulus-response. Parenting then became a matter of intuitively responding to the cues that signal the needs. Green's view of the toddler was expressed in various humorous ways throughout his book but a sense of power and manipulation was central to them all:

> The trademarks of the toddler are; more power than sense, living for the moment, demanding centre stage position. Philosophical, religious and philanthropic ideals are not conspicuous. Parents should know this is normal, use commonsense and cunning, not blame themselves, then go with the flow. (Green, 1990, p. 15)

Conclusions

Child-rearing advice throughout this century can be seen to have undergone a major shift from a discourse about physical and mental hygiene and a moral order based on habits to a discourse about normal emotional and cognitive development and a moral order based on social adjustment. Mothers were initially positioned as following routines and advice to ensure the acquisition of habits necessary for children's physical and mental health. It was argued that they needed to follow advice because they either had lost their natural mothering instinct or it could not be trusted. As a discourse of normal development and emotional relationships became more dominant, mothers became positioned as the source of emotional stability for children and as the regulator of children's emotional development. Now they were to do this by following their instincts, under the guidance of expert advice, and unconditionally loving their children by giving them continuous maternal care. Then, with the addition of the discourse of cognitive development, mothers were also to be a source of constant intellectual stimulation.

Fathers were initially not referred to in the child-rearing advice, suggesting that the dominant discourse excluded them from the care of young children. As emotional relationships came to the fore, fathers were positioned as playful companions and links to the outside world. In recent years, the dominant discourse of child-rearing literature has been articulated in terms of parenting. Much of what is said in the name of parenting can be read as directed at women. Although, it is within this discourse that a space has emerged in the literature for fathers to become engaged in a wider range of tasks in caring for their children, and for some texts to position men as possible primary caregivers of their children.

However, it is never as cut and dried as an analysis of this kind would have it seem. Vestiges of discourse from different eras remain as echoes in contemporary texts both in terms of the advice given and the way that children, mothers and fathers are constructed. What this analysis does reveal is that it has always been assumed that the social problems experienced in one generation will be remedied by changing the way that parents raise the children of the next generation. This is a discourse that reifies the individual and is based on a view of history as a linear and neutral progression. It ignores the socially embedded nature of people's lives, which both constrains and

supports the way a life is lived. It also provides a basis for both techniques of external government and self-government in the production of the individual, who is both subject to and the subject of power (Foucault, 1982). One of the strange contradictions inherent in this reification of the individual is that the relationship between the life experience of the people who write such manuals and the advice that they promote has been ignored. It is in this sense that the opportunity to explore the ways in which people both reproduce and transcend what they are given is lost.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FIVE

The Research Process

Introduction to Part Two

The next part of this thesis is concerned primarily with material that represents how the experience of becoming a parent was lived within a small number of families. There are three main tasks to be accomplished within the following chapters. One, I illuminate the methodology that has informed the collection and the analysis of the data. Two, I present a general argument about the process of becoming a parent through the presentation of narratives of the experiences of six families. Three, I provide a more detailed analysis of that argument and discuss issues raised in the first part of the thesis. These tasks do not fall neatly into discrete chapters so in the material that follows I provide more detail as to way in which these tasks will be accomplished in the various chapters and appendices.

In Part One of the thesis I have argued for the need to examine people's lived experience in the life-world. The tradition of fieldwork – the hallmark of anthropology – involving sustained and rigorous participation, observation and documentation provides a means of doing this. Ingrid Rudie argues that

> The dominance of participant observation as a methodological credo in anthropology has been founded on an idea that we can understand another culture through sharing the experiences of the practitioners themselves as far as possible. More specifically this implies that it is important to get at what people do because there is so much cultural practice that is never verbalised. (1994, p. 28)

Rudie goes on to emphasise that the context of the knowledge constructed through participant observation includes not only the unfolding situation but also the "experiential luggage" of the participants, including the participant-observer. Jackson (1989) also stresses the need to come to knowledge of the life-world through participation and not just observation, drawing on all senses and also reflecting inwardly. The sustained involvement that characterises fieldwork also provides a way of accessing the temporal and processual nature of social life and intersubjectivity. This is highlighted by Grills (1998, p. 3) as he argues the case for the direct involvement of fieldwork as a means of understanding the life-world of others:

Field research, however, focuses on the interactive (e.g. processes, activities and acts) and interpretative (e.g. definitions, perspectives and meanings) aspects present within a particular setting. By going to "where the action is" the field researcher pursues an intimate familiarity with the "world of the other", through getting close to the dilemmas, frustrations, routines, relationships and risks that are a part of everyday life. This closeness to the social world is fieldwork's most profound strength and the researcher comes to know the world of the other through direct involvement with it.

Historically, fieldwork has been embarked upon by those researching cultures that were different from their own. However, it is now also commonly accepted as an approach to understanding questions about the life-world of the researcher's own culture (Messerschmidt, 1981).[1] In an interesting turn, in recent years, the value of cross-cultural fieldwork has been seen, at least by some, to lie in the insights it can provide about the lives of those in the ethnographer's own culture, "The most important consequence of the cumulative ethnographic endeavour is not an accumulation of hard-won insights into the lives of members of remote societies but the cross-cultural perspective it provides for examining our own lives" (Wolcott, 1981).

The strengths of fieldwork, as so lucidly articulated above by Grills, rendered it the most appropriate methodology for pursuing the question of how people become parents in the life-world. The details of how I actually gathered data during my 18-month period of fieldwork are contained in Appendices One to Five. In the material that follows in this chapter I consider some broader methodological issues that are concerned with the way in which research itself is lived out in a social world of constraints and possibilities. As part of this I document the changes in my understandings of experience and intersubjectivity. In the later part of this chapter, I also describe the antenatal classes and support groups that I participated in as part of my fieldwork, and which are frequently referred to in the chapters that follow.

During the course of the research and in the process of reflecting upon it, "experience" became ever more central to my analysis. Writers from a variety of disciplines have advocated narrative as a means to consider and reflect on experience. As part of the process of working with my transcripts and fieldwork notes I constructed narratives for each of the families (see Appendices Six and Seven for details). These

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[1] The collection of chapters edited by Messerschmidt (1981) provides an introduction to some of the debates that have occurred over the years around the idea of "anthropology at home". The chapter by

narratives have been used as evidence for the general argument I make about the process of becoming parents for these families but they have also been used in Chapters Six and Seven to illuminate aspects of the method of analysis. Chapters Six and Seven then, each have a dual purpose: to illuminate aspects of the method of analysis, and to provide evidence for the general argument that is made about the experience of participants in becoming parents. In Chapter Six, I establish the centrality and irreducibility that experience had for the parents involved in the research, and reflect on the nature of experience by examining the narratives of one family. In Chapter Seven, I discuss the relationship between experience and narrative, and reflect on the nature of narrative by examining the narratives of one family.

Chapter Eight contains the narratives of four other families. They are included to substantiate and illustrate the argument, foreshadowed in Chapters Six and Seven, that suggests that the process of becoming a parent is primarily forged through the experience and practical activity of caring for a baby on a daily basis. This experience is mediated by the knowledge of trusted others, people's experiences of their own and others' families and expert knowledge. It is also produced and constrained by the material realities of people's daily lives. Chapter Nine examines this argument in more detail.

Some of the issues raised in Chapter Two regarding the nature of the subject are also returned to and further developed in Chapter Nine. In particular, I discuss the issue of the extent to which it is useful to think of the self as fragmented and the ways in which the self is constituted by and/or constitutive of discourse. Sometimes the accounts that people gave of their experience throughout the year contradicted each other as they used different stories and discourses at different times to explain what they had done and the life they were living towards. However, this is not to suggest that they lived fragmented lives. As the fieldwork material in the next chapters show, in a sea of contradictory narratives a sense of cohesion was continually worked at and wrought from the necessary daily activity and decision-making that comes with the project of caring and making a life for another. Throughout the year, a sense of keeping it all together was sometimes more and sometimes less easily achieved as the babies changed and there were different demands from other aspects of the parents' lives.

John Aguilar, titled *Insider Research: An Ethnography of a Debate*, examines closely issues concerned with doing fieldwork in one's own culture.

The accounts generated in this second part of the thesis are based on the details of interactions between myself and those I met whilst doing my research. People's accounts about their experiences changed as their knowledge and understandings changed, as their experiences changed, as their babies changed, and as other aspects of their lives changed. It is impossible to "pin down" definitively the nature of these experiences and sources of knowledge and practices, and to reach a generalisable truth. The language of generalisations fails to convey the subtleties, shifts in emphasis, doubts, contradictions, conflicts, and vacillations in people's accounts of their daily experience as parents. In representing these experiences I have worked with the details of people's accounts and kept them as separate case studies so as to capture these aspects. What I am striving for here is what Bruner (1986, p. 11) has referred to as verisimilitude; detailing the minutiae of daily life, as it is lived in a particular social and historical moment, in a way that does not stray too far from the lived experience of the participants. Lila Abu-Lughod (1993) stresses the value of this type of analysis for *representing*, rather than merely asserting, how social life is lived:

> ...reconstruction of people's arguments about, justifications for, and their interpretations of what they and others are doing would allow clearer understanding of how social life proceeds. It would show that, within limited discourses (that may be contradictory and certainly are historically changing), people strategise, feel pain, contest interpretations of what is happening - in short, live their lives. (Abu-Lughod, 1993, p. 14)

The chapters in the second part of this thesis foreground the particulars of people's accounts to show the ways in which these details are central to the constitution of experience. These details also highlight both the active on-going participation of people in shaping their lived experience, and the way that experience is intersubjective. It is important to remember, however, as I stressed in Chapter Two, that experience is never innocent, "outside" culture, and free of discursive practices. As Haraway, writing about the artifact of "women's experience", notes:

> ...what counts as "experience" is never prior to the social occasions, the discourses, and other practices through which experience becomes articulated in itself and able to be articulated with other accounts, enabling the construction of an account of collective experience, a potent and often mystified operation...What may count as "women's experience" is structured within multiple and often inharmonious agendas. "Experience", like "consciousness", is an intentional construction, an artefact of the first importance. Experience may also be re-constructed, re-membered, re-articulated. (Haraway, 1991, p. 113)

Getting Started

As I have indicated, my approach to fieldwork and the material I have generated from it has been conceptualised in the spirit of Contemporary Phenomenology (see Chapter Two, pp. 19–21). It recognises, as did Foucault in his middle period, that our research takes place in the same social world in which we and the people we research live, and hence is subject to the same constraints and possibilities. As Dorothy Smith argues, as she makes the case for exploring the everyday world as problematic,

> "…we propose a method of inquiry that relies on the existence of a world in common, ongoingly created and recreated in human sensuous activities. It is a method of inquiry that proposes to explicate the same world as that of people's actions and experience. Indeed the work of inquiry itself goes forward in and is part of the same world as it explicates" (Smith, 1987, p. 127).

Our research, as our experience, is never innocent, outside culture, and free of discursive practices. Hence, in the material that follows I consider moments in setting up and analysing my research that highlight the ways in which research and understandings, like life itself, proceeded in an intersubjective world of possibilities and constraints.

In contrast with a view of knowledge as "out there", waiting to be objectively discovered through abstraction and reduction from a transcendent viewpoint, Foucault insisted that the production of knowledge is not only historically and socially located but inextricably linked with power in a formative sense. He saw power as not merely a negative force or oppressive set of practices but linked with the production of the social world through the construction and legitimation of particular discourses and practices. Furthermore, he understood that those who attempt to analyse discourses are themselves immersed within and subject to the discourses they are describing. Foucault used the term "sciences and technologies of the social" to signal the way in which the social sciences, through the production and legitimation of particular discourses, are actively involved in the apparatuses and institutions that are so central to the processes of social regulation in our social world. For Foucault it is not just a matter of "taking account" of the social and political situation and motivation of the producers of knowledge, and so becoming more objective. The task is to recognise the inextricable nature of the link

between knowledge and power, to identify the play of wills in particular moments, and to ask what is effected by particular claims to truth.

Different ideas about the nature of knowledge are not merely a matter of opinion over which we can agree to differ, they exist within discursive formations in which power is exercised in specific practices. Through these practices, dominant discourses are legitimated and empowered. When we move against the dominant discourse/practice as researchers we experience the way the power is effected. I have chosen two incidents from the beginning stages of my research to illustrate the ways in which an objectivist model of research has been dominant and privileged, and so has defined the space in which other kinds of research are evaluated. An examination of these incidents illuminates the way in which our research is also subject to the constraints and possibilities of an always-social world.

At the beginning of my research I submitted a written application to the University Research Committee for funding to assist with expenses. I then had to appear before a "panel" of a vet and a physicist, who were to interview me on behalf of the Research Committee about specific aspects of the proposal. One of the areas the committee had asked the panel to question me about was "the problem of how will you control for your presence in the experiment?" Somewhat surprised, I explained that the study was not an experiment but rather an attempt to systematically observe and document the experiences of people becoming parents for the first time. As such, I would need to write myself into that documentation, not as an aside, or in the preface but as intrinsic to the account which I would produce. Our conversation then moved on to explore the extent to which someone else would be able to replicate the findings and the value of research that was not generalisable. I completed my undergraduate degree at a time when the dominant discourse of inquiry in the social sciences mirrored those of the natural sciences so I could appreciate the nature of their questions. However, it seemed to do justice to neither them nor myself to assign them as the only evaluators of a research proposal, based on a reflexive understanding of social sciences research. When I remarked upon this to them they agreed that it did create certain difficulties and explained that this was part of a policy of the funding committee, so that people could not be favoured or disadvantaged by people of their own faculty.

At the outset, the space in which it was possible to evaluate the worth of the application for funding against others was, in part, defined by a competing discourse about how we can know something, appropriate ways to proceed in producing

knowledge, and what this knowledge should enable us to do. In this particular context, authority and legitimacy were bestowed upon the "natural" sciences, by invoking and rewarding categories and metaphors to do with objectivity, reliability, generalisability and prediction. It was against the possibilities offered by this discourse that my research was to be evaluated, despite my proposal having been formed in the context of another discourse considered legitimate within the discursive formation of the social sciences.

However, this was a contradictory situation. The practices and discourses surrounding the interview – the "panel" and the policy of having interviews conducted by someone not of the same faculty – were ostensibly about objectivity. Our discussion quickly revealed this was a concern for objectivity about intra- and inter- faculty politics rather than about the processes for evaluating the merit of a proposal requesting funding for research. At some level, I felt that the people on the panel also sensed the contradictions in the situation and it was at this point that they both began to talk about their own experiences of their family.

This is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the moment. There are other aspects that could also be considered such as gender, age, positions within the university. It also says nothing about the very positive way in which they responded with enthusiasm and curiosity, seeking to understand and engage with the ideas and to share their experiences of being fathers. This last point I will return to. This example does, however, underscore the way in which our research takes place *in* the world, and is itself subject to the links between knowledge and power that we may propose to examine through our research.

Another example, which illustrates these points, comes from my interactions with a hospital ethics committee. To contact people who might be interested in volunteering to take part in my research, in a way that did not breach confidences, I wanted to attend hospital antenatal classes and talk briefly about the research. To do this I needed to be given permission by the hospital ethics committee. I had already appeared before the University Ethics Committee, comprising both representatives of the university and the community, to provide documentation about the procedures I would follow and to answer any questions about those procedures (see Appendix Two and Three). I expected that obtaining permission from this second committee would be reasonably straightforward.

However, over the next 4 months it became clear that this was not such a simple matter. During this time the issues of negotiation shifted grounds. Initially the issue of concern that was raised was whether I would be asking people involved in the research about their sex lives. I assured them I did not envisage this was a topic of discussion I would initiate during the course of the research. Then it became a matter of debating whether or not it was appropriate that I should be required to provide the committee with the questions I would be asking during a year-long study involving participant observation. Once this was settled, I was requested to use the hospital consent form that was designed for research about different drug treatments (see Appendix Eight). Having argued that my own consent form (see Appendix Three), based on concerns to do with social rather than medical research, was more appropriate, the committee then requested to hold the copies of the signed consent forms, and so we debated the appropriateness and security of this. My response to these requests and the delays that accompanied them was to buttress my own position with letters of support from my professional associations and to concede issues that did not compromise the integrity of my research.[2] Finally, I was given the clearance to proceed.

Ostensibly this correspondence was about satisfying the committee that I would conduct my research in a manner that would protect the ethical interests of the people who became involved in the research through hospital antenatal classes. Naively I expected this process to be guided by principles pertaining to ethical research practice. However, it became evident through the official and unofficial correspondence with the committee, and through the way our correspondence took place, that the space in which this (social) process was taking place was circumscribed by other discourses. Discourses about the nature of research, the status of those becoming parents, the power and authority of the medical versus the academic professions, ownership of research, appropriate ways to apply for ethical clearance, the authority of particular individuals within the hospital hierarchy, and a backlash effect to the Cartwright Report were all at play, staking various claims to truth.

This process also involved the evaluation of my proposal, based on a reflexive understanding of social sciences research against the criteria of another model of research. In this case, the standard was a medical model, sharing many of the concerns of the natural sciences model for generalisability, predictability, replicability and

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[2] One of these concessions was to add to my consent form the section stating that I had discussed the possible benefits and disadvantages of being involved with the research.

control. Throughout the correspondence there was the assertion of a medically based orientation to the question of becoming a parent. One of the committee members explained to me informally in a telephone conversation that the committee had to exercise caution with regard to requests like mine because I would be dealing with "sick people". I objected, asserting that pregnant women and their partners were not in the majority of cases sick people and reminding her that all I was requesting was permission to talk at antenatal classes and to hand out an information sheet about the research so people could contact me if they desired. She conceded but, speaking through the discourse of crisis examined in Chapter Four, asserted that people who had just become parents were likely to be emotional and upset. Again I objected to this and reminded her that my consent forms outlined procedures that would enable the people I was working with to withdraw temporarily or permanently from the research if they should feel emotional, upset or not like continuing with the research.

As our negotiations proceeded and I included letters of support from the Chair of the University's Ethics Committee and the Convenor of the Ethics Committee of the New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists, the discussion broadened from my individual request to the need for the university ethics committee to meet with the hospital ethics committee to sort out appropriate procedures for academics to follow. Although I, and one member of the hospital ethics committee, requested that I meet with them to clarify these matters more speedily, this was refused. The committee wanted any discussion to be recorded in writing and felt that a personal appearance could influence their capacity to assess the issues objectively. This reveals a classical empiricist view of science that holds that only knowledge that can be objectively measured or recorded is real and legitimate. This example again illustrates the inextricable link between knowledge and power. It also reveals that this was not any monolithic exercising of power that the committee had that I did not. Rather power was continually constituted in our relationship, an effect of the discourses and practices in which we were positioned and which governed our conduct.

As I have suggested, knowledge and power are inextricably linked and it is not just a matter of agreeing to differ about different ideas about the nature of knowledge; these issues need to be debated. In the examples examined, a view of knowledge was dominant that had no way of recognising or taking seriously people's experience as primary data. As I have demonstrated in Chapter Three, much of the research that has been done about parents has purported to be concerned with experience but has in fact

explored scholarly artifacts about experience. In each example examined here, dialogue (and in the second a good measure of tenacity) eventually created a basis on which support could be granted for the research to proceed. These dialogues may have also contributed to a more general change in understanding about different kinds of questions about life requiring different kinds of research and for each case to be assessed on its merits.

From a cognitive to an experiential understanding of experience

I now move on to examine changes in my own understandings of experience throughout the research as a way of again illustrating the way that our research occurs in the same social world in which we, and the people we research, live. Here again I am testing my ideas against my experience as a researcher. In the early days of my research I was arguing for the importance of examining experience in the life-world as a way to explore the relationship between discourse and experience. However, I still held a view of experience that gave epistemological privilege to analytical knowledge and assumed that accounts of people's experience needed to be decoded to get at the real experience. As I was working on the proposal for my research I wrote a paper that suggested that it would be useful to move "beyond linguistically determined views of the subject and explore the inter-play between discourse and subjectivity in a way which includes those dispositions which are embodied through experience and expressed through practice" (Loveridge, 1990, p. 22). I had started this paper with an anecdote about the experience of holding my newborn nephew and recognising my mother's bodily gestures and facial expressions in my own. This led me to question

> Why did I hold Nick in this way? Why did I have this recognition of my mother in such a richly experienced way? How can we access those experiences without reducing them to cognitive operations? How can we talk about them without reducing them to theoretical abstractions? (Loveridge, 1990, p. 1)

These still seem like good questions[3], however this was a fairly programmatic piece of writing, and it would be some years before I re-cognized the full significance of what I had written, and the implications of this for my work.

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[3] In Chapter Ten I discuss how difficult it was to access this type of experience with the people I worked with, and possible reasons for this.

I now view experiential knowledge and theoretical knowledge as qualitatively different but no longer give one a foundational status. Previously, it was as if I had understood that practical activity and experience were as important as theoretical explanation and analytical knowledge for learning to do physical things in the world, like riding a bike or skiing. However, for aspects of life like becoming a parent, I still gave epistemological privilege to analytical knowledge, as if in these moments people's actions were guided by the intellect.

The understanding of the relationship between experiential and theoretical knowledge that I have come to is clearly expressed by Jackson as he writes of the shared insistence of radical empiricism and of Husserl's phenomenology for comprehensively describing experience as it is had, before intellectual reflection:

> What James and Husserl wanted to stress was that there are significant differences between the way the world appears to our consciousness when we are fully engaged in activity and the way it appears to us when we subject it to reflection and retrospective analysis. It is not that reflection, explanation and analysis are to be extirpated from phenomenological accounts of human life; rather these modes of experience are to be denied epistemological privileges and prevented from occluding or down-playing those non-reflective, atheoretical, and practical domains of experience which are not necessarily encompassed by fixed or definite ideas. (Jackson, 1996, p. 42)

To trace this change in understanding I have gone back to notes written in my fieldwork diary over the course of this research. To begin, I return to the incident previously examined about the research funding panel. I referred to the way that towards the end the panel had started talking about their own and others' experiences of parenthood:

> *The conversation was sprinkled with references to their own experiences of parenthood: "I'm glad we never had a shy feeder" and the experiences of their colleagues as parents: "Academics with three children often have difficulty with their second". They were curious about the research – the interview felt positive BUT very much connected to their own experiences in a way that I cannot imagine a discussion on research about social policy or physics experiments proceeding. (Fieldwork diary, 21 April, 1989)*

Later in the same year I was applying for an academic position, and as part of the selection process I had to present a seminar on my doctoral research. As I had not yet started the actual research I presented a paper that talked about previous studies, and the theoretical and methodological approach I intended to follow. One of the people

attending the seminar commented that my proposal to consider becoming a parent through concepts such as contradictory discourses and multiple subjectivities made her feel like I was a terrorist, wanting to run off with people's experiences. In my notes I wrote:

> *The point she made is valid and a good warning for the future. I think her comment is also a good warning about what a touchy threatening topic this is for some. She prefixed her comments with "As a recently new mother.." which in some ways illustrated my point: I assumed I was giving a seminar to academics but she responded as a new mother; one of her multiple subjectivities. What are the various discourses operating here? Contradictions both within what I said and then did and likewise for her. (Fieldwork diary, 3 July, 1989)*

Later in this entry, reflecting on this experience, and that with the funding committee I wrote:

> *This ease with which people relate to the topic personally is something to be aware of in the future when thinking about how to present the ideas. (Fieldwork diary, 3 July, 1989)[4]*

Four years later when I was working with my interview material and fieldwork notes, I reflected on the way I was still struggling in the early days of the research with the relationship between discourse and experience. I also noted the change that had occurred in my understanding of experience and knowledge based on experience:

> *I read the entries now and remember the uneasy feeling, the anxiety I felt as to whether or not I would be able to show some causal link between the discourses in the literature, statements in public forums and people's experiences, as if one might be read off from the other. I now understand in a way that I didn't at the time, that when people were telling me of their experiences that this was their lived experience, not a view of it that somehow needed to be decoded from the discourse to get at the "real" experience.*
>
> *As I read the early entries from my fieldwork diary I am struck by the extent to which I thought it strange that people responded so personally to my research project, like in the funding committee interview or the seminar for the job. Two things have changed since then. One, my own experiences of life. Having two children myself has made me realise the way in which parents' experiences are grounded in the world, in practical activity and intersubjectivity. For myself these experiences have provided a stable ground to speak about experience from. But also Keith's illness and recovery from Leukemia has changed my understanding of experience, watching him experience each day during*

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[4] It is interesting to note that this has continued. Whenever I have given seminars or even talked informally about my research with people many have responded on a very personal experiential basis.

that time in such an embodied way, experientially not cognitively. Also myself, experiencing the moments we had together as immediate, primary, focussed, nothing to be gained then from analysing them only something to be lost. All that mattered was the shared moment of life, the experience itself. The second thing that has changed is that I have come to understand in an experiential as opposed to a cognitive way the extent to which there is no privileged epistemological view point, just different vantage points that yield different kinds of knowledge and that different kinds of knowledge accomplish different things, effect different things. For me, in the funding situation and the seminar, as a junior member of the faculty, attempting to impress with my scholarship so as to win funding and a job, talk of experience in this context was unsettling: personal experiences were not ones for me to speak about, I could not afford to. Those already secure in their academic standing could,– in relation to my project at least (Fieldwork Diary, 26 September, 1994).[5]

What interests me now about these excerpts is the way in which I initially felt somewhat frustrated by the personal responses. In the research funding interview entry it is as if I felt my work was not being taken seriously and in the seminar entry as if I had to compensate for those who might want to respond to my work in terms of their personal experience. However, with the changes in my own understanding of experience, I came to know and understand that when people were talking of their primary experiences this was an equally valid form of knowledge and contribution to the discussion as a secondary elaboration, or analysis of that experience.

Towards an experiential understanding of intersubjectivity

My own experiences of becoming a mother also accentuated an experiential understanding of the intersubjective nature of research. When I started my fieldwork, I explained to the people that I worked with that I had in part become interested in the question of how people become parents in part because of the number of people I knew who were becoming parents. In the middle of the fieldwork I became pregnant myself and completed the main part of the research as my daughter was born. Hence, during the fieldwork there was always and increasingly a sense that I was sharing a number of

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[5] Bruce Jackson and Edward Ives (1996) have recently edited a collection of accounts of fieldwork that reveal similar moments of ambiguity and searching for connections, noting that these are usually glossed over. They contend "The time we spend seeming to wander in darkness may not be wasted after all; we are often travelling the right road, but it takes the pain of travel to teach us where we were really going" (p. xv).

the experiences that people were talking about, not just as a researcher but as a person with a life beyond the research. In very tangible ways the people that I worked with recognised this as they talked to me and showed me things as someone who was about to go through the process, sent home books for Keith about fathers, commented on aspects of their experience that he should know about, watched the newspaper for the announcement of the birth of our baby, and initiated getting together so they could meet our baby shortly after she was born. As they did this, they incorporated me as someone about to become a parent, and this has in part constituted my experiences of this research. As Hastrup (1994, p. 235) so graphically puts the point, my lived body was "a path of access rather than a thing…fieldwork is quintessentially an intersubjective experience".

My own experiences of becoming a mother also underscored the intersubjective nature of the experiences recounted to me by the people with whom I had done my research. For example, during the last months of my being pregnant with our first child, Keith and I spent time with my family. Evening walks around the beach front with my parents were narrated with stories of the births and the early days of raising my brothers and myself. My brother, Graham and sister-in-law, Ruth had decided to have no more children and were handing on various bits of baby gear they had finished using with their children. With each piece came a story of when or how it had been used or why it had been used with this child but not the other. During this time Ruth and I sat on the deck and went through a huge bag of used baby clothes that she and friends were handing on. As we sorted through them, Ruth talked about the different combinations of clothes that she, Annie and Sharon had used, and how there were some that they had all used and others that only one of them found useful. Various parts of the day's routines and activities associated with each piece of clothing were also recounted and the pros and cons of doing things this way or that mused upon. Later, I found myself doing the same thing with a friend about to give birth with some clothes that we had finished with. It was then that I realised just how much of my experience of being a mother had been intersubjectively constituted in those moments of being both the receiver and the giver of practical wisdom. This is not to suggest that the accounts that follow have been fashioned on the basis of my experience but to acknowledge that my own experience of becoming a parent brought to life both what the parents I had worked with had told me and also the ideas that I had been thinking about both before the

research and before being a parent myself. In sharing the experience I came to "attend to similar categorical conventions and practical tasks"(Hervik, 1994, p. 79).

As I have written this thesis, and reflected on the changes in my understandings I have endeavoured to be guided by the radical empiricism of William James and to work with "the plurality of all experienced facts, regardless of how they are conceived and classified – conjunctive and disjunctive, fixed and fluid, social and personal, theoretical and practical, subjective and objective, mental and physical, real and illusory (James, 1976, pp. 22–23)" (Jackson, 1996, p. 7).

Antenatal Classes and Postnatal Support Groups

Before moving on to the accounts of people's experience it is necessary to describe the nature of the antenatal classes and parent support groups referred to in the case studies that follow. I met all the people who were involved in the research through the antenatal classes, and all of them went on to have some involvement in at least one formally organised support group.

The antenatal courses run by the hospital and by Parent Centre both lasted 8 weeks, with people attending one night a week. As part of the research I attended all the sessions of both of the courses, and in addition I was present at a number of other classes as I tried to find people who would be interested in participating in my research. The hospital classes were free, and the Parent Centre classes cost $50.00. During discussions with various people as I arranged to attend the antenatal classes I was told that the hospital classes would contain a wider variety of people, whereas the Parent Centre classes tended to be middle-class and pakeha, very motivated and keen on education. However, I noted in my fieldwork notes, the first evening I attended a Parent Centre group that *They all looked more 'ordinary' than I had been led to believe they would be*" (Fieldwork diary, 27 June, 1989). At the same time, however, it was evident that neither set of classes had participants who appeared as socially alienated and disenfranchised.

The course I attended at the hospital was held in the early evening and was run by a trained mid-wife, Faith. The classes were conducted in rooms in the general vicinity of the delivery wing of the hospital. The main room was L-shaped, and rather awkward for trying to position seating so that all participants could see each other. Hardback chairs were generally arranged around the walls of the room, but were moved

into different configurations during the class. Posters had been hung on the wall and a table of pamphlets set up to provide people with information and to try and brighten the room but the level of heat, the smell and general ambience of the room was still very reminiscent of a hospital. Faith sometimes wore a nurse's uniform and at other times ordinary clothing with her nurse's badge. Generally their partners, or a support person, such as their mother, sister or a friend, who was likely to be with them during the birth, accompanied the women who were expecting babies.

Each week, Faith presented information on different aspects of the birth process, for example, early signs of labour, final stages of labour, pain relief, etc. During these presentations she asked questions of the class members and where possible illustrated her points by using diagrams, plastic models of the birth canal or the womb, and a doll. She also used small group discussions to get people thinking about different aspects of caring for a baby after the birth. For example, groups were asked to discuss the pros and cons of breast feeding, or how much sleep they thought a baby would need and over what periods of the day. Typically, one person from the small groups reported back to the larger groups. Faith would also supplement these feedback sessions with information from relevant research literature, and occasionally her own experiences as a mid-wife and a mother. During most classes a short film was screened in a nearby room, for example on birth, or nutrition, or bathing a baby.

A physiotherapist also came in to each class for a short period to take the participants through various exercises and positions that could be used for relaxation throughout the pregnancy and to help in the various stages of labour during the birth process itself. During this stage of the class, chairs were shifted back and mattresses pulled down and all class members, including support people, went through the various positions and exercises. Faith arranged for new parents to come to two of the classes to share their experiences of different aspects of becoming parents. One couple was there to talk about their experiences of having a caesarian birth, and another couple came to talk about breast-feeding, and passed around their photo album of their first days with their new baby and other family members.

The mid-wife worked hard at using various techniques to get people participating in the classes but generally those attending the course participated in a fairly minimal fashion. It was most frequently men who reported back from the small groups, and who asked questions of the mid-wife, or the person presenting information. There was very little interchange amongst participants as they arrived or left. By the

end of the course, however, there was the odd couple staying on to ask questions, and the class had a more relaxed feel.

The Parent Centre classes were held in the staffroom of a local tertiary education institute, in the early evening, once a week over an 8-week period. The staffroom was large and spacious, with carpet on the floor, comfortable armchairs arranged in a horseshoe shape, and tea and coffee making facilities. Their partners or a support person accompanied the women who were expecting babies. The course was facilitated by a hostess, Ellen, who provided general information about the course, the aims for the group and the Parent Centre philosophy, introduced the speaker of the evening, and generally attended to group dynamics. After the birth of the babies, the hostess's role was to facilitate the beginnings of a post-natal support group, gradually withdrawing as the group gained confidence and established themselves.

Each week the class was divided into two sessions: the speaker, who changed weekly, followed by refreshments and then the childbirth educator, who was constant every week. The speakers addressed a variety of topics such as the role of Plunket and basic baby care, changes in relationships and marriage guidance, breast feeding, and caesarian birth. A video of different births was screened towards the end of the course and on the last evening of the course some new parents accompanied by their 5-week-old baby spoke about their experiences of the baby's birth and the first weeks of being a parent. The class also had a visit to the hospital one night to see the delivery suites and the maternity wards. The childbirth educator, Hannah, was a physiotherapist. The childbirth educators are usually, but not necessarily, a midwife or physiotherapist. Each week, Hannah addressed different aspects of pregnancy, stages of labour, the birth itself, and feelings following the birth of a baby. She used visual aids such as a birth atlas and plastic models and dolls to illustrate her points, and sometimes used small group discussions to get people exploring an issue. Hannah also worked with the class members on various breathing exercises, antenatal exercises and positions for giving birth.

The group seemed very responsive, asking a lot of questions and talking a lot amongst themselves, and they went on to form a very strong support group. The hostess thought that in part the success of this particular group during the classes and as a support group was due to the participants being very similar in age and background. The venue, and time for refreshments during the class also aided mixing amongst participants.

Both sets of classes presented a mix of scientific knowledge, practical demonstrations, and experiential knowledge. In both classes there was a sense in which within certain limits people were being given a variety of points of view and information from which to choose ways of doing things that worked for them. However, a subtle difference in style occasionally emerged, which should not be over-emphasised but which nonetheless existed. This difference relates to the rhetorical devices used on the odd occasion to legitimate a particular point of view within the variety of views being presented. It can partly be understood in terms of one set of classes being run by the medical profession, in a hospital, and the other being run by committed volunteers in an organisation whose purpose was adult education, in a staffroom of an educational institution.

In the hospital classes, a discourse of professional knowledge, status and judgement were used to support the particular view being privileged. For example, one evening the class started with a demonstration on a plastic doll of the procedure to follow if the baby chokes. This procedure is referred to as ABC (airways: checking they are clear; breathing: applying mouth to mouth resuscitation; circulation: checking for pulse). Faith had told the class to clear the airways and place the baby on his or her side first and then phone for help before proceeding with the rest of the procedure. Two questions by men followed the demonstration and then one of the women in the class commented that she had been told to do four cycles of the breathing before phoning for help. Faith said this was just a different way of teaching the procedure but she *as a nurse* considered that it was best to get help first. In this context we were left to understand that this was not just her personal judgement but her professional judgement (Fieldwork diary, 24 August, 1990). In a similar vein, the physiotherapist added legitimacy to the exercises by referring to the scientific principles on which the techniques she was teaching were based. Another night, during the stretching exercises, the physiotherapist asked if there were any women who had had miscarriages. One woman replied that she had had two miscarriages but had been doing the stretching exercises for 4 months with no problems. The physiotherapist responded that personally she thought women who had had miscarriages were fine doing the exercises but in terms of her professional position she required the woman to check this out with her doctor (Fieldwork diary, 19 October, 1990).

The hostesses, guest speakers and childbirth educators at Parent Centre did not refer to professional knowledge, status or judgement to support a particular point of

view. As a voluntary organisation involved in adult education, the idea of informed choice was foremost and if a particular view was being advocated it was usually in the terms of information or practices that had proven to be personally useful.   At one moment there was a subtle and humorous comment about the medical professions desire to protect their "expert" status in the area of antenatal education. A film of three different births had been screened and the class members were discussing the experiences of those who had been involved in the births. The childbirth educator then remembered that she had been requested to read out a statement from the Gynecologists and Obstetricians at the local hospital before screening the film. The statement aimed to clarify what they considered to be ambiguities in the film; for example, they wished to point out that the experiences of one of the women was not normal, and that even though it seemed in the third birth that there wasn't a doctor present, there was. At this point one of the men in the class said that if there was a doctor there he hadn't seen him, to which the childbirth educator responded she might have been female. The class responded with laughter and the general discussion resumed (Fieldwork diary, 17 July, 1990).

In both sets of classes, personal experience was clearly validated through the references to it by the midwives, physiotherapists, hostesses, childbirth educators, guest speakers and the practice of bringing new parents back to the class to share their experience.   In both classes it was emphasised that "different people experience things differently".   Hence, in an area in which the discourses of medical science have been dominant, personal experience was construed as a legitimate resource for people to draw on, and with which to question medical science. However, at the same time, these and other practices suggest a tendency towards the structuring of those experiences within another form of non-innocent dominant discourse.   For example, all class members and I, as researcher, were requested to, and earnestly did the exercises and breathing routines so we would *share* what the pregnant woman was experiencing.   In the last couple of years, the possibility of "sharing" the experience of the pregnant woman has been further extended with men being given the opportunity in classes to wear a "pregnancy simulator" so they can experience heavy breasts and the weight of a full-term pregnancy.[6] The accounts of support people in the films screened were all

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[6] Ostensibly the simulation of "an experience", as in these examples, is a part of a genuine quest to understand someone else's lived experience. However, at another level, it represents the appropriation of

carefully and self-consciously constructed, within an emotionally laden discourse that stressed the meaningfulness and shared nature of the experience. For example, doctors and nurses talked of the privilege of sharing the experience, and one of the birthing mothers wished that she had had more energy so that she could have shared what her husband was going through, as he tried to share what she was going through. However, these comments seemed to lack authenticity and spontaneity. The class members responded with embarrassed laughter and the childbirth educator referred to them as "corny". These practices suggest a poetics of public performance, which foregrounded certain generalisable understandings and modes of experience over others. They also attest to the trend Simon, in one of the narratives to come, identified of isolating experiences, turning them into "an experience", which can then be improved.[7]

Those who had attended Parent Centre classes went on to form post-natal support groups, which met for the first time at the house of the hostess from the antenatal course. After that, they took it in turns to host the weekly meetings. I regularly attended the support group that evolved out of the Parent Centre antenatal group I had sat in on, and three of the mothers from that group were directly involved in the research. The group met for a couple of hours in the early afternoon, after the babies had had a sleep. The woman hosting the meeting provided afternoon tea. Occasionally the group arranged to do something with their partners, like a potluck dinner or a barbecue.

Initially, the majority of the conversation at the weekly meetings was filled with minute details of each of the babies' sleeping, feeding and weight gain. It amazed me how much detail the women were able to recall about when and for how long their babies had slept over the previous week, for how long they had fed from each breast and at what sort of time intervals, and the exact loss and gain of grams in the first few weeks. As the babies got older attention turned to other issues or behaviour such as vaccinations, teething, cot death, nappy cleaners, sterilising bottles, juice or water, sitting, starting solids, beginning to crawl, etc. But always, at no matter what age, there was an intensive exchange of very detailed information about whatever aspect of the babies' development or issue was being focussed upon. Often these exchanges

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another's experience as part of a process of manufacturing a dominant discourse surrounding that experience.

[7] This example and the use made by parents in their accounts of experience suggest the possibility of an analysis of the discourse of experience. However that is beyond the focus of this study.

included what people had been trying, what other friends had tried, what their mothers or sisters had suggested, and occasionally the odd bit of direct advice to one of the mothers. One of the hostesses from Parent Centre who had helped many different support groups get started felt that they were surprisingly non-judgmental:

> Hannah: They realise that there are other people experiencing it. [ ] And all those sorts of things they do talk about, not perhaps necessarily actively speaking what to do but just discussing how you do it kind of thing. (H1.p3)

To begin with all the attention was focussed on the babies, and only things like Valentine's Day or Mother's Day stimulated conversations about the mothers and what they had been given or how the day had been celebrated. However, when the babies were around 4 months old I noted in my fieldwork diary that the conversations had broadened to include topics such as mortgages, family holidays, husbands' work situations, the pros and cons of working part-time, and the odd mother starting netball again or going to aerobics classes. In part, the greater range of topics being talked about may have reflected a growing sense of familiarity and ease with each other. However, there also seemed to be a shift from a sole focus on the babies' welfare to address the mothers' welfare as the caring work became less self-conscious. (Fieldwork diary, 8 December, 1990).

This particular group continued to meet regularly, and my last contact with them was when the babies were around 3 years old. Not all the Parent Centre support groups had this longevity, but many had at least some members from the original antenatal course meeting for some time. For example, two other women who participated in the research and who had been to different Parent Centre antenatal groups had initially gone intermittently to the post-natal support group and then stopped going as they had felt they had little in common with the other women and that they were rather judgmental. Many groups do last a long time. I know of women whose children are now teenagers who continue to meet a few times a year with their "new mothers' support group".

The hospital antenatal classes encouraged their participants to go on and meet after the babies were born but looked for a volunteer from the class to arrange the first meeting, whenever they felt able after the birth of their own child. None of the three couples who had been to the hospital antenatal classes had gone on to be involved with their class members in a support group. However, one had met regularly with one other woman from the class, and another had created a support group with some other women

she had met informally at a neighbourhood park. I attended one of their meetings and it was very similar to the Parent Centre Group I have described in terms of intensity of exchange of information about the babies.

However, that is not to say that those belonging to the groups did not resist or struggle against the dominant understandings and meanings of the group. For example, one day when I arrived before the others to the support group Olivia spoke of the way in which the other mothers continually talked about the need to buy educational toys whereas she herself had not thought it important to buy many toys, educational or not, for her daughter at 8 months old. She also referred to the other mothers criticising her for feeding her daughter a processed dairy food when there were not pureed vegetables available. In this instance she had talked to her mother about it and she had said that she thought what Olivia had done was fine as long as she didn't do it too often. (Fieldwork diary, 26 June, 1991). Another mother, talking about getting her baby to sleep using a method that conflicted with the ideas of a Laleche support group she belonged to, indicated that she was avoiding mentioning it to the Laleche group.

Conclusions

In the chapters that follow I argue that the discussions I had with the research funding and ethics committees and the intense exchange of information and practices by the members of the support groups illustrate that way in which experience and subjectivity are situated within relationships, and are really matters of interexperience and intersubjectivity (Jackson, 1996, p. 27). As will be revealed, the parents I worked with were involved in numerous dialogues with all kinds of people in their life-world about their experiences of caring for a baby and being mothers and fathers. In many ways "having children", albeit in different circumstances and experienced in diverse ways, cuts across boundaries and divides, and, even if only momentarily, forms a common bond.

CHAPTER SIX

The Journey

> Just about everything we did with the kid there was someone that's
> nodding sagely in the background, yes good on you, should have done it
> a long time ago. And there will always be somebody else saying Oh my
> goodness; you're not doing that are you? Yeah, you get it all the time.
> Just wherever you go [] What I found though, as we've um grown as
> parents...we sort of know more what we want to do and you can just
> accept what people say and think Well fair enough that's fine. Whereas
> when he was only little and we really didn't know what we were doing
> everything anybody said was Oh goodness, you know, you take it home
> and analyse it, well perhaps we really should be doing that or shouldn't
> be or whatever. And you just take everything to heart. But now we're
> sort of a bit more seasoned. (CR5.pp. 14–15)

Experience: Trying, Observing and Undergoing

In this chapter I work with my fieldwork notes and transcripts of the interviews
to illustrate the way the people I worked with articulated a strong case for the centrality
and irreducibility of experience in understanding the process of becoming parents. Here
I am interested to prioritise the knowledge by which people live: the common sense, the
taken-for-granted, the wisdom acquired through practical activity and time that cannot
be abstracted from the world in which people live. Experiential knowledge that is
gained through practical activity is frequently discounted or at best glossed over, as if it
were a lesser form of knowledge than the knowledge that we use to explain life.   In
drawing attention to the place of knowledge gained through practical activity I am
writing against a position that privileges theoretical knowledge.   Where I have included
intellectual reflection on the narrative it is to illuminate more generally the nature of
experience that is central to the project of contemporary phenomenology. Both kinds of
knowledge are generated within the social world, and both are subject to the constraints
of culture and the historical moment (Loveridge, 1990). Instead of prioritising one
form of knowledge over the other, we should regard them as different vantage points
within the same field of inquiry (Jackson, 1996). The issue then becomes a matter of
understanding what these different kinds of knowledge enable people to accomplish in

the world, and what is effected when people refer to them to justify their decisions and actions.

In a variety of ways, the people I worked with expressed the feeling that becoming a parent was something that you couldn't really appreciate until you had been through the experience yourself, until it had happened to you. Much of their knowledge had been acquired through the experience and practical activity of caring for their baby.

> Phillipa: I think I was as prepared as I could have been, you know,
> because I don't think you can be prepared until it really...until it
> happens to you. (PJ1&2.p. 20)

> Richard: You know it is going to be hard, but you don't really understand
> what care is all about until you have them. You know I think we
> were expecting it to be hard work but you just...you don't...until
> you've had it you don't realise how tired you get in between
> times, that makes it even harder, I think. (R2.p. 2)

> Christine: I think I was quite...quite surprised really at how much I
> wasn't really prepared for it. I thought I would be. I thought I
> knew, oh yes I'd be tired and it's going to be hard work, and I
> know this and I know that, but it's not until you're in it...and
> there's quite a few times I've sort of thought well I don't think I
> really want to do this. (C2.p. 1)

> Karen: Because I don't think that people who don't have children can
> really appreciate what it's like until they've got them...really
> appreciate it, you know. (K5.p. 15)

> Judith: How have you known what to do with Edward?
> Simon: [] A lot of it is just learned I think, just on the job training. You
> can read so much; you can be told so much but some things work
> for your child and some things don't. It is just practical
> experience. (S2.p. 6)

Even when the same point of view had been expressed before and after the birth, the experience of parenting had changed people's understanding of what they had previously thought:

> Judith: Well, looking back to that other transcript you actually say that
> you expect to be just totally doing things for them and totally
> involved with them.
> Karen: Yeah, I mean I said that, but I don't think I knew what reality
> was, reality's a wee bit different from that, I guess because I
> expected that I'd have a bit more free time. (K2.p. 9)

Desjarlais (1996, pp. 72–76) provides a very comprehensive account of both the etymological development of the word "experience" and the ways in which it has been used in the humanities and social sciences. In particular, he notes that what was initially meant by experience is best captured by the modern English word "experiment", to try and to test. From this the idea of observing things to gain knowledge evolved, before a more subjectivist turn was taken with experience coming to mean "to feel" or "to undergo".[1] All these meanings are revealed in the way that the people I worked with referred to experience; the trying, the observing and the undergoing. Jackson (1996, pp. 28–29) relates the original meaning of the word experience to *emperia*, which shares the same root as the German *fahr*, to travel. This suggests the metaphor of journeying to evoke the lived process of experiencing. "Experience, like experimentation and empirical work, suggest a passage into the world, a going forth, a venture, a trial, a self-proving peregrination , – a 'thinking with one's feet' as Ortega y Gasset puts it (Marias1971, p. 40)". This metaphor works very well for evoking a sense of diversity within the common experience of a journey as a parent. Different points of departure, travelling companions, itineraries and other competing voyages contributed to a unique journey for each of the people I worked with. It also brings to mind the highs and the lows, which are part and parcel of both journeying and parenting. Christine and Richard express this sense of a passage or journey at the end of their first year as parents when I was asking them how appropriate they found the notion of new parenthood as a crisis.

> Judith: Quite a lot of the studies that have been done previously looking at people's experience in their first year have focussed on the extent to which people have experienced it as a crisis or not. So, I was wondering does that seem a good way to talk about the first year? Or do you think there are other words that are better to describe it?

[ ]

Christine: I wouldn't call it a crisis.

Richard: Just call it...
Christine: An experience
Richard:..a growing up curve.
Judith: A growing up curve?
Richard: Entering ...entering the next phase of you life, basically isn't it?
Christine: An adventure.

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[1] Desjarlais comments on the similarity of the trajectory of the concept of the self: "Similar to the trajectory of the Western self, which initially marked an exterior relationship to one's environment but later came to entail a moral reflexive agent (Taylor, 1989), experience evolved from a verb denoting external engagement with or testing of one's surroundings to a template marking a person's subjective awareness of that engagement." (Desjarlais, 1996, p.73).

Richard: Yeah, everyone's been through it.
Christine: Yeah, I'd call it an adventure.
Richard: You'll be through it...you'll be through it soon, Judith. No it's
not a crisis. It's just a bit...it's different. All of a sudden
you...there's someone else there and you don't get your eight or
nine hours sleep. [ ] You don't get to go up to Auckland for the
weekend.
Christine: Though at the same time you get so much happiness out of it.
Richard: mmm
Christine: It's quite incredible really. (CR5.p. 16)

I've extracted these comments to show the way that people recognise the particular quality of understanding and knowledge that comes through lived experience. However, to edit them out of the context of the lives of the people who spoke these words, and to abstract them from time reduces their power to reveal the complexities of that lived experience, that journey. Writing as an anthropologist, Abu-lughod argues for the importance of focussing on the particularities of people's lives, and of locating those particulars in time as a means to understand the experience of people we perceive as other:

Yet the dailiness, by breaking coherence and introducing time, trains our
gaze on flux and contradiction; and the particulars suggest that others
live as we perceive ourselves living – not as automatons programmed
according to "cultural" rules or acting out social roles, but as people
going through life wondering what they should do, making mistakes,
being opinionated, vacillating, trying to make themselves look good,
enduring tragic personal losses, enjoying others, and finding moments of
laughter. (Abu-Lughod, 1993, p. 27)

It would seem that the same argument should apply when attempting to understand how people whom we perceive as similar to ourselves live particular periods of their lives, such as becoming parents. Through attending to the richness of particular social situations and the specifics of the discourse that people generate about their experience we can draw on a plurality of data, including the theoretical and the practical, the rational and the emotional, the mental and the physical, the conscious and the unconscious, and so bring to light the range of lived experience. We can also reveal those moments when people feel themselves to be agents acting on the world and those when they feel themselves to be subject to the world and its constraints.

The need to locate the particulars of experience in context and time, at the macro- and micro- level, is something that people themselves frequently attempted to do, as they reflected on their experience. As will become apparent in this and the

following chapters, most commonly reference was made to the experiences of previous generations but at other times people referred to practices in other cultures. In the extract that follows, Simon makes a link to the experience of his parents' generation, but also points to the dangers of abstracting experience itself from the broader context in which it is lived.

Simon: [ ] I think parenting is something that you can't enter into lightly. You can't just think Oh let's have a baby because it is a big thing, but a lot of the thing, too, I think is it's made a lot harder these day just by the pressure that's on people in society. I was just thinking about this before when you were talking about it with Nicola. I think there's a lot more pressure on people I think than what there was in our parents' day. Have a look around, divorce statistics and family breakups and juvenile crime and that sort of thing and I think it just speaks for itself, a lot of it. There's just not the same kind of commitment in relationship as what there used to be, you know. I think you can't just look at this in the light of having a baby, I think it stems right round the whole orb, this is just one part of it. I don't know if I'm answering your question or not... But I sort of see it in a different light maybe to what others would look at it. I just think, oh well we've had a baby and it's changed our whole life but I think, you know, if you're going to have a baby you're committed to it and your commitment to you partner doesn't change. In fact you know for us, I think it has given our relationship a great deal more of fulfillment in a different way. Um some parts of your relationship change (laughing). Your sex life changes but you do get a greater appreciation of each other and you realise a lot more of the values the other person has and the capabilities. Like I think Nicola has been a great mother, probably more so than what she thinks she has been. [ ] You see it has become very much an experiential thing of just having a baby. Everything sort of focuses on that particular one point of time, whereas they don't seem to take the whole past and future into account, which you've got to do, you can't just look at is as an experience of having a baby. It's part of life and it's part of the baby's life as well as your own life. You know, it's all intertwined and I think we tend to isolate experiences too much and focus on them and think, you know, how can we improve this experience, because then we'll improve the quality of life.[ ] I think life is life and every part of it gives something to it and, you know, it's a natural cycle, I mean having children, but I think...you know, we're just basically products of our society as well and the pressures that are on us. Like I'm one of seven, and OK it might have been tough financially for Mum and Dad but then they were only paying two-percent interest on their mortgage, whereas at the moment we're down to fifteen. You know, it started at sixteen, went up to twenty one and now we're down to fifteen and we're feeling pretty good about that, but if we were on two percent we could

probably afford to have seven kids as well and be happy, you
know. (S2.pp. 9–10)

In the material that follows I have responded to the challenges set out by Lila
Abu-Lughod and Simon by representing discourses about the place of experience in
becoming parents from my fieldwork notes and interviews and conversations with one
couple over the course of the year. What I'm interested in here is not to try and
untangle the "truth" from the various accounts, but to consider what is effected through
the claims that are made to different types of knowledge and in the prioritising of the
explanation of experience. In focussing on one couple I do not wish to generalise their
experience of becoming parents to the other people who participated in the research, but
rather to illuminate aspects of the nature of experience and to consider what is
accomplished for new parents in invoking a discourse that prioritises lived experience
and experiential knowledge. Through introducing time and allowing space for the
particulars to be aired I hope to reveal the contradictions, vacillations, moments of
conflict and consensus, certainty and doubt, fulfillment and loss, etc., that are flattened
out when we generalise about experience in an atemporal sense and the sense of social
life as a process is lost. I also hope to bring to the fore the knowledge that people live
by.

Liz, Martin and Lucy

People had different ways of referring to knowledge gained through practical
activity and experience. The words "trial and error" were frequently used to describe
how people had known what to do, even though at the same moment they
acknowledged other sources of knowledge and influences on what they did. The
following material is based on the accounts of Liz and Martin, and I have selected it to
represent a change from a discourse that valued the knowledge of others to a discourse
that gave increasing weight to the value of their own experience, whilst also revealing
that there were vacillations, conflicts and contradictions in their account of how they
had known what to do as parents. Clearly, other narratives could also be constructed
out of this material.

Liz and Martin had been married for 4 years when Lucy was born. Both were
working full-time; Liz as a dentist and Martin as a social worker. Liz said that she had
always wanted to be a mother. She had had very little contact with babies and children.

Martin had been very involved with his nieces and nephews when they were small, and through his work he had a lot of contact with children. Initially they had considered that Liz might take parental leave for 6-months and then return to work while Martin took 6-months leave. This was partly for financial reasons as Liz earned more than Martin, but also Martin thought that it could have been useful for his work to have the experience of being very involved with caring for a baby. However, they decided that it was not wise to make such a decision before they even knew what it was going to be like being parents, and so after Lucy was born Martin continued to work full-time and, after a short break Liz worked part-time but during the evening.

Liz's family had moved around a lot when she was a child and as an adult she wanted to stay in the one place, and "become ingrained in the community". Her own family lived in the far North, and although she felt ambivalent about living very close to them she wished they lived closer so that they would be able to be play an active role as grandparents. Nonetheless, Liz felt they kept up a good level of contact, and she had a close relationship with her mother. Martin's family lived in the Hawkes Bay, and as a family they regularly kept in touch. Both Martin and Liz described Martin's family as a very close family, with the lives of the various brothers and sisters, and the families they had created, still being very closely linked to Martin's parents, particularly his mother. Martin and Liz both felt that their families had different values but that they got on well with both sets of parents. However, it was also clear that there were moments of extended-family life that required tolerance, diplomacy and humour.

Early Days

In the first interview, before Lucy was born, I had asked Martin and Liz what they had done in preparation for becoming parents. Liz said "Oh, we've done everything", and went on to list the various books that friends and clients had lent her, and the two antenatal classes they were attending. Liz and Martin noticed a difference between the two sets of classes, and valued what they perceived to be the more objective-information based style of the hospital classes.

> Martin: We've found the hospital good, which we wouldn't have
> expected because people had always...mostly said to us that
> Parent Centre was better. But I guess what we find good about
> the hospital one is that it's run by a mid-wife and we think the

midwife's really good and because it's her job she's really up-to-
date with knowledge and is good at getting it across.

Liz: And she gives both...she gives unbiased views of both sides of
everything, whereas at Parent Centre the three that we've had so
far, they've given their personal opinions of how they coped and
what they did, that sort of thing, which is ...which is alright, but
we prefer the information rather than this is what I did, and this is
what I found useful. (LM1.pp. 14–15)

However, it was clear that at least for Liz, there was also value in gathering
ideas from other people's experience. In the first interview, after the discussion of the
antenatal classes, she immediately went on to speak positively about knowledge passed
on in daily encounters about their personal experience. Her use of the word "hints" to
refer to this knowledge suggests a sense of openness, as if they are something that can
be tried as a "one off" and discarded and forgotten if not useful. The extent to which
this knowledge is socially constituted through multiple interactions and relationships
with other people in every day contexts is evident in Liz's account. There is also a
clear sense of active participation in attending to and selecting information to subject to
a process of trial.

Judith: Have you been talking to other people about it, apart from the two
lots of classes?
[ ]

Liz: Yes, you are always picking up hints from other people. We always
talk about it at work, I talk about it with all my clients. All these
clients give me ideas and ...all the time.
Judith: Do you find ...any of them conflicting?

Liz: Not necessarily, 'cos they're just hints. You know, "if this doesn't
work try this" type of thing. So...well they probably are
conflicting but it's trial and error, I mean I...I've got to see what
helps me (laughs).
[ ]

Liz: You talk to mothers. Any mother, you know, they'll give you some
hints. [ ] We went out to dinner on Saturday lunchtime, there was
a mother with a baby there, I mean everyone sees you are
pregnant and we were just talking like she said "oh, this particular
sheet is really good and it's thick and it absorbs all this" so that's
another hint you get. And I was out there the other day, I just
walked to the car and there was a couple of people we know [ ]
and one just had a little baby and I went over to have a look at it
and she said "oh, the birth was really...", she had a home birth
and she said "oh, it was really good, I felt relaxed and I did this
and this", and I mean you just...all the time (laughs). Our
receptionist at work's a bit motherly too and she keeps saying "go

home and put your feet up" and " you shouldn't be doing this, this and this", and you just get advice all the time.

Martin: I guess that's one of the things that's always irritated me, not a lot, it's just been there I guess, is that when it comes to having a baby, a child, there's a lot more emphasis placed on mothering than there is fathering and even when people talk to me ...well when they talk to me about the pregnancy, it's about Liz" (LM1.pp. 15–16).

Later in the interview, Liz gave a further example of a hint, and again there is a sense of "possibility" about it, something that could be tried. Martin drew on his theoretical knowledge, gained through his work, to lend authority to the hint.

Liz: [ ] A couple of ladies at work have said...given me ideas, they say look you know, you want to get it into a room...if, after the first few weeks, like I don't know how many weeks they said but you don't...when you want it to sleep though the night and it's obviously not hungry you go in and you don't talk to it and you don't turn the light on, you go in and tuck it in or change it's nappies and put it back to bed, so it gets into the habit of knowing that it's not talking time and playing time and I ...that's one hint I've remembered (laughs)

Martin: That's good behavioural psychology as well.

[ ]

Liz: You just listen to people talking too.

Martin: Yeah.

Liz: I mean rather than asking, your ears are just pricked up, I mean for the last couple of years, when we've known people are having babies, there's a couple of mothers talking, ...I just listen and notch up the things I think that might be helpful. We haven't asked anybody. Not yet, we will, I'll be ringing up my friends "What do I do next?" (laughs), I will.(LM1.p. 19)

In the second interview when Lucy was six weeks old there was a sense emerging from both Martin and Liz that some kind of knowledge is acquired through the practical activity of caring for a baby. When I asked Liz how she had known what to do with Lucy, Liz again referred to things she had read in books and what she had seen other mothers doing, and "I've just been experimenting." (L2.p. 12) Liz claimed that she bossed Martin around a bit over what should be happening to Lucy because he was more nervous. But Martin refuted this, arguing that he was less confident because he had spent less time with Lucy, and that it was hard sometimes for him to take Liz's word. When I asked Martin how he had known what to do with Lucy he referred to what he had seen happening in the hospital, things he had picked up from the antenatal

class, what Liz said she had done, and "I think putting her to sleep and knowing what to do about that has been a bit of trial and error." (M2.p. 6). Later in the interview he reflected on the influence of his work on the way he cared for Lucy, but drew a distinction between his attitudes and the practical activity of caring.

> Martin: "I think some of my attitudes are through my work and the people I work with [ ]you're working with families and parents all the time and you're working with people who are right into the importance of parenting and that, so I think a lot of my attitudes come from there. But not a lot of it, not very much at all in a practical sense." (M2.p. 7).

When Lucy was 6 months old both Martin and Liz were beginning to feel that it was hard to pin down their own experiences. There is a continuing sense that social interaction with others generates ideas to try, but also a sense of things that were philosophically important to them shaping what they did. Initially, Martin and Liz had read a lot, but subsequently books had moved to the background. At this stage, however, they had come to the foreground again, as something to browse for ideas.

> Martin: For me the influences are less obvious, because whereas back then and certainly before she was born and soon after she was born we were making a real effort to kind of learn, you know, and you were very aware. Whereas now I think it's more...I don't know, I think it's probably for me still talking with Liz about what she's heard from various sources or read and trial and error...there is still a couple of people at work who I talk with, one in particular...
>
> Liz: A lot.
>
> Martin: Talk often...and I'm sure I just pick up, you know, on stuff from there.
>
> [ ]
>
> Judith: What about for you then, Liz, what are the main influences in the last few months about the way that you've cared for Lucy and the decisions you've made?
>
> Liz: Don't know.
>
> Martin: It would be discussing with other women, wouldn't it?
>
> Liz: Just listening to other women, other mothers basically. And ideas that...we had before she was born.
>
> [ ]
>
> Martin: Like there's one example here, it's just kind of a philosophy I guess about how to bring up children. Like one that springs to mind is that when Lucy maybe falls over or does something that she might cry or start to cry. We don't want to just suddenly run to her and cuddle her and reassure her and that because it's often not necessary. Often it's enough to say Oh you fell over, you'll be OK.
>
> Liz: Tough love (laughs).

Martin: Yeah you know she'll grizzle for five seconds and then be OK I
    don't think we have learnt that from anywhere, it's just...
Judith: It's your philosophy
Martin:..we want to foster a little bit of independence.
Liz: I don't know what else then? Definitely not from our parents. And
    the book.
Martin: Yeah, the book.
Judith: The book?
Liz: Just that *Birth till five*. I mean I went off books for ages but ...it's
    just nice to catch up on a few new ideas that you may want to try.
    I mean they go through everything, sleep disciplining and we...we
    have...we tried for a couple of nights, we thought, gee, she
    shouldn't be waking in the night for this feed, she's having three
    good meals a day and we did try some sleep disciplining, sort of,
    two nights in a row, and she screamed so much we gave up and
    just breast fed her (laughs), so I'm still feeding her at night.
    (LM3.pp. 20–22)

Creating an Itinerary for Another

In saying what they were doing, other things that Liz and Martin were not doing, that were backgrounded, were also brought to the fore. In the previous extracts Liz explicitly commented that their ideas and practices were not coming from their parents. A couple of months later, in the context of a life-history interview, I asked Liz about how the ways in which they were raising Lucy built on or departed from the way she had been brought up. Initially, Liz found it really difficult to remember things in order to answer these questions. She seemed uncertain of what I wanted from the questions, and didn't enjoy answering them. However, she found more to say as the interview progressed. In a positive sense, Liz felt that in some ways she was mimicking her childhood. She really wanted Lucy to have lots of opportunities to do things, such as sports and music, just as she had had lots of opportunities for doing things as a child. She also felt she had acquired a strong sense of discipline and etiquette from her upbringing and these were things she valued. Liz's parents had always fought a lot when she was growing up, and she wished for a calmer, more relaxed atmosphere for her own children.

Liz: Yeah, so I've got those...those are probably the main ideas that I've
    had from my family [ ]...we were very strictly disciplined and
    because of that I feel that I'm probably going to be quite strict,
    just because it's ingrained (laughing). It is ingrained. It's very
    hard, if you've had, you know, years and years and years of
    harping...my parents do harp, like with table manners, don't talk

with your mouth full and I...I'm going to be quite particular about that type of thing for my family.   Is that what you want?

Judith: Yes.

[ ]

Liz: And although you used to get hit on the head every time you answered back and ...there's a few things...there's heaps of things Judith, that you're put off by from you parents, and my parents were quite pushy and there's a lot of things...I want my children to have more free expression. I want to be able to talk to them, I never, ever had discussions with my parents. My parents were right and we had to agree with them and that was it. And I can never, ever, ever remember having quiet personal conversations, ever, then until recently, you know, until now I can.

Judith: Yes. Yes, well it sounds like you and your mother do now.

Liz: Oh yes, yes we do. We talk about anything.

Judith: What do you think brought about the change?

Liz: She's always been quite open [ ] but like your deeper more emotional things that mean more, the meaningful things, no way. And it's those meaningful things that, you know, I just felt I really needed more. And I want to be able to do that. [ ] You don't know how you are going to cope with that. I mean you haven't had the experience, 'cos you've never had it with you parents. Well, I haven't. And you just have to pick it up from reading books and watching...watching the Cosby Show (laughing). (L4.pp. 31–32)

Martin talked of having had a very family-centred life, and he hoped that he and Liz would create a family life for their children where both parents were available as much as they could be. He too talked of having been given a lot of opportunities by his parents as a child. His parents had made things available to them that they were familiar with, such as sports and scouts, but he hoped that he and Liz would branch out and also do things that were unknown to them. He spoke very positively of the influence of his mother's values, his father's active participation in family life, and an uncle who had been an active community worker.   Although he loved spending time with the family, Martin felt ambivalent about ever living in the same city as the rest of the family. He suspected they could be a bit overpowering, that Liz would find it hard and that he too might find it stifling. Martin thought there could be some interesting discussions ahead over the years for him and Liz as they attempted to resolve some of the differences in the values they had inherited from their respective families.   Liz and Martin both described Liz's parents as racist and snobs. Her parents flew a British flag, and said that their tribe came from Britain. Liz was born and mainly grew up in New

Zealand but she felt that she hadn't been brought up in New Zealand at all but "in a sort of English white-dominated society". Liz described Martin's mother as having gone to the opposite in terms of her values about race. Martin felt that Liz was far more liberal-minded than her parents were, but also felt that Liz still retained some of their values. Liz was aware of this, and wanted herself and Lucy to feel "more New Zealand".

Making your own travel arrangements

In an interview when Lucy was around ten months old there was a sense emerging of Liz valuing her own experience more, and finding "hints", at least from Martin's mother, as more regulating than she had initially. She began by mentioning that Martin's mother dropped hints all the time, adding that "she thinks she is doing it subtly but it's not." (L4.p. 26) Liz went on to give examples of the range of subjects that advice was offered on: the number of people you leave your child with, state schools versus catholic schools, recipes for children's food, the use of Nappy San and cot deaths, and the value of children wearing handed-down clothing. She said that she felt she just had to "pass it off", but went on to add:

> Liz: I'm actually getting a bit tougher (laughing). I'm...I'm probably getting a bit sick of little things like that all the time. I mentioned it to Martin the other day. I mean up until now we've got on really, really well but I just feel...I mean I've accepted everything she's had to say, but now, like, I'm a little bit more experienced, it's almost a year and I feel that she has had an awful lot to say with her other two grandchildren, because they live so close, she...she, um, gets her way with them a lot and, um, I don't want her to have as much input. (L4.p. 27)

A few months earlier, I had been at one of the mother's support group meetings Liz had attended, and she had expressed her frustration with the hints that she had received from Martin's mother. In this context she emphasised her mother-in-law's lack of authoritative basis for giving such advice. By contrast, Liz sometimes referred to Martin's professional knowledge on family matters to support her point of view, and at one stage it had been suggested that he come and give a talk to the group on "toddler taming":

> *Discussion about babies going off to sleep on their mothers. Liz's mother-in-law runs a creche and she had told Liz this was not a good thing to do so that others could comfort a baby. Liz had not done this*

with Lucy. Liz turned to me and said "But she isn't anything. That is just her point of view." Liz puts a great deal on what Martin says. Olivia's baby masturbating. Olivia smacked her hand and Liz said that she would damage her baby. Martin had told her that until 5 years it was best not to make a fuss about it but after that something should be done. Discussion followed with other examples of babies who had masturbated. Liz said it was so difficult to know what was and wasn't going to harm them, that being a parent is getting much more complicated as they get older. All three mothers agreed they weren't looking forward to teenage years. (Fieldwork diary, 26 June, 1990)

At times, Liz clearly valued Martin's professional knowledge and at other times she felt more ambivalent about it. When Lucy was around 9 months I had asked Liz who made most of the decisions concerning the care of Lucy. Liz felt that she and Martin shared the decision-making.

> Liz: Like with the creche business. I said...I rang him up at work and told him what I'd ...all the people I'd rung...because he is a social worker I ...I don't want to hurt him (laughing). I'm quite pushy and I don't ...you know he's got these set ideas which I often disagree with, but it's his baby too and if he's quite emphatic about something, I mean...I mean I'm a bit wishy washy about what I want in some of the areas and if he's really got a firm viewpoint I'll probably lean towards his way of it, only because he thinks he knows what he is talking about. So I rang him about the creche and said, look, I know you didn't want her to go into one before a year, um, but this is the situation, what do I do? And we decided that the creche was fine, I mean she's...the personality of the child, you know, you take that into account and what stage she's at and she's fine with people....Lots of decisions, like food, what do we feed her tonight. He often...no not often, sometimes, will ask, "Oh what she will give her for tea", other times he'll just make a decision. He wants to have decisions on the clothes she wears...I look into more things like the playcentres, the swimming, music lessons, all those things, he doesn't really care about those and I'll just say "Well, this is what I'm doing" and he'll say "Oh that's good", or "that's bad", you know...? (L4.p. 29)

In a later interview I asked both Liz and Martin about whether they thought babies and children should be cared for by their parents or by other people. I have quoted at length from this discussion to illustrate the plurality of data that contribute to experience.[2] As Martin explained his strongly held feelings he drew on the rational, the emotional, the theoretical, the pragmatic, the general, the particular, the fully

formed, the half-sensed, the clearly stated and the difficult to articulate to give validity to his position.   As he did this he vacillated between using theory to lend authority to his point of view, and claiming a personal belief, and so lending it validity from an existential point of view:

Liz: Martin has specific demands in that area.

Judith: What were those?

Martin: It's really important to me that in the first year Liz be by far her primary caregiver.

Liz: Or you. You were prepared.

Martin: Or me. But in retrospect I'm glad it's been Liz and not me, partly for selfish reasons but also I think that, you know, there's a natural bond there and I think you should use that. So...

Judith: So you think there's a natural bond between mothers and their babies and more so than fathers?

Martin: Yeah, yeah. And ...so definitely in the first year and even in the second year...I don't like to see too much emphasis on kind of daycare or creches being the daytime caregiver, you know. Maybe for half a day, maybe for half a day. But it is really important to me.

Judith: And what...for what sorts of reasons?

Martin: I think that for their basic security they need to have the total trust in...in one or maybe two people. They just need to...it's just my ...it's not my theory, it's just a theory that for their basic security they just need that, ah...

Liz: But then what happens if you...one person, like the grandmother is looking after them all the time? They've got that security haven't they?

Martin: Yeah, that's ...I mean if there's going to be an alternative that's obviously the best one, that there is some kind of person who's got that family relationship with them who is always the same person. Um, but I would still...I mean it's just a kind of a belief.

Judith: What about you Liz? What do you feel about...

Liz: I...I really don't know. I personally feel that they get used to...children are so adaptable, and I feel they get...I mean you don't know how they are going to turn out later, that's what Martin's always said "Well, they might be fine now but what will turn up later in life", and he reckons these early childhood experiences modify, I don't know, your psyche or your behaviour for later on, like adolescent type era, and um, at this age I would have been quite happy to put her into a creche and she's been to a creche two or three times, just half a day, and when they start moving and walking and becoming little people, you know, like from 10 months or so, I mean they just absorb all the extra input,

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[2] There are other points that could be made about the specific discourses invoked here but that is not the task of this chapter. These points will be picked up in Chapter Nine.

I just feel home's boring and that they love...they love talking to other...she is just animated when there's other children around.

Judith: And so is that one of the reasons you've started her at the playcentre group?

Liz: Oh yes. Home is boring.

Martin: She is an extremely social baby.

Liz: It depends on the personality of the child. (LM5.pp. 12–13)

In the final interview I asked Liz and Martin what their current sources of guidance were in bringing up Lucy. Again, I have quoted at length to reveal the ways in which aspects of experience exist in relation to that which is backgrounded as well as that which is foregrounded. That which is backgrounded contributes to the shape of that which is claimed in the foreground. It asserts its presence by being refused but in having to be refused is brought into the field of possibilities. Here in this extract experience, trusted others, Martin's knowledge, personal philosophies and trial and error are foregrounded as abstract theoretical knowledge, expert opinion and books are refuted, but in the process of being refuted a sense of possibility is entertained.

Judith: What are your current sources of guidance in bringing up Lucy?

Martin: My knowledge and expertise, Liz just has to do what I say basically.

Liz: Rubbish. I always talk to ...I still find that it's your friends and ladies on the street and neighbours that you get more information off.

Martin: I...I personally I mean...I said that jokingly, but I personally feel from now probably increasingly confident in terms of doing what I think would be best and I...like it's really up to Liz and I, I think to discuss and kind of agree.

Liz: Yes, you feel like you're not relying on outside information as much.

Martin: I think that our combined...sometimes it's common sense and just our combined experience should be enough for most things. I guess when she gets sick is one time when we seek a bit of guidance. She got quite wheezy and a bit like asthma a few weekends ago and we've got a doctor friend across the road and we kind of spoke to him [ ], yeah rather than just take her to the GP we'll tend to talk to friends who know.

Liz: We're not really into reading books now are we?

Martin: Oh no (laughs)

Judith: Why do you think that is? What do you think is different about...?

Martin: I think because, I mean when they were babies there was a lot of kind of factual information that you needed to know, you know, but now it's more...it gets more into the realm of opinion than kind of theories as to what's best. I mean there's probably so

> many theories that you read, and if you read a different book, it will just be a different theory...
>
> Liz: No, but if there's a problem that...a sleeping problem or specific problem well then I think that you probably...there's a lot of books written on wetting your bed and having nightmares and when you hit those problems that probably when we'll consult more information but now we don't have any problems.
>
> Judith: Looking back then generally over the year how do you feel that you've known what to do?
>
> Liz: Trial and error.
>
> Judith: Trial and error?
>
> Martin: With the routine type problems that you come across, trial and error, certainly with food and sleep I would say...
>
> Liz: But we had a preconceived idea that we wanted to stick to routines as well. That was one of the things.
>
> Martin: What I meant by the routine type problems was not the problems with the routine, but the kind of problems that come up...
>
> Judith: On a daily basis.
>
> Martin:...yeah on a daily basis, you know, we tend to just I guess find out what worked best for her and us...
>
> Liz: That's trial and error, darling.
>
> Martin: Yeah. For want of another word, that would be trial and error.
> (LM5.pp. 7–8)

"...a bit more seasoned."

The main focus of this chapter has been to give voice to the importance that people in the research gave to lived experience as they became parents. I have focussed on the account of one particular couple so as to be able to pay attention to the details that reveal some of the contradictions, vacillations, shifts in emphases, doubts and conflicts that are part of the way social life as a nascent mother or father is lived on a daily basis. Social life as it is represented by this account is clearly something that proceeds, and our analyses need to be able to reveal this. I have also used the account of this couple to reflect on the nature of lived experience more generally. Although the particular paths that this mother and father travelled in the first year of their parenthood cannot be generalised to the other people involved in the research or parents in general there are some landmarks that were shared with other couples involved in the research.

As the excerpts from the interviews at the beginning of this chapter showed, in a variety of ways people noted the centrality and irreducibilty of experience in understanding the ways in which they had become parents. Martin and Liz used the terms trial and error to talk about their experience of this process. A close examination

of the ideas, practices, and resources that they brought to this process of trial and error reveal a variety of modes of experience: knowledge gleaned from others, echoes of their own upbringing – affirmed or protested, philosophical points of view, and theoretical knowledge. This highlights the broadened notion of experience that is central to radical empiricism's conception of experience, as opposed to the interior, private, and personal notion of experience that belongs to the nineteenth century introspective psychology and German Romanticism. Accompanying this broadened notion is an orientation towards what different kinds of knowledge and experience are held to be true, and what they allow people to accomplish, rather than establishing the determinants or causes of what people say and do:

> By expanding the notion of experience to include active and passive modes, facts as well as fiction, the precarious as well as the certain, the idiosyncratic as well as the shared, one goes from trying to establish foundations for knowledge to the exploration of the circumstances under which different modes of experience arise in the course of life. (Jackson, 1996, p. 25)

In particular, Martin and Liz's accounts illuminate the intersubjective and social nature of experience. Becoming a parent occurs within and between social relationships, including those from the past as well as those of the present. Some of those relationships were important for what they gave over as well as what was absent – the gaps, the longings, the wished for, the sense of loss. In highlighting the indeterminate nature of experience, Dewey reveals the way it is important to attend to the background as well as the foreground: "The visible is set in the invisible; and in the end what is unseen decides what happens in the seen; the tangible rests precariously on the untouched and the ungrasped" (Dewey, 1958, p. 14).

Martin and Liz's accounts also highlight the intentionality of experience (Husserl, 1931) as they "reached into" parenthood, oriented themselves towards it, had a directedness about them. It is in this sense that the experience of becoming a parent can be understood as a personal project (Sartre, 1968, p. 170). The project for Sartre referred to the way that a person's lived experience is determined not only by the givens of his or her situation but also by the surpassing of that situation, the transcending of it as he or she tries to bring some other possibility into being, "The meaning of conduct and its value can be grasped only in perspective by the movement which realises the possibles as it reveals the given" (Sartre, 1968, p. 152). At the same time as they lived within

the constraints of their social world, Liz and Martin actively shaped their lives through what they brought to the discourses and the choices they made as they forged something from what was given.   Young (1990, p. 13) argues that

> Subjectivity is constituted in language and interaction, a contradictory and shifting product of social processes in which a person always discovers herself already positioned. But however much we are constituted, we also have purposes and projects that we initiate; the concept of the subject retains this sense of agency as creative, as the life activity that takes up the given and acts upon it.

This sense of agency relates to both the life they were building for their child, but also their own senses of themselves as they were transformed by the experience. In this light, the project of rearing and caring for a child is both one of reproduction, re-creation, and creation.

Initially, Liz and Martin talked very positively about the hints and advice they were receiving from other people, whether they were friends, family, the Plunket nurse, the doctor, an author, etc. However, by the end of their first year as parents they felt confident of their knowledge and experience, and the advice and opinions of others was not generally sought. Advice that was unsolicited was at best tolerated. Through different routes the other parents in the research came to a similar position. So, what does privileging a discourse of personal experience or trial and error allow people to accomplish in the world, and what is effected in the shift from a subject position that was open to suggestion to one that privileges the opinions and knowledge of the immediate family?

The material from the account of Liz and Martin suggests that a discourse of trial and error affirms the knowledge of ordinary people, and specifically mothers and fathers like themselves, in contrast to that of expert knowledge. In so doing it validates a sense of themselves, as they experienced this period on a minute-by-minute basis, as active agents, caring and strategising the best they could for *their* child. It also enabled them to live *in* the "world experienced" (James, 1976), not radically split or alienated from it. They lived the experience of becoming a parent in the way that they lived the rest of their everyday life. In the account of Liz and Martin the tension between objective knowledge and knowledge acquired through practical experience is accentuated because of the theoretical knowledge available to Martin through his work. Nonetheless, even for Martin, ultimately it was a matter of figuring out "what worked best for her and us".   In many ways, then, in this particular context it can be seen as an

emancipatory discourse that was empowering in the face of a year that delivered joys, frustrations, happiness, pain, certainty, doubt, equilibrium and conflict.

At the same time it is important to acknowledge that a discourse that privileges personal experience, accompanied by a shift in subject position that values a privatised notion of the family and children, can have effects that are oppressive and constraining, particularly when those personal experiences have negative effects. For example, until recently child abuse and domestic violence have been ignored because these have been seen to be matters that are the concern of the individual family, which has a right to determine its own concerns without external interference. A privatised notion of the family underpins the liberal right argument that individual families should be responsible for the care and education of young children, and hence there is no need for any sense of broader responsibility for children and their well-being. It is salutary to return to the point made by Foucault (1984), which was referred to in Chapter Two: a discourse in itself is neither inherently emancipatory or oppressive; the point is to examine the effects of specific discourses in particular circumstances. Once again, it is important to stress that a discourse that privileges experience is not a discourse that is in some way innocent; like any other discourse, it is an artifact that is structured within multiple agendas.

In Chapter Nine, some of the discourses that were manifested in people's accounts of their experiences will be explored. However, the more immediate task of the next chapter is to reflect upon narrative as a way of commenting on experience. Once again, a narrative will be used to illuminate the nature of narrative and the relationship between narrative and experience. That narrative will also serve to to document how people experienced – tried, observed and underwent– the journey of becoming parents.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Story

Narrative

From a variety of disciplines, the pathways of narrative have been advocated as the means to consider and reflect on experience. Van Mannen (1990, p. 120) ascribes the etymological root of narrative to the Latin *gnoscere, noscere* "to know". The extent to which we can really know and understand another's experience has been an age-old preoccupation but currently, on quite different grounds, the case has been made that narratives offer a way of at least getting close to the experience of others. The most direct argument holds that narrative re-description is part of the life world and that the shape and structure of people's stories are pre-given in the shape and structures of the experiences recounted. As part of their daily life, people tell stories to each other and themselves. Whether the story begins with the moment of birth, the departure for a morning's fishing, the beginning of a quarrel, or a first encounter of a friendship enjoyed, the "stories are lived before they are told" (McIntyre, 1984, p. 212). Hence, it is argued there is a predisposition to express the story in a way that replicates the shape of the experience. Narrative then is a way of enabling us to meditate and reflect on experience without abstracting ourselves from it.

In a slightly different but related vein Charles Taylor (1989) makes a case for inevitability of narrative. He argues that we are impelled to tell stories:

> We grasp our lives in a narrative…It has often been remarked that making sense of one's life as a story is also like the orientation to the good, no optional extra; that our lives exist also in this space of questions, which only a coherent narrative can master. In order to have a sense of who we are we have to have a notion of who we have become and of where we are going. (Taylor, 1989, p. 47)

Building on this argument of the irrefutability of narrative as part of human experience, others have stressed that narratives provide a vehicle for understanding not just our own lives but how life is lived more generally. Marjorie Shostak[1] (1989, p. 239) argues:

> No more elegant tool exists to describe the human condition than the personal narrative. Ordinary people living ordinary and not-so-ordinary lives weave from their memories and experience the meaning life has for them. These stories are complex, telling of worlds sometimes foreign to

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[1] In 1981 Marjorie Shostak published *Nisa: The life and words of a !Kung woman*, which was a full-length book dedicated to the narrative of one woman. Since then many others have followed.

us, worlds that sometimes no longer exist. They express modes of thought and culture often different from our own, a challenge to easy understanding. Yet these stories are also familiar. It is just this tension – the identifiable in endless transformation- that is the currency of personal narratives, as they reveal the complexities and paradoxes of human life.

The potential of narrative for understanding the other and the self are combined with a reflexive twist in the work of Ricoeur (1969, p. 20) who suggests that narratives foster the "comprehension of the self by detour of the comprehension of the other".

Others have developed a critical turn as they argue personal narratives, at the level of the individual, reveal the way in which given rules and concepts of a society or culture are accepted or challenged. Abu-Lughod (1993, p. 8) addresses the potential of narrative to work against the "culture" concept and problematise notions of homogeneity, timelessness, and coherence. Writing about the use of narrative in interpreting women's lives The Personal Narratives Group (1989, p. 8) argue that "Both narratives of acceptance and narratives of rebellion are responses to the system in which they are originated and thus reveal its dynamics." They identify four dimensions of the context of narratives that are important in building a critical stance: the importance of the interpersonal relationships in which the story emerges, the significance of the intersection of the individual life with a specific historical moment, the importance of the frameworks of meaning through which the individual orients themselves and makes sense of the world, and the way in which the interpretation of the narrative is shaped by the context of the interpreter.

Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992, p. 6) argue for a critical theory of narrative at the level of the individual. They emphasise the formative and deformative effects of narratives on individual's lives: "Stories give direction to lives". Given that there is more than one single story to be told about a life, they argue that the relation between narratives, the discourses that constitute them and forms of life must be the focus of a critical perspective. Ochberg (1992, p. 267) goes on to draw on psychoanalysis to explore the possibilities of a "narrator's stories getting 'better', 'freer' of misunderstandings."

Narrative has also been turned to by those working in the related field of identity. Margaret Somers and Gloria Gibson (1994) make links between experience, narrative and social identity. They argue that experience is constituted through narrative and that "through narrativity we can come to know, understand and make sense of the social world and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute

our social identities" (Somers & Gibson, 1994, p. 59). They contend that by attending to time, space and analytic relationality narrative has the potential to produce an understanding of identity that is multi-layered, processual and relational. Furthermore, they argue that it provides the conceptual sinews for producing "a tighter, historically sensitive coupling between identity and agency" (ibid, p. 79). Benhabib also stresses the work of narrative in constructing a sense of self but she also alludes to the pragmatic nature of narrative. She argues that self-identity is "constituted by a tale" wherein the events of the past are "reformulated and renarrated in the light of the present and in anticipation of the future."(Benhabib, 1986, p. 349). Calhoun (1994) argues that it may suit us to think of identity as a discovery but that it is always a construction. Both Benhabib (1986) and Calhoun (1994) underscore the way in which the tale is told to others, in a shared social moment, and it is "never separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others" (Calhoun, 1994, p. 10).

Accompanying these different arguments for attending to narrative as a way of commenting on experience and identity are different views about how narratives should be managed. For some, they are of value, in and of themselves, as a standpoint from which to view the world; a description of a sense of being-in-the world that is left free of the conceptual reworking and rhetorical embellishment that accompanies intellectual endeavour. Jackson (1996, p. 8) argues:

> The fetishised products of intellectual activity all too often assume a life of their own, reinforcing the illusion that life can be possessed, controlled, captured, and pinned down. Our aim is to do justice to the lived complexity of experience by avoiding those selective re-descriptions, reductions, and generalisations which claim to capture the essence of the lived in underlying rules, or overarching schemata, yet, in effect, downplay and deaden it.

Others claim the value of assuming a different standpoint, whose turf is the use of conceptual schemes and theoretical tools to work with narratives in a way that is emancipatory. Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992, p. 14) argue for the importance of analysing narratives, in terms of psychic and social obstacles to reveal "better" stories that could be told, "in terms of a larger emancipatory interest". Writing from within sociological traditions Somers and Gibson state the value of explicating the culturally and historically specific narratives available to groups and persons to reveal the repertoire of narratives available and to bring to attention counter narratives "that do not

continue the long tradition of exclusion so characteristic of dominant ones" (Somers & Gibson, 1994, p. 74).

Polkinghorne (1995, p. 5), drawing on the work of Jerome Bruner, has distinguished two kinds of narrative inquiry. He defines "Analysis of narratives" as studies that analyse elements of narratives or stories and then produce paradigmatic typologies or categories. "Narrative analysis" he defines as studies that analyse actions, events and happenings, and this analysis then produces a narrative. It is within this second form of inquiry that my analysis is located. The narratives I have produced in this part of the thesis have been built up from conversations, interviews and observations recorded throughout my fieldwork. They incorporate the stories people told me. As in the previous and next chapter, I have attempted to stay with the detail of the accounts of the people I worked with rather than reduce their accounts to rules or generalisations. However, I have imposed the overall form of the narrative as I have attempted to show how these people explained at various points throughout the year how they knew what to do with their babies (see Appendix Six).

Somers and Gibson (1994, p. 61) argue that it is useful to distinguish between four different kinds of narratives. Ontological narratives refer to the stories that individuals use to make sense of their lives and explain who they are, and they are born of social interaction over time. Public narratives are those that are sustained and transformed by the "interpersonal webs of relationality" that exist in cultural and institutional frameworks that are larger than the individual, such as one's family, the church, the workplace, the government and the nation. Conceptual narratives are those concepts and explanations that are constructed by social researchers, often without recognition of their constructed and narrative quality and the contribution of ontological and public narratives. Metanarratives are the masternarratives, the epic dramas, within which we are embedded, such as Progress, Enlightenment, Industrialisation, and which, paradoxically, are built upon abstractions. These distinctions are useful for highlighting the different dimensions of narrative whilst underscoring the always social nature of narrative. In the narrative that follows there are echoes of all these dimensions but in the main it is the rich ground of the ontological narrative from which these accounts resonate. However, the purpose here is not to anlayse them or isolate them but to consider the relationship between experience, narrative and identity.[2]

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[2] All the narratives are anlaysed in terms of the discourses through which the people spoke their accounts in Chapter Nine.

In the material that follows I again focus on one narrative with a dual purpose: to represent the complexities of the experiences of another family over the course of a year, and to reflect on the nature of narrative and the relationship between narrative and experience. In this narrative, I am particularly interested in the continuous sense of self presented by the people I was working with amidst the variations and seeming contradictions in the stories they told about what they were doing and why they were doing it. On the basis of this narrative, and the others that are considered in Chapters Six and Eight I would argue that human experience is not intrinsically coherent. However, people are oriented towards forging a sense of cohesion through the practical activity and intersubjectivity of everyday experience. Narrative is a part of this intersubjectivity but not all of it. Watching others, doing what we see others do and the repetitious practical activity of caring for another are also a part of the process of shaping, even if only momentarily, a sense of cohesion from experience. However, more generally I would argue that a preoccupation with cohesion and contradiction and inconsistency resides more with those involved in explaining how a life is lived than those who are living life.

The family at the heart of this narrative contrast with the "norm" as it has been portrayed by the authors of contemporary childrearing literature. This family was in close contact with many, but not all, of their extended family. As was discussed in Chapter Four, these authors have argued that the advice they are giving is necessary because social changes have resulted in the break down of the extended family. They imply that if people were in a position to receive advice from the "traditional source" they would accept it. They also imply that the expert knowledge offered in their book is the same as that offered by "traditional sources", and that it too will be accepted by the reader. However, in legitimating their authorial voice in this way there is no space for any extensive discussion about the ways in which the social world in which the present generation of parents of babies lives offers different possibilities and constraints in the way they care for their families. The way the authors have used "social change" to buttress their authority, has effectively precluded any exploration about the diverse ways in which social change has been experienced by families and the responses they have made to it. As will become apparent in the discussion of the narratives that follow, there are many subtleties and nuances in people's accounts of the relationship between their own practices as parents and those of their own parents.

Nicola, Simon and Edward

At the time Edward was born Nicola was 28 and Simon 30 and they had been married for 5 years. They had lived in Spenceville all their lives and felt they were in quite close contact with their family members, particularly those living locally. Simon's parents immigrated to New Zealand from Germany in the early 1950s. He had no extended family here but his father and some of his six brothers and sisters live in the region and the rest in other parts of New Zealand. Simon had good memories of his childhood. With six siblings and living in a cul-de-sac of houses with young families there had always been lots of children to play with. On the other hand, Simon felt that with six siblings to compete with for his parents' time, "I don't really think any of us really got a lot of quality time with Mum and Dad". His father worked two or three jobs and his mother had started working part-time outside the home as the children got older. There had never been a lot of money but there was always plenty to eat. Simon's family were practicing Catholics and most of the family had been educated in the Catholic Education system. During his teenage years he had completely rejected the Church as he felt religion was "a duty and very unreal". In his early twenties he had become involved in an interdenominational church after "a real living experience of Jesus and God." Simon felt that Christian values were central to the way that he and Nicola lived their lives and the way they were constructing their family life. In particular he stressed the importance the Church placed on a good and wholesome family for the stability of society. Simon described himself as shy and lacking in confidence.

Nicola's parents had lived all their married life in the region. Her mother's family had farmed in the region for several generations and her maternal grandparents and aunts and uncles all lived locally. Nicola saw them quite frequently. Her father had moved to Spenceville from the far North after he had met Nicola's mother. Nicola had had very little contact with her father's family whom she described as hermits and peculiar. As well as running a café, Nicola's parents also had a small lifestyle block and her father was particularly interested and active in the financial markets. She had two sisters and a brother and although she felt that she had had a very happy childhood she found it odd that she could remember so little about it. Nicola had always been involved in the Church but had left the traditional Methodist Church of her childhood as a young adult to go to the interdenominational Church that she and Simon belonged to. She felt that Christian values, particularly not leading a selfish life and caring for other

people, were very central to how she lived her life. Nicola felt that Simon had had to prove himself to her family in a sense because his family had not been as well-off as her own and he had "nothing much behind him except being a really nice guy." Nicola described herself as a caring person who was quiet and not very confident.

Early Days

Before Edward was born, Nicola and Simon had attended antenatal classes at the hospital and then when they decided they wished to have a home birth they also attended the antenatal classes run by the Home Birth Association. They both read books about birth and infant care before Edward's birth, and throughout the following year Nicola continued to read widely and she discussed what she had read with Simon. A number of their family members, friends and church members had had babies and they felt that they had spent quite a lot of time before Edward was born observing people with children. Throughout the year I was doing the research, they had people living with them who needed support, including a young woman who had had a baby and stayed on for a few months.

When I first met Nicola she was working as a nurse. She took parental leave just before Edward's birth and then when he was 6 months old she returned to working as a nurse for 1 day a week and some on-call duties. Work had been such a big part of her life that she had found it really difficult to give it up completely. Despite feeling that her extended family didn't approve of mothers who worked outside the home she had decided it was important to do this for herself. When Edward was first born, Simon had a job driving that took him away from home for 13 hours a day. Simon was a trained electrician but had had a lot of different jobs for short periods of time. He was concerned that as economic times became harder it was going to become less tenable to change jobs so frequently and that such a broken work history did not look good. Some of the men in the Church counselled Simon about his work and when Edward was around 5 months old Simon became self-employed. This meant working fewer hours in a day with more flexibility in the hours worked. It also meant he was able to look after Edward when Nicola was working. Simon felt that society expected mothers to be more involved in caring for children than fathers but he himself wished to "get past that idea" and make sure that Edward had "balanced contact with both".

After Edward was born, Nicola joined La Leche League and she gradually became very involved with the organisation. Initially she belonged to the main group and borrowed books and the League magazine from their library. Later in the year she joined a support group for the League that was committed to the enrichment of the branch, as well as seeing to the practicalities of keeping the local branch going, and to support of the support group members. Nicola felt that this group had substantially influenced the way she and Simon had done things for Edward. She described them as a group dedicated to demand breast-feeding but also a certain style of parenting. Some of their parenting ideas she found a bit whacky but she appreciated the way they loved their kids, and didn't deny them what they wanted, in contrast to other people who "take a harder view". She also participated in a support group she referred to as "the Park group" because the members had all met by chance at a local park. Nicola considered this group to be much more heterogeneous in their views about parenting, and found the views and practices of some of the group members difficult to accept.

Initially, Nicola and Simon explained the way they had cared for Edward as having been driven by his needs; what happened throughout the day was determined by what he needed, particularly in terms of sleep, feeding and entertaining. They used phrases such as "going with where he is at", "working around him", "give into him", "demand feeding", "accommodate him", and "he governs your day" as they explained how they responded to his needs. Nicola and Simon also felt that what they did was shaped by their continued observation of what other parents were doing. They commented that they had followed advice given to them from people of their own age group rather than their parents' generation. Nicola felt that the two generations had completely different ideas but the main difference hinged on that matter of routines:

> Nicola: This whole routine thing, very regimented on that one and a lot
> more bottle-feeding and introducing solids earlier. I used to get
> liver juice and things like that given to me when I was three and
> four months old in my Plunket Book. I mean, I wouldn't dream
> of doing things like that to Edward (N2.p. 14)

Nonetheless, refuting the discourse did not make it disappear. The discourse of a routine for babies had been so dominant in the child rearing literature and familial practices in New Zealand that its echoes remain. The historical presence exerts an influence[3] by being a referent, and at some moments, as something that one refuses.

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[3] When my daughter was born in 1991 the Plunket Nurse, visiting when Mayrse was 4 weeks old, wrote in her Plunket Book "Breast fed on demand. Sleeps up to five hours at night but not in a routine."

This is revealed in Nicola's reported dialogue with herself over when she should be bathing Edward:

> Nicola: Because I think I was sort of struggling in my mind with the parent's generation and how they in the Plunket books had 6,10,2,6 and 10[4] they'd do things for babies and they would always give them a morning bath…(N2.p. 9)

Later on, as will become evident, Nicola and Simon changed their practices to be less driven by Edward's needs and to take more account of their own needs as individuals and as a couple.

A Side-trip: Sleep and the Lack of it

The accounts Simon and Nicola gave of their practices surrounding Edward's sleep provide some insights into the ways that this couple used their interactions with trusted others and information from the child rearing literature to adjust and justify what they were doing as Edward changed and their own needs changed. When Edward was about 6 weeks old Nicola and Simon described how they had started having Edward sleep with them in their bed. Nicola described Edward as a "very wakeful baby" and it could be anywhere between 9.00 pm and 1.00 am before he went to sleep and they were concerned that with a 5.30 am start that Simon might fall asleep at the wheel of his daily 13-hours driving. Nicola, Simon and Edward had been away on holiday with Nicola's family. It was a small house and Nicola and Simon were anxious that Edward's crying would wake the other family members so they had taken him into their bed to sleep. On their return home they tried to put Edward in his bassinet at night but after some difficulty getting him to sleep they ended up having him in bed with them. Nicola described their feelings:

> Nicola: Well it's something that we're struggling and working through at the moment because not many people do it, or not many people talk about it and you don't like to tell very many people that you do it [ ] I've been reading a book about it called *Nighttime Parenting* and that is really good, and I agree with what it says [] It's only a cultural thing. I mean these primitive cultures have their babies with them all the time. They carry them with them, they have them everywhere and it's just our culture and society that say that your baby should be in a room on its own at night, when you know it just…to me it seems so stupid when it's been

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[4] These numbers refer to the hours at which Plunket recommended infants should be fed and changed. "holding out" was attached to the 10.00 am slot in the morning and referred to holding a baby over a potty as part of toilet training.

> part of you for nine months and then all of a sudden there's that
> separation. Yeah, there's a lot of…a lot that it involves but I
> agree with a lot of it.[5] (N2.pp. 5–6)

Simon was less concerned with what other people thought and felt that other people's views on the matter of where Edward slept were not really an issue.

> Simon: He's our baby and, you know, we've got his best interests at
> heart and if his best interest is that he sleeps in our bed and that
> he feeds when he wants to, well that's our prerogative not theirs.
> (S2.p. 11)

By the time Edward was 6 months old where he slept was no longer an issue. At this stage he was mainly sleeping in his own room, although he spent the occasional night with Nicola and Simon. They were more preoccupied at this stage with when he got to sleep and how continuously he slept. Edward was very difficult to get to sleep and had been waking two to three times a night. Each night Simon was spending 2 to 3 hours singing and rocking Edward after his bath, trying to help him over the divide between wakefulness and sleep. Nicola and Simon had discussed leaving Edward to cry but they didn't think it would work nor did they think it appropriate to leave him on his own when he was distressed. Simon felt that "at 6 months it's still hard for him to distinguish between what he wants and what he needs".   He supported this position by referring to the developmental discourse of the Plunket Nurse who said that it wasn't appropriate to train babies into sleep patterns before they are about 9 months old.

When Edward was 9 months old Nicola explained how she and Simon had changed what they were doing over Edward crying when he was put to bed. She wasn't sure if it was a matter of "getting hard" or "thinking you really know what is best for them" but they had started leaving Edward to cry when he was going off to sleep. Simon accounted for it in terms of Nicola's exhaustion with the broken nights they had had since Edward had been born. With Edward becoming more "demanding" during the day he felt Nicola's level of tiredness was less tenable; he and Nicola needed their sleep too. As she explained what they were doing in terms of getting Edward to sleep, Nicola made a reference to the *Sleep Book*[6] so I asked her how she had come across it.

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[5] Nighttime Parenting by William Sears proposes that "nighttime parenting" is one of the practices of a total parenting style he refers to as attachment parenting" which includes creating a peaceful womb experience, breast feeding with child led weaning, responding promptly to baby's cries and travelling as a father-mother-baby unit (Sear, 1985:2-6). Hence this is what Nicola is referring to when she says, "there is a lot that it involves".

Nicola: Um, through friends at church, you know and I used to
think...the pastor and his wife sort of mentioned it one day that
they'd tried it on their kids and I thought...I know it was pretty
radical from what I'd think I sensed through La Leche, 'cos it's
not one of their recommended reading books and, um, it was
against their philosophies and the pastor and his wife used it and I
thought, Oh gosh, you know, fancy them using that book and I
thought Oh, if it's alright for them, it's alright for us. It was
funny, I did think that. And we borrowed it from our friends and I
thought, oh, I'll just read it, you know, and that'll be it and the
night we went away with friends whose daughter slept through
the night and then they said after Edward in the next morning Oh
he's just like a new born baby. I sort of had him in and out of my
bed all the time with me, my sleeping bag, we were in a camp,
and I thought after that...that night made me think, right ok we
are going to try it out on you. So we just did and it did work and
then I felt a conflict of, you know, the La Leche people because I
know they wouldn't do anything like that.

Judith: And so what happened when you felt that conflict, how did you
resolve it?

Nicola: I didn't (laughing). I just avoided it. I didn't sort of say anything
about it to them or anyone from there I wouldn't sort of talk
much about letting Edward cry or using it, I just wouldn't
mention it. So, it wasn't really resolved, it was just sort of
brushing it under the mat. We can't let Edward rules our lives so
I want to tend to, you know, draw back from some of the other
things they believe in and intervene a bit earlier than they
would.(N4.p. 19)

Simon ended his account of their change in practices governing Edward going to
sleep by reflecting that they had "forced sleeping habits on him more, which sort of
changed our theories a bit there."(S4.p. 22).

These accounts of Nicola and Simon about Edward's sleep illustrates the way in
which coherence was not an issue as they *lived* their experiences; their observations,
experiments and going through it. Their preoccupation was a pragmatic one of getting
some sleep for everyone; finding a *modus vivendi*, with theories being changed or used
to support their practice rather than drive it, and expert knowledge taking second place
to the knowledge of trusted others. My preoccupation as a researcher, at that
point, was a concern with how people *explain living* with contradictory discourses and I
missed the point that pragmatically it didn't matter. This episode of Nicola's story also
illuminates the reflexive dimension of narratives that permitted Nicola to not only tell

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[6] *The Sleep Book* advocates establishing clear routines around bed-time, and then, having said the final
goodnight, not to respond to calling-out or crying. They note that it is important for parents to check their

the story but to observe and comment on the self that was being created (Linde, 1993). In this instance she separated herself as narrator from herself as the protagonist of the tale, and commented on her ready acceptance of the practice of trusted others when it conflicted with what she had been previously doing. As she narrated the story, she noted the contradiction between the two different approaches, and used the narrative to evaluate the positions. Linde (1993, p. 123) argues "Narrative is thus an extremely powerful tool for creating, negotiating and displaying the moral standing of the self. This is centrally established by the evaluative component of narrative and by the social negotiation of evaluation."

Creating an Itinerary for Another

These accounts of how Nicola and Simon have cared for Edward and how they have arrived at those particular practices have been generated through focussing on the nitty-gritty of their everyday practices. Towards the end of Edward's first year we discussed in a more abstract way what sort of life they were trying to construct for Edward and what had influenced this vision. Simon wanted to create a happy, balanced, secure life for Edward and show him a lot of love and be close to him. He felt that his own upbringing, which included a certain amount of discipline, respect for elders, and attention to manners, had resulted in being a well-balanced person and making a contribution to society. This, he felt, had "moulded very much the way we're going to bring up Edward, plus our own convictions as Christians." (S4.p. 18) However, he felt that he wanted to build on his upbringing to be more open with Edward than his own parents had been, admitting to his children when he made mistakes and communicating with them about his and their feelings:

> Judith: In what way would you see it building on the way that you were brought up?
>
> Simon: Well, I think just taking it a step further and teaching them to be honest and open, because we weren't and I think that' one of the reasons I was quite shy, I never really had a lot of confidence in myself because I was never really taught to express myself or, you know, allowed to communicate what I was feeling to my parents and um...
>
> Judith: How do you think children learn those sorts of things?
>
> Simon: By example. Basically I think kids learn most things by example, by watching their parents and watching their friends and

children if they have any doubts that something might be wrong.

their friends parents and um...because they can only learn by seeing or by hearing really, or by doing and finding out whether it works or not. (S4.p. 19)

Simon described both his parents as people who didn't communicate with people, "partly because of who they were...they really didn't know how to communicate very well and so we never learnt how to, really."(S4.p. 18) He wasn't sure why his father didn't, but thought that in part it may have been due to his experiences during the war in Germany. Also, although his father had never talked about it, Simon understood from other family members that his father had been offended when his mother-in-law sent money to help him and his wife set up their own home. From that point on he had stopped talking German and spoke English without a trace of an accent, stopped seeing German friends, broke links with the family in Germany and had nothing more to do with the German community in New Zealand. His father explained these actions as part of the need to assimilate to his new country and become a Kiwi but Simon felt that it was more connected to feelings of arrogance and humiliation. Simon experienced the years that immediately followed the rupture as ones in which his parents' relationship was icy and non-communicative. His mother he considered as someone who loved her family and had been quite happy at home but "she was never one to get into any deep conversations." (S4.p. 18)

Nicola also wanted to create a life for Edward in which he felt loved and happy, whilst firmly disciplined, and with a good self-esteem. Nicola didn't think that the family that she and Simon were creating would be different from their own families except that Simon was much more involved with caring for Edward than her own father had been with his children. In contrast to the assertion of a lack of communication from Simon's father, both Simon and Nicola stressed how involved Simon's father had been with many of the daily tasks of practical caring for his seven children. Compared with Nicola's father and the fathers of many of their friends, he had been involved on a daily basis in a much wider range of caring activities. They felt he had been a good role model for Simon and his brothers, as they were all very involved with caring for their children, to a greater extent than many of their peers. Like Simon, she identified a feeling of openness and closeness as something that she felt that she had missed out on in her upbringing and yearned to foster with Edward:

> Nicola: I guess, you know, the parent in you always wants to give your child more, things that you missed out on in your upbringing, that you want to make sure they don't miss out, and my family never

talked, you know, close, you know, intimate, close things much
and I sort of hope that we don't have those sort of hang-ups, you
know, that anything from our past coming through to him like.[ ]
I don't feel close to my father and I think probably, because you
know, Mum was my mother I felt more closer to her but not
intimately close and I'd hope that we could be, you know, I'd
hope that Edward would have the freedom to talk about anything
he wanted with us. (N4.p. 15)

Both Nicola and Simon felt that having Edward had changed their lives deeply.
Simon referred to it as a "growing experience", "a challenge" and "that the biggest thing
is just the fact that you realise you'll loose your freedom." (SN5.p. 6) As he explained
this further, he alluded to the connection between his own project of the self becoming
intertwined with that of another:

Simon: It is a changing experience. Your life takes on a whole different
meaning. And you realise there's a bit more to life than just the
two of you and your own desires. And you get engrossed in
children, I think, because they are an extension of yourself, you
see yourself in them, and so you want to train them up, you know.
Hopefully, you want to do the best for them all the time.(SN5.p.
9)

As he elaborated on this sense of engagement with his child, Simon highlighted
a sense of commitment and the recognition that parents are never perfect.

Simon: You are committed to caring for them. I think that is the biggest
thing. You are committed to caring for them and, you know, you
want to do what's right, even though you may not always do
what's right, basically your heart's still with the kid and you can
look out for them. (SN5.p. 9)

Nicola too talked of the sense of growth that had accompanied becoming a mother,
along with the sense of loss of freedom:

Nicola: [] It sort of brings more out in you and you're discovering a part
of yourself that you've never done before [] But I have found the
hardest thing was just the sleep, hassling over that because we
know he hasn't slept as much as other babies and now with sleep
being so erratic through the day...that's the part I find hardest,
just sort of having enough time away from him during the day,
and I guess I do get time away from him but it is when I am
working, so I still don't feel I can ask anyone to look after him
just so I can do something pleasurable for myself, and yet I've
talked about it enough, but I just can't justify paying someone so
I can sit down at the sewing machine (laughs). (SN5.p. 7)

In these accounts, which were generated from more abstract discussions of what Simon and Nicola were doing as parents, there is a strong sense of narrative constituting identity as the events of the past are "reformulated and renarrated in the light of the present and in anticipation of the future."(Benhabib, 1986, p. 349). Their own identities were being reworked as they engaged with the project of creating a sense of self for Edward. It is interesting too, to note the gaps, the discontinuities and the contradictions with the accounts that were generated from the description of the nitty gritty daily care of Edward. For Nicola in particular there seemed to be a greater rupture with the practices of daily care that her mother had followed, whereas the more abstract discussions revealed a sense of doing some things similarly but also changing some. Simon did many of the things on a daily basis that his own father had done, but was clearly seeking a qualitatively different relationship through communicating more.

Their accounts of how they responded at different times to the issues concerned with Edward's sleep are useful for reflecting on the way in which the strong emphasis on the social construction of narrative and, from that, identity, tends to occlude any recognition of the contribution of the body and the way that bodily processes are shaped by life and shape life. This initial account of Nicola and Simon's should caution us against forgetting the point made by Dollard in 1935 when he outlined criteria for evaluating life histories (cited in Polkinghorn, 1995, p. 11). Dollard argued that it is also important to attend to the embodied nature of people, and to include the bodily dimensions in people's explanations. More recently, Connell (1995, p. 386), writing about sexuality, has argued that "Bodily processes are drawn into social relations". He highlights the way that pushed to its logical limit the social constructionist position, which concerns itself only with discourse, inscription of the body and subject positioning, makes the body disappear. "This definition evacuates rather than resolves problems about bodies; which are certainly surfaces to be written on, but are also busy growing, ageing, reproducing, getting sick, feeding well or badly, getting aroused or turned off, and so on." (Connell, 1995, pp. 386–87). In this context, these points relate not so much to the bodily dimensions of Nicola and Simon, as the narrators, but to Edward, the protagonist of their tale. Edward's bodily needs were inescapable as he was busy, amongst other things, being wakeful and active. That they choose to articulate their response to his bodily needs in a way that seemingly put him in control can be related to the competing discourses of child-centred versus parent-driven care. These themes will be returned to later in this chapter, and in Chapter Nine. For our

purposes here, Edward remains as a baby with a body, and so is a reminder that narratives are not purely fabricated from experiences borne of the social.

Further on the Journey: A Change of Route

Two years after I finished doing the initial fieldwork for this research, Nicola rang me to say that she had changed some of the ways she was doing things as a parent and she felt it important that I record these changes, and the way that her thinking had changed. At this stage Edward was 3 years old and their second child, Grace, ten months old. She initially described the changes as arising from the discussions that she and Simon had had after reading a book, *Preparation for parenthood*, and listening to 8 cassette tapes that accompanied the book. However, as the interview progressed and Nicola looked back over the previous year she identified other reading and discussions as also contributing to the change. She had borrowed *Preparation for parenthood* from a friend from her Church. The book was written by an American couple who travel throughout Australasia running courses and workshops on parenting, and they had come to Spenceville not long after Nicola had first seen the book. She started off feeling quite sceptical about their approach. Statements like "fussy babies are made not born" had made her feel quite cautious. Both Simon and Nicola listened to the tapes and then Nicola went to a workshop run by the authors.

> Nicola: We started to listen, and over two or three weeks we talked
> together about it ourselves and could see where they were coming
> from because at first we didn't really agree with what they were
> saying until we heard their reasons why. Like, they talk about
> God being a god of order, like how he made the world in seven
> days...there was an ordered pattern and the Adams (the authors)
> see the family life as being one of order and routine for having
> things running well so therefore they are against demand feeding
> and into routine feeding and they call it parent-controlled feeding.
> They say right from as soon as the baby is born stick it in a
> routine and don't just feed it when it cries and from that routine
> the baby's metabolism stabilises and they get used to knowing
> when they are fed and when they are not fed and they are more
> contented, so they are not going to be demanding on you because
> they know their routine and they are secure in that and will sleep
> through the night on their own. [] It is sleep feed play sleep feed
> play over a four hourly cycle so by 4-6 weeks they are dropping
> the late night feeding and the early-morning feeding. By about
> 12 weeks of age they might be going to bed at 7.00 and sleeping
> for 12 hours which is great and it is a lot earlier than a lot of

people with demand feeding, you are not going to achieve the same thing. It doesn't matter if they are bottle or breast fed, their body has kind of metabolised into the way they digest their food because it is a regular thing.

Judith: That is quite different from what you had been doing,

Nicola: Yeah, well none of the books that I have read when Edward was little or before he was born were talking about routine feeding, it was sort of an old-fashioned thing that our parents did with us, you know, like thirty years ago that was what they did and I just thought it was an old fashioned thing and the only books that mentioned it seemed to be the old Plunket books. (N6.p. 1)

On the basis of book and the tapes Nicola made a distinction between what she saw as a parenting style that was driven by the demands of the child and one that was controlled by the parents. With a demand-fed child she felt that the parents catered to their needs all the time and their life revolved around the child, but with feeding times and routines that were set by the parents they were the ones who were in control. This new approach involved "putting a bit of distance between you and your child" but she saw it as something that would be to her advantage in the long run. Nicola felt that this new approach for parenting also addressed the relationship between the mother and the father in a way that the other approach had neglected:

Nicola: One comment they made in the set of cassettes was who sits in the back seat of the car when you have a new baby. They say not to put the baby in the front rear facing and the mother in the back. They said in a marriage the husband and wife come first, that relationship, I know the parent-child relationship is important but the marriage comes before the children and with this whole programme they are wanting to keep that in front first. (N6.p. 3)

As she worked through describing the differences in the two approaches she continued to emphasise her initial scepticism and cautiousness. So, I asked her again about any conflicts she had felt between the different views. She felt that with a second child you don't get as much advice and that you are left to get on with things more. Also, she wasn't going to La Leche meetings very regularly so there hadn't really been any conflict. However she did feel that she had to be a bit careful about what she said and how she said it to other people because "everyone likes to think that the way they do things is the best way." (N6.p. 4)

Although Nicola had identified the changes in their practice as parents as arising from the book she had recently been reading, she had read lots of other books that we had discussed that hadn't brought about this kind of change so I asked her about it more closely.

> Judith: What was the main reason that you changed what you were doing. At first you came across the information but what do you think it was that helped you decide to use the information rather than thinking oh that is an interesting approach?
>
> Nicola: I could see where the people were coming from and because we are a Christian family and they way they explained the reasons for what they were doing I could see it made sense from that point of view, from the Bible point of view. So that would be one reason, plus the fact that you were, the parent, you were the one meant to be in control not the child bullying you, and the long term outcome of it all was to the parent's advantage and the child's advantage and also the fact that you are not tired plus you knew where you were for the day with your routine. So all of those things were an advantage. (N6.p. 3)

Later in the interview she went on to elaborate what she saw as three strands that had come together for her in terms of her parenting in the previous year. There had been the book and cassettes we had been discussing, another reading course she had done with a friend that was also biblically based, and then a course she had done at her church on parenting. As she reflected on this she also identified a change in her own thinking about her role as a mother. This led her to reading that she and Simon ad been doing on the family, more generally, which she identified as contributing to their new approach to parenting:

> Nicola: It is also that one thing that was a turning point for me last year was when the children were a bit of a drag or a drain or hard going, I learnt to be able to see past that. And everything that I am doing for them, no matter how regular and routine, is building something into them. And you don't have a second chance like you think you do because there are all these years ahead of you but everyday turns into a week and the time is gone. So I do realise now how I speak to them and what you do every day is important. And one sort of thing leads on to the next. Simon and I have been reading a couple of books by Mary Pride who is an ex-feminist and it is really interesting because having been a feminist and now not and she has written a lot of books ...and she is really into mothers staying at home and if she is going to work to work from home and home ministries and a lot of things that she does for children. And we have read a couple of her books and that has even changed our attitudes to family life even more.

> So, we have been doing a lot of learning in this whole area.
> (N6.p. 4)

In this telling of a change in their parenting practices Nicola has woven together several accounts. Linde (1993, p. 6), writing of the accounts that she can give of why she became a linguist, argues

> ...the more such accounts I am able to give, the more I make my being a linguist coherent with the entire fabric of my life. The existence of so many multiple accounts seems to assume that the choice of profession is well-motivated, richly determined, and woven far back in time....It helps guard against the chilling possibility that one's life is random, accidental, unmotivated.

Looking back over the various stories that Nicola has created there seems to be a movement towards greater unity in the expert knowledge and trust relations that she and Simon referred to. Initially, the expert knowledge that Nicola drew on came through her involvement with La Leche Group, although she had always maintained a selective stance towards their practices. With their second child, the expert knowledge was coming to Nicola via classes, groups and seminars organised by the church. It aligned more closely with the practices and views of the trusted others in their church community and had become more "coherent with the entire fabric of" her life. However, as her accounts illustrate, this was by no means a smooth or even process and was not without its difficult moment. This narrative illuminates the way that

> A coherent life of experience is not simply given or a track laid down in the living. To the extent that a coherent identity is achievable at all, the thing must be made, a story-like production with many pitfalls, and it is constantly being revised, sometimes from beginning to end, from the vantage point of some new situation of the 'I' that recollects. (Crites, 1986, p. 160)

Throughout our discussions and time together there was never any sense that the gaps, contradictions and discontinuities in the accounts of Nicola and Simon led to an incohesive sense of self. Rather, they presented a continuous sense of self that they saw as still being "discovered" through the process of being a parent. These narratives reveal lives that proceed without the need to explain or resolve all contradictions to maintain a sense of coherence. It may be that intense and frequent talk about babies with other parents, friends, neighbours, grandparents, researchers or, sometimes anyone who will listen, contributed to a sense of cohesion or integrity. Also, following the argument that the "story is lived before it is told", some of the cohesion must follow

from the continuing, daily, sometimes hourly, tasks of caring for an infant that, whether carried out in a routine or less scheduled manner, are repeated again and again.

In Nicola's narrative of the evolution of her parenting practices, the spatial, temporal and relational aspects of identity are highlighted. Her narrative identity was "constituted and reconstituted in time and over time" (Somers & Gibson, 1994, p. 67), within the larger matrix of relations that she lived her life within, and against the backdrop of particular stories from her life that resonated deeply for her. This emphasises the importance of seeking the intelligibility of social action through recognising that "people are guided to act by the relationships in which they are embedded and the stories with which they identify – and rarely because of the interests we impute to them" (Somers & Gibson, 1994). Further illustration of these points is provided in the following chapter, where four more narratives of the experience of becoming parents are presented.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Four More Stories

In this chapter I present four more narratives about the experiences of families in the first year of their children's lives. As I have written these I have felt a tension between my habits as a social scientist and the predisposition of those recounting their lived experiences to tell me what mattered to them. My discipline has oriented me to working with the fieldwork and interview material in a systematic way to make the narratives include the same facets and categories, preferably in the same order to facilitate comparisons and cohesion. However, people's daily accounts of their lives are not so habitually disciplined. We are predisposed by the particular nature of our lives to take up quite differently the various facets of an experience, such as becoming a parent, that in the broadest sense may be seen to be shared. As I tried to craft the material into narratives which followed a particular order, the sense of weight that people had given to different aspects of their experience was lost. Hence, in the narratives that follow, I kept in mind certain aspects that I wished to cover (see Appendix Six), but the structure of the narratives themselves has been more determined by the concerns that dominated the accounts that people gave. People's lives and preoccupations are different and so are the structures of these narratives. To return to the point made in the previous chapter, "the stories are lived before they are told."

The first two narratives are similar to the two already covered in that these families were embedded in dense networks of family, friends, work mates, church members, and neighbours who were having children. The social milieus of the other families in the final two narratives were not so saturated with new parents and young babies, but for quite different reasons. In these, and the narratives in the previous chapters I have provided details of the living arrangements of the extended families to illustrate the variety of family forms that exist under the name of "the family".

Christine, Richard and David

Christine was 25 and Richard was 29 when David was born. Both of them had lived with their families in small towns in the central North Island, shifting as their fathers' work had changed. In their late teens they had moved to Spenceville, Richard with his family and Christine on her own. They had met through a sports club they belonged to and had become engaged and married shortly after they met. They had been married for three years before deciding to start a family. In the early stages of Christine's pregnancy they had sold their house and then lived with various friends and family throughout the pregnancy and the first months of David's life. Two of the families they stayed with also had young babies. When Christine and Richard finally moved into their own home it was in a street in which there were other close friends with a young family. Christine had been nursing, and her job was being held for 6 months. She had decided to wait and see how things went after David's birth before committing to going back on a part-time basis.

Christine described her own family as a "hotch-potch". As her mother Dorothy put it, "There are mine, his, ours and theirs." Dorothy herself had grown up in an orphanage, run by nuns, where her mother worked as a maid. Dorothy's mother had been disowned by her family for becoming pregnant out of marriage and the nuns at the orphanage had taken her in, giving her board in return for work. When she was 11, Dorothy was taken out of school and set to work in the Nursery where she stayed until she was 27. Then, pregnant, she left to go and make a life in another part of the country. In a period where there was no economic or social support in New Zealand for single mothers, she had worked during the day and had two cleaning jobs at night to keep herself and her child. Eventually Dorothy got a job as housekeeper for Ray, who was a widower with three children. After some time Dorothy and Ray married, adopted a child and also had another three children of their own. Christine described Dorothy as very bitter about her childhood, claiming that she was always hungry, didn't have shoes to wear, and was treated badly at times in the orphanage. Christine felt that this explained why Dorothy had given her children so many toys and loved spending so much money on them. Her father too, had been very poor in his childhood. He was born during the depression and his father was alcoholic. His mother

had died at a young age from too much hard work keeping her family of five together. However, Christine felt that he had experienced his hardships quite differently from her mother:

> Christine: You'd think, ugh what a rotten childhood but the stories he tells you, you just get the feeling that they had so much fun and being a kid was wonderful. All the little stories, you can sort of imagine them in your head. (C4.p. 8)

For Christine, her family had never functioned as a family, and no one really belonged. Her mother had favoured her own children and her father had tried to keep the peace, so his children had felt left out. She felt that her parents had never really been able to offer their children the interest and encouragement they needed.

> Christine: I don't think you should stand behind your children and push them but Mum and Dad never expressed any interest at all in what we were doing with our lives. It didn't really matter. I think they were just so busy getting 7 of us off their hands and surviving that it didn't really matter what we did just as long as we did something and left, you know. And I think that's going to change the way I deal with David. I want to make sure that he decides to do something and doesn't just drift, because I just sort of drifted from one thing to another and found myself a nurse and realised perhaps it wasn't really what I wanted to be. But well that's what I chose and it was a bit late, so just do it, sort of thing. (C4.p. 7)

When Christine had gone to boarding school she had gone home to her friends' families for holidays and as she listened to the discussion her friends had with their parents she realised that "there's life outside Hawera" and "there's more to life than just drifting".

> Christine: I had been brought up in a family where just getting through each day was the main objective (laughs). You know who is going to try and kill someone today, you know, pull these kids apart and let's get on with life. To suddenly end up in people's homes around the dinner table where people really wanted to know about you and what you thought and it dawned on me, I mean this is only 13, 14, that I really didn't have much to say (laughs). That I didn't really know who I was, or where I was going or anything. I mean, apart from the answers that I had two sisters and four brothers and Dad did this and Mum did that and ran out of conversation really. Conversation was never really part of anything at home, you know, we never sort of sat around the table and talked about things. There was always

> somebody fighting with somebody else and Mum and Dad spent all
> their time pulling us apart. Then I suddenly realised, well you know,
> families don't only operate like that, some families actually sit
> around and discuss the state of Iran and Iraq (laughs), the price of tea
> in China…(C4.p. 10)

Although they lived in another city, Christine and Richard saw Christine's parents regularly, and felt that despite a large generation gap they got on quite well. Christine missed not having the practical support from her mother that she saw some of her friends get from their mothers as they looked after their grandchildren to give their daughters a break. However, she also felt that she had actively tried to construct a "separate life" from her parents and Richard's parents. Christine maintained close contact with a number of her brothers and sisters but some of them had nothing to do with each other. She described herself as someone with lots of bright ideas for things to do and ways to do things, but after doing things she often lay awake at night thinking "there's got to be a better way to do that" and would then do whatever it had been differently.

Richard described his own family as very close-knit. His parents were both from very large families and they had gone on to have five children. Richard had had some contact with his grandparents but very little contact with his numerous cousins. Sport had been very important in Richard's life and he had been involved in playing in Rep teams from a very young age; "sport was everything". His parents had been very supportive of his involvement in sport, organising much of the family life around his sporting commitments. One of his primary school teachers, Robyn, who was also very involved with sport, had influenced Richard a lot and remained a source of support and friendship. Richard's parents had also come to know Robyn well, and had sought his advice when they were despairing of Richard's progress at secondary school.

> Richard:He gave me security away from home, as much as anything,
> because things were a bit strained at times at home because Mum and
> Dad, you know, money was never hell of a free and Dad's
> occupation often led to a fair bit of boozing and that and I used to go
> and see a lot of him. (R4.p. 2)

Richard felt that the family moving to Spenceville in his last years of secondary school had been a turning point in his life. Moving away from a small rural town and

meeting boys who were talking of going to university started Richard thinking about doing something in life other than doing what his father had for a job. After completing a degree in business studies at university Richard had got a job working as a Real Estate Agent in the rural sector. He really enjoyed his work and thought that he would continue with it, although maybe move more into the finance side of things. Richard described himself as "easy-going, still a bit sports mad but generally pretty caring."

Richard and Christine saw Richard's parents often and Richard saw them on his own as well. Richard felt that he was struggling to establish what kind of relationship to have with his parents. He felt that Christine had hinted that he was too oriented towards his mother and father and now that someone else had suggested it too he was beginning to wonder if it was a problem, although he had never really thought of it like that:

> Richard: You try and split yourself down the middle where you shouldn't.
> [ ] Home is this here now. (R4.p. 15)

Both Christine and Richard had been raised as Anglicans but had left the Church as teenagers. Christine had recently joined an interdenominational Church, which Richard attended to support her but he didn't consider himself a Christian. Christine had a number of close friends in the Church but also had a group of close friends who she met while doing her nurse training. Richard played a number of sports, including representative soccer, and so was frequently committed with sport at the weekend.

Before David was born, Christine and Richard had gone to antenatal classes at Parent Centre, read a few books, and talked to friends about their experiences of having a baby. Many of their friends, members of Richard's soccer team and people attending their church were either pregnant or had just had babies. As Christine saw it "Just about everybody's pregnant or having babies." Their brothers and sisters had had children but they hadn't discussed their experiences much with them, although Christine and Richard had had a lot of contact with one set of nieces and nephews.

Christine looked after David during the day throughout the week. At the weekends, when it wasn't the soccer season, Richard and Christine shared caring for David. Richard got up to David when he woke during the night to bring him to Christine for feeds and to change his nappies after the feed. When possible, Richard came home at lunchtime to see

Christine and do things for David. Occasionally after work he did some of the domestic chores and looked after David so that Christine could get the shopping done more easily.

Initially, Richard and Christine described knowing how to care for David as a matter of trial and error, reading Penelope Leach, asking the Plunket Nurse, discussing things with each other and with their friends, listening to what others were doing at the Parent Centre support group, and seeing how other parents did things. David's sleep was an issue at various points for Christine and Richard, and this again provides an interesting insight to the ways that parents selectively took guidance from a variety of sources until they felt more confident of their own decisions. When David was 8 weeks, Christine drew on Penelope Leach's advice on the sleep needs of babies to back-up her decision not to try endlessly to get David to sleep during the day but to arrange things so he could be comfortable and watch her do things:

> Christine: [] She says that if they need sleep they'll sleep no matter where they are, and if they don't need sleep there's no way you can get them to sleep. So I thought well it's pointless standing for half an hour rocking him in the pram if he's not going to sleep anyway. I may as well be doing something else. (C2.p. 7)

Early on David more or less went to sleep straight away at night and if he didn't, rocking him or carrying him would get him to sleep. However, he started waking frequently at 3 months, and feeling that that was quite normal as part of a growth spurt they "just went with the flow and fed him more". But at 4 months David was still waking frequently during the night and Christine and Richard were trying to settle him by feeding him and cuddling him:

> Christine: We didn't even know what we were doing but you just try different things, and whatever works you just go with that.(CR3.p. 3)

At this stage, the Plunket Nurse suggested that he should be sleeping from 6.00 pm until 6.00 am but because he had never done that Christine and Richard "abandoned" that suggestion and continued with cuddles and feeds, whatever would settle him more easily. However, Christine was getting exhausted with the continual waking and feeding. At his 6-months check Christine said that the Plunket Nurse had asked her again if David was waking in the night:

> Christine: [ ] I said yes, so she asked how many times and I (laughing) sheepishly replied about two or three times, and she said what do you do and I said I feed him, in this little weak voice. And she sort of looked at me sternly as if to say you know you shouldn't be doing that. But she was actually quite good, she sort of said he didn't need any of that, but if that's what we were happy with well then we could continue and she just ran through all the options...different things we could do. (CR3.p. 7)

The Plunket Nurse said they could try giving "B grade comfort", which was just cuddling and singing, or there were two kinds of sleep programmes they could follow. One programme, for babies over 9 months, required parents to leave the baby to cry until they cried themselves to sleep. The other, for younger babies[1], required parents to leave the baby to cry for 10 minutes before they went in to settle them. Once the baby had stopped crying the parent was to leave again and, if the crying started again, to wait another 10 minutes before going to settle the baby again. Christine and Richard had initially tried the second programme and changed to the other after the first night. They felt that going in continually had upset him more. They had just seen the friends they were staying with use the first programme successfully with their daughter, and two other families they knew well had just been successfully through it with their babies. However, proceeding with the first programme hadn't been easy. Every night for a week David had cried for up to 2 hours, and Christine and Richard had alternated between being the one who was trying to convince the other they should go in and pick him up, and being the "strong one" who said that they needed to follow the programme:

> Christine: I am really glad we persevered because there were lots of times...well, yeah, just about every night we wanted to go into him but...and especially when we've got three sets of friends that had done it and Sarah's little boy took one night and Claire's little girl and Sandy's little girl both took two nights and here was David taking more than a week and we were thinking, Oh no (laughing) trust us, sort of thing, but yes we got there in the end, but you still have nights like this when he wakes. (CR3.p. 9)

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[1] Christine said that the programmes were designed specifically for children of different ages because before 9 months there could be reasons that they were crying such as teeth or hunger. By 9 months there are not the same teething problems and they have started solids so they shouldn't be hungry. So if you have checked their nappies and that they are not too cold or too hot, and given them a cuddle, then there is no excuse for crying.

Four months later David's sleep was no longer a problem. Christine said they were now "older and wiser and we know what we're doing", so no longer "stuck religiously" to letting him cry if he woke. They judged it at the time in terms of what else was going on, such as teething:

> Judith: So did you think the strategy had been useful?
> Christine: Yeah, it was good because at that stage we couldn't distinguish whether he needed us or whether he was having us on and he was waking too much to feel sane so we just needed to do that, so, yeah, it was good at the time, really good. But now we feel older and wiser and we know what we are doing (laughing). (CR4.p. 26)

Christine had initially gone along to the Parent Centre support group that had formed from their antenatal class, but when David was 6 months she decided not to go anymore. She felt that the other mothers, who were older than her, were very competitive about their babies and also about their careers before becoming mothers. She felt that they were going about raising their babies in a professional and business-like manner, continually referring to expert knowledge to show they knew best. Although these women were determined that their babies were not going to rule their lives, Christine thought that their lives were dominated by their babies' routines. She appreciated that David's routine was important and that he should get enough sleep but she also needed to get out of the house and to get things done. She reflected that when she had four or seven kids she wouldn't be able to wait to go out until somebody could relieve her:

> Christine: Yeah, so you get all the old fuddy duddies having their first babies at the age of 32, 33 and sort of trying to be very clinical about it instead of just sort of she'll be right mate, just go with the flow. (CR3.p. 20)

Christine eventually met weekly with three other friends and their children. These were friends she had made whilst training to be a nurse. They often met on a Friday night, enjoying a bottle of wine and take-aways while their husbands met socially with work mates or friends from their sports teams. Christine really relished their time together. One of these friends in particular she enjoyed being with because they had such a similar style of parenting and expectations of their children's behaviour. Christine felt the knowledge they had gained about children's development through their nurses' training was what had given them this common ground.

The companionship and experience of the other parents with whom they had lived while their house had been built was also valued by both Richard and Christine, but particularly Christine. All the shifting around and finishing of their house and section before moving in had added stresses to their initial experiences of family life. After two shifts, and one to go before finally moving into their new house, Christine was really ready to have her own home:

> Christine: I actually don't even feel like a family yet, its quite funny, people say, you know when they're holding David, I'll give you back to Mum now (laughing) and it's really quite strange because I don't really feel like Mum. I mean that might not happen, even when we move into the house, it might not have anything to do with that but, um, I just feel like when we get time to ourselves we can sort of be a family again. (CR2.p. 16)

However, Christine also spoke very positively of the opportunities to see other mothers caring for their babies, to "have a model right there". Often she found herself doing the same thing and then modifying it as it suited her, or deciding not to do what the other mothers were doing. At the end of all the moving Christine commented on the need "to get to know Richard all over again with David." After some time in their own home both Christine and Richard felt that the opportunity to live with other people and learn and share with them had been really special.

> Christine: In some ways, like we found it really hard moving around and there's even times down here you wish you were in a street where you didn't know the neighbours and you could just mind you own business and that but I think looking back, I don't think I'd like to do it differently because we've just been so lucky really. Having people there that are sort of almost one step ahead and you can take all the good bits and all the bad bits and mix them all up and get a nice recipe for yourself, it's …it's quite handy…(CR3.p. 31)

Christine thought that she and Richard had quite different ideas about the kind of life that they were trying to create for David, and that this was because of their different upbringings:

> Christine: I think the thing that I missed about growing up was knowing for sure that I was loved. You just know that Mum and Dad love you because they're Mum and Dad but we were never sort of told that and never really felt it in big way and I think that's something I want really quite badly for David, just for him to know that we'd always

> love him, no matter what he does, no matter who he ends up being, that he's always loved and just for him to hear it, not just to know it because I'm his Mum but to hear because I tell him that I love him and I think he's important. (C4.p. 11)

Christine felt that Richard's parents had always thought he was fabulous, and although his family had had their ups and downs, "because every family does", he had grown up very secure, knowing who he was and where he was going and so he thought that it all "comes naturally but, you see, I've seen the other side of the coin and it doesn't just happen". She also thought that men, in general, weren't so concerned with those sorts of things:

> Christine: [ ] They deal more with the factual than the feeling and so for him he's got all sorts of plans about David's school and he's going to be a lawyer or a doctor and earn lots of money and David's going to play soccer, be an All White or a cricketer or something. Whereas my plan…my plans for David deal more with who he's going to be not what he's going to do, so we're putting this hopefully into the right mix (laughs) (C4.p. 16).

Richard felt that he was trying to create a secure life for David, one in which he saw his mother and father having a good relationship:

> Judith: What do you mean by security?
> Richard: Well obviously money-wise and just also security for kids that they can know that they can come home and that Mum and Dad are going to want to see them and love them and that sort of carry on, and a supportive one I suppose. (R4.p. 18)

He felt that in creating a family with Christine he was building on aspects of the way his parents had reared him: understanding how to perservere with things and the importance of the closeness of the family and support. However, he had strong memories of his own parents' arguments and "wasn't a fan of that". Although he would argue with anyone on a general basis, he struggled with arguing with someone he loved.

As the year progressed, there was a clear sense from Christine and Richard that they felt quite confident about how they were raising David and that because he was their son it gave them the right to decide what to do with him. By the time David was 7 months other people's ideas were still interesting and it was still good to talk to other people about different options. However, Christine and Richard felt confident about what they wanted to

do with David and what they wanted for themselves: "he is our son and we decide what we want to do with him."(CR3.p. 15)

At the end of David's first year, Christine reflected that basically she had felt much happier being a mother once she had accepted that what she was doing for David was just fine and that she didn't need to keep looking over her shoulder to see what other mothers were doing. She had also felt happier after she and Richard had discussed the different impact that David had had on their lives. Christine felt that she had given up a lot of things and while Richard was very supportive and involved with David he hadn't had to give up his work or his sport or the social functions that accompanied work and sport. Richard acknowledged this which made Christine feel less taken for granted and she also set about carving out some time for herself everyday, putting David in a creche while she did aerobics. Christine also went back working part-time when David was nearly a year old. While she enjoyed it, she and Richard hadn't felt good about the way David was so miserable being left at home with a caregiver. After that, Christine did relief work which was less regular and on those occasions David went to a friend's place where she looked after several young children and David was very happy.

Val, Tony and Charlotte

Val and Tony both turned 30 not long after Charlotte was born. They had known each other at school and had been married for 9 years before deciding to start a family. Both felt that they had managed to travel, go out a lot, have good holidays and do a variety of interesting things together in those years. They had both grown up in the Waikato and had lived for the last 10 years either in or around Spenceville.

Val had very happy memories of her childhood. She recounted the way her mother and father did lots of things with her and her younger brother and sister, including a regular Sunday outing. She felt they had been encouraged and supported to do the activities they were interested in and that her parents always had time for them; there was never a feeling that they were a nuisance to them. Her father died of a heart attack when she was 12. Her mother, June, returned to work to support the family and her younger brother was sent to boarding school. Val felt that it had been difficult for them all to adjust to the sense of loss and separations that had accompanied her father's death. June died when Val was 23 and

she felt that losing both of her parents at an early age had affected her life. She wanted herself and Tony to be able to provide a home-base for her younger brother and sister in the absence of her parents. She described the rest of the extended family as very close, and she and Tony saw them frequently.

Val had been guided into her career as a nurse by her mother and her mother's friends. They felt that nursing and teaching were suitable work for young women. Val felt that she hadn't ever "had any great passion for it. [ ] I think that you either did that or stayed in Cambridge and married and had children, that was about what it amounted to." (V4.p. 7) Although she had been directed into "this channel", Val thought that she was "lucky enough to have to have the opportunity to get out and see what was around the corner" whereas her friends were still in Cambridge, with three or four children, "living the life that our parents lived which I would have hated". (V4.p. 11) Val felt that her own mother had never really had the opportunity in life to do interesting work. June's father had told her that her place was at home with her mother. However, as a young woman June had worked in an unskilled position with an airline and so had travelled quite a lot and was in her early 30s before she married and started having children. Val described herself as a "fairly outgoing, fairly independent person who likes to enjoy life and get the most out of life that I can." (V4.p. 26)

Tony was from a family of six children. His mother was from a small family and when she was very young her mother had been ill so she had gone and lived with an aunt for 4 years. Tony's father had been one of 10 children, some of whom were cousins who had been adopted when their parents had died. When Tony was a child, some of his father's brothers and sisters lived with them. However, that had changed when he was 9 and his father died. At that point the family had had to move from their farm to town and his mother had struggled financially to keep the family together. Disagreements over the handling of the trust for the family farm had damaged relationships. Tony had had very little contact with his extended family since his father's death, and while he saw some of his brothers and sisters others he had very little contact with. He felt that his family was a "bit of a disaster [ ] just circumstances really. [ ] I guess it all fell apart to some degree when Dad died." (T4.p. 12) He felt that his father's death and growing up in a rural Maori community had both influenced his life. He spoke in particular of one Maori teacher who

he described as a "real Maori", whose honesty and discipline he respected. He felt that people sometimes reacted to the way he spoke about Maori but he didn't intend it to be negative or derogative.

When he left school, Tony had studied agriculture and then had a series of positions working on farms and share milking. He had wanted to own his own farm but at a certain point he and Val had decided that the farms they would be able to buy and develop were not in places where Val would be able to keep her career going. Instead they bought a small "hobby" farm and Tony got a job in Insurance. He also had some rental properties he had purchased and developed with a group of workmates. Tony often worked doing the physical labour on these properties at night, and on the weekend he also worked on the farm. Tony described himself as "Jekyll and Hyde, sometimes. I think. I've been called that more than once. [ ] I think I can be quite nice and caring and a sincere person, some of the time. Um, some of the time not."(T4.p. 17). He thought he was not very tolerant but on becoming a father he had been pleasantly surprised at how he was able to control his temper.

Before Charlotte was born Val and Tony had gone to classes at Parent Centre and had read a few books in preparation for the birth. Val had continued to run and swim throughout her pregnancy because she enjoyed it and as a means of being fit for giving birth. A few of their friends had just started having children and they gave a bit of advice. However, Val and Tony felt they had not had a lot of contact with babies though Val did have some contact with babies through her work. Before Charlotte's birth both Val and Tony stressed the way that pregnancy and having a baby had been interpreted in a very negative way. Tony felt there was a general lack of "enthusiasm" for the experience of having children in the literature, and in what was said in the antenatal classes.

> Val: Oh people go on about the negative things I find. Well I would prefer
> not to do that, I'd try to look for the positive things. I'd try not to
> sort of think that there'll be those dreadful nights and wind and
> colicky babies and all those sorts of things you hear about.
> Tony: You hear it all the way through. Actually, it is the same with
> pregnancy. Everybody thinks it's an illness, really, it's treated by a
> lot of people as an illness. (TV1.p. 11)

When Charlotte was born, Val took 3 months parental leave. Initially, Val felt that she "just knew" how to care for Charlotte but also felt that when something was wrong she

could "think back to the tricks of the trade" and the hints she had picked up through her work. But she also found that "It's all very different when it's your baby." (V2.p. 7) Val also asked the midwife and visiting Public Nurse questions. In particular, she had asked them about Charlotte's allergy to cow's milk. She had been supplementing breast feeds with a bottle as she didn't have enough milk herself but Charlotte had reacted to the formula.

Val expressed frustration at the pressure put on people to breast-feed and the lack of information and support for bottle-feeding in antenatal classes. She had thought about it before Charlotte was born and had decided that if she couldn't breast feed, bottle-feeding would be fine. She felt however that a lot of people got very upset when they couldn't continue breast-feeding. She also felt that people were then lost as to what to do when it came to bottle-feeding. The mothers she saw through her own work tended to bottle feed but they were also unlikely to have attended any antenatal class where they would have been told what to do. During her time of parental leave, Val attended a play group that had formed from the Parent Centre antenatal class. She enjoyed swapping notes with the other mothers but also tried "quite hard to try and get off the subject of babies and back onto something else."(TV2.p. 13)

Tony felt that he had known how to care for Charlotte because "a lot of it's just common sense". He also thought that living in the country and dealing with animals all the time had a certain bearing on knowing what to do. Tony drew on his farming experience as he recounted his frustration with the information that was given out in the antenatal classes about breast feeding.

> Tony: Being someone who's milked cows, I know that some people produce more milk than others. It's as simple as that and, ah, you know, OK I quite agree that breast milk is the best, but if you haven't got it you haven't got it. You can eat all the peanuts you like (laughs) but if you're not up to it you are not up to it and that's as simple as that. [ ] That was one thing, you know the exercise is another thing. You know, why shouldn't you exercise, why shouldn't you get back into shape like Val has in five weeks. It might have decreased the milk production a wee bit, I think it probably has but it has certainly paid off dividends in other ways.
> Judith: Psychologically?
> Tony: Yeah, that's right. (TV2.p. 8)

Both Val and Tony described Charlotte as "fitting in with us" and felt that they had worked hard at establishing a routine by the time she was 6 weeks old, so it would be easier for them to organise their days.

> Val: I think that before Charlotte was born we talked about things, you know, about how it is important for us to still try and carry on doing the things we were doing and not let Charlotte change our lives too much and, you know, basically getting Charlotte to fit in with us rather than being manipulated by her, you know. (TV.p. 6)
>
> Tony: Well it hasn't been a major hassle really. We've tried to get Charlotte to fit into our life and lifestyle, more that the other way. [ ] So we've tried to let her upset our life as least as possible and so far we don't think it's done her any harm, that's for real, we think it's done her more good than anything, and she's really adaptable already. (TV2.p. 1)

As part of this routine, Val and Tony had a system of putting Charlotte to bed at night, and allowing her to cry for certain periods of time and then picking her up briefly before putting her down again for another period of time.

> Tony: As long as she's had a feed and she's happy, like now I could put her to bed and that would be it, she might have a little grizzle, and she has a cry. We leave her to cry for half an hour before we do anything and I think we've only picked her up a couple of times.
>
> Judith: So she has actually cried for a while and you've left her and she's gone off to sleep?
>
> Tony: Yep. Mean, aren't we?
>
> Judith: I don't know that it's mean. I think that it's um…something that people talk about trying to do but I think it is something that some people have quite a lot of difficulty with actually carrying out.
>
> Tony: We put a time limit on it. [] They'll try you on and if we think that she's just being a little bit of a madam for whatever reason, we'll put her down and just say well we're going away for quarter of an hour, 20 minutes, set the timer and just go and come back and if she's still not asleep well then, well, perhaps we were wrong, perhaps she has got a bit of wind or she's whatever…But if she's fed and got dry nappies and that sort of thing and it's time to sleep well then…(TV2.p. 5)

When Charlotte was 12 weeks old, Val returned to work as a nurse. During the week Charlotte was looked after by a woman, Shirley, in her home. Her husband, Dick, was retired and also spent time with Charlotte and grew vegetables for her lunch. Occasionally, Charlotte stayed the night with Shirley and Dick so that Val and Tony could

go out. Tony and Val were very happy about the arrangements with this couple and felt that their life worked so well because they were so confident in the care that Charlotte received during the day. Val felt that she wouldn't be happy leaving Charlotte in a childcare centre, and stressed the need to take everything on a day-by-day basis, and keep evaluating the arrangements as they went along. She felt mindful of Shirley and Dick's age, and that something could go wrong with their health so they would not be able to care for her. Both Tony and Val thought that as Charlotte got older and they had more children, Val might move to working part-time. Val thought it would be difficult for her to give up work completely. Tony and Val shared the dropping off and collecting of Charlotte and the care of her during the evenings. At the weekend, Val did more of the caring for Charlotte while Tony worked on the farm. However, Tony enjoyed taking Charlotte out on the farm in a backpack as much as possible. Val and Tony shared the domestic work of the household and the cooking.

As the year continued Val and Tony described the way that they cared for Charlotte as "unfolding", taking each day as it came, with Charlotte fitting in with what they were doing. Throughout this period they shifted houses several times and flatted with friends while they did up houses as rental accommodation and their own house was built. At one stage they flatted with friends who also had a baby. During this period they described having let Charlotte go off to sleep having a bottle because there was often a lot of household noise at her bed time and it wasn't easy to leave her to cry with the other family trying to settle their baby. However, Val had recently read about leaving babies to cry for certain time periods and had then discussed it with Shirley. Shirley thought this was a good idea and she had done it with her own children. So, once they were in their own home again Val and Tony had a few nights of leaving Charlotte to cry as she went to sleep.

On the whole, they continued to work things out between the two of them, and, when they felt uncertain, asking friends, colleagues at work or Shirley. They watched the way other people were with their children and discussed this with each other, "we want her to be like that or we don't want her to be like that."(TV5.p. 7). Val read a number of books, including ones that she brought home from work. While she put some of these aside for Tony to read, they differed in their opinion of how much Tony read of them and of how useful they were:

Tony: I've read some and I've read portions of others of which...
Val: You read one page and tell me it's tripe.
Tony: ...of which I don't agree.
Val:mmm, So I don't feel you're qualified to say.
Judith: Oh well it sounds like you should talk to Keith (laughs). When he knew I was pregnant he came into my office and said "Right where are these books", because he knew I had bought up lots of books in the sale for the thesis. So he picked out this one on fatherhood, took it home and opened it and said "But this is written by seven women (laughs). I don't want to find out about fatherhood from seven women. I want a bloke's account of it". So he made no progress on that one (laughs).
Val: Well I've said my piece on it [ ]
Tony: Hey, hey hey I read the last one.
Val: What was it about?
Tony: Some of it was a bit kinky.
Val: What was it? What was it? (laughs)
Tony: Oh about some habits of babies and ...
Val: Sexuality that's what it was about.
Tony: Sexuality, that's it. That's right and Keith would sympathise with me 100%. Who bloody well wrote it? But a Catholic priest. And I thought, well what the hell would he know about sexuality (laughs)
Val: I must admit that was a bit...(laughs).(TV5.p. 19–20).

Val wanted to create a life for Charlotte that had "a feeling of family love and a close knit family feeling. [ ] Just basically the sort of childhood I had really." (V4.p. 17) Val considered that doing things together on a Sunday as a family, her mother being available to go to events at school and at home after school, and having lots of contact with cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents had contributed to her sense of a close-knit family. She wanted to be able to reproduce this for Charlotte and any other children they had. Along with this sense of security Val also wanted to create a sense of independence:

Val [] I guess I feel I'm fairly outgoing, fairly independent person who likes to enjoy life the most I can and get the most out of it ...and as far as being a parent goes I'd like to be able to give that to Charlotte and any other children we may have as well, to...to be able to give her the opportunities that I've had, at least that I've had and even better if I can. (V4. p. 21).

Tony wanted to create a life for Charlotte that had a sense of security and stability but also independence. He saw this as being quite different from his own family experience with all its emotional and financial upheavals. Tony felt that the way that money matters

had been handled by the trustees for his family after his father's death and the bad advice that his mother had been given had shaped the way he had organised his own financial affairs. He had also made sure that Val was very conversant with the various strands of their finances and would be capable of running it all if he were to die. Tony didn't want to push Charlotte but wanted to help her develop:

> Tony: I'd like Charlotte to be able to do the things she wants to do, to see
>   her well-educated and to do, um, not to do the norm for a young lady
>   to do, let her do what she's best able to do.
> Judith: So what do you feel was a norm for a girl.
>
> Tony: Oh, teaching and nursing, that's what all the girls at school did, that's
>   about the only options they had, teaching, nursing, or secretarial
>   work or go and get married and get pregnant. There wasn't a lot of
>   scope, which is ridiculous.(T4.p. 16)

Accompanying these visions of the kind of life that Val and Tony were creating for Charlotte was a view clearly stated by both of them as to how the needs of children should be balanced with the needs of adults in a family.

> Judith: I can remember from your first interview, you were both very
>   positive about the way you wanted to set things up and had quite a
>   vision of what it could be like.
> Tony: Well our basic thing I guess was that we're busy, busy people, we
>   both work long hours, really hard and obviously we love little
>   Charlotte, we're wanting a family but we are not prepared to
>   sacrifice all our life for theirs. That might sound mean and hard and
>   horrible, but that's the way it is, we want to live our lives as much as
>   we can as well. And it's going to be extra hard work, we appreciate
>   that but like everything it's just organisation to a certain degree and
>   we have been very lucky to have a good little girl. (T2.p. 7)
> Val: I think that before Charlotte was born we talked about things, you
>   know, about how it is important for us to still try and carry on doing
>   the things we were doing and not let Charlotte change our lives too
>   much and, you know, basically getting Charlotte to fit in with us
>   rather than us being manipulated by her you know. (V2.p. 6)

Throughout the interviews, as Val and Tony talked about different aspects of their lives, they made references to the way that Charlotte fitted into their lives, such as going on a skiing holiday with them at 6 weeks, out to dinner in restaurants or barbecues at friends' places, feeding out the stock in a backpack or staying the night with Shirley and Dick to give them a break. At the end of Charlotte's first year, Val and Tony felt that it had been a

hectic but great year. Their lifestyle had changed more than thought it would, however, and Val also thought that her thinking had changed since being a mother:

> Val: [] You can easily get quite selfish going along just the two of you, gliding along and we had a good life, we did what we wanted, when we wanted and how we wanted, now there's always that extra little person to think of, but that's...that's OK, that was our choice and we enjoy it. (V4.p. 21)

Andrea, Brent and Sophie

At the time that Sophie was born, Andrea was 17 and Brent 20. Brent had shifted from the West Coast of the South Island to study Agriculture at university two years earlier. Andrea had joined him early in his third year when they realised that she was pregnant. Although the pregnancy had not been planned they both considered it a "fortunate accident". They had been in a relationship since they met at school 4 years earlier and had planned to marry when Andrea had finished her secretarial exams. However, she decided to delay finishing the exams once she knew she was pregnant so she could live with Brent before Sophie was born. Andrea and Brent rented an old farmhouse in the country. Brent's study took him to university for most of the day and Andrea stayed at home with Sophie. Andrea knew very few people in Spenceville, apart from the people that Brent had been flatting with when she moved up to join him. Andrea had threatened to miscarry several times during the pregnancy and Sophie was eventually delivered prematurely by caesarean section after Andrea's blood pressure had become dangerously high. When Sophie was 5 months old they married.

Andrea's family had been on the West Coast for several generations, and many of her extended family lived in the region. As a child she had spent a lot of time at the weekends with her aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents on picnics, bush walks, bike rides or barbecuing at each other's houses. During the week she often went to her grandparents' house after school if her mother was working at her father's shop. Brent's family had initially been share-milking around Taranaki, where many of the extended family on his mother's side lived. They moved to the West Coast to their own farm as he was finishing primary school. Brent's maternal grandmother was Maori and had married

a Pakeha who left her when Brent's mother was two years old. His grandmother then married a Maori with whom she had three other children. Brent had a lot of contact with his mother's family when he was growing up and, in terms of his ethnicity, considered himself to be "Half and half, getting the best of both worlds." (B4.p. 3). Andrea, who thought "we should all be New Zealanders, there shouldn't be any Maori or Pakeha" saw Brent's sense of ethnicity as less fixed: "He's changeable, one minute he's Maori and the next minute he's not."(A4.p. 17)

Andrea and Brent both felt that they had a good relationship with both of their families and that both families were very supportive. When they had been "going out" they had spent most of their time at home with either of the families. Both told stories about the way that their own relationship mirrored some aspect of their parents' relationships. Andrea's parents had met when they were still at school and had then married at a young age. Brent's mother (and her sisters) had all been pregnant as teenagers before they were married. Andrea and Brent felt that their parents got on well with each other. Andrea and Brent described Brent's family as more laid back than Andrea's. Although things had been financially difficult for Brent's family when he was young, and he saw them now as less extravagant than Andrea's family, he felt they "lived pretty well". The two mothers had come for a week-long visit together a month before Sophie was born, bringing lots of clothing, baby gear and meat for the freezer. Both families continued to send food and clothing to help out. Brent had a student Bursary and they received Family Support through Social Welfare, but despite keeping to a tight budget and buying the bare necessities in terms of food, they did not have enough money for either of them to have new clothing or shoes and Brent wasn't able to buy any text books for his study.

Andrea had two sisters and Brent two brothers but none of them had had children, and neither had any of their friends. Neither Andrea nor Brent could remember ever having held a baby. They both attended antenatal classes at the hospital but did not get to complete them because of Sophie's premature birth. They had bought Shelia Kitzinger's book and Penelope Leach's *Baby and Child* and also took some other older books out from the library, which they read bits and pieces from. Throughout the year, Andrea was the primary caregiver but Brent was actively involved in caring for Sophie when he was not at university. When he was studying at home he often "sneaked off" to see what she was

doing and played with her, and at night he often had her with him while he was studying. Brent shared the cooking with Andrea, and did the laundry.

Throughout the interviews both Andrea and Brent constructed a picture of themselves as complementing each other through being the opposite of each other. Brent was portrayed as the more easy-going and placid of the two, but also as the one who was prepared to take a few risks.

> Brent: Sort of my outlook on life is…you've got to take risks to get anywhere and everything usually comes right in the long run. I suppose I am a bit of an optimist, but if things go bad, I mean well, there's not a real lot you can do about it except I don't know, keep looking up and get on…get on with life really. (B4.p. 14)

Andrea, meanwhile, was portrayed as more temperamental and anxious, seeking Brent's opinion for reassurance but not necessarily following it :

> Judith: How would you describe yourself?
> Andrea: Tough (laughs) No. I don't know, um, I'm bad-tempered, very moody, so is she, when she throws a wobbly she's worse than me, aren't you. Whereas Brent is really placid, almost to the point of being docile (laughs). No, Brent's really placid, he's really good-natured. I'm really moody. When I'm happy I'm real happy and when I'm not, watch out, sort of thing, yeah. (A4.p. 15).

Initially, Andrea and Brent felt that they had drawn on a variety of sources as they figured out how to look after Sophie. They referred back to the conversations with their mothers when they had visited before Sophie's birth. They tried what they had been told and had observed the nurses doing on the antenatal ward in hospital. On the first night at home with Sophie, a particularly cold evening, they had rung their neighbour, who had three young children, to ask her how many blankets to put on the cot. They also referred to looking up "the book", which was *Baby and Child* by Penelope Leach.

> Brent: Oh yeah, the *Baby and Child* book by Penelope Leach, that's really good.
> Andrea: If anything goes wrong, we go to the book and look it up and see what's what. (AB2.p. 15)

The Plunket Nurse had also given them bits of advice about folding nappies and nappy rash on her visits, and on the whole they had found her very supportive. One day I was there when she was due to come for her weekly visit:

Today Andrea was anxiously awaiting The Plunket Nurse's arrival because Sophie had been so unsettled, wanting to be fed every couple of hours, but not feeding properly and crying. Andrea felt very tired and wondered if her milk was "good enough" for Sophie. Andrea explained all this to the Plunket Nurse when she arrived. The Plunket Nurse asked her a lot of questions: "She has done with spurting, hasn't she?", "You haven't been tearing, around have you?", "You haven't been eating different things, have you?" Andrea then said it had been very hot over the last few nights and she wondered if this had anything to do with it. The Plunket Nurse replied that babies were sensitive to changes in the weather, and then said "If it is any comfort to you, Andrea, wherever I have been this morning babies have been unsettled." Andrea turned to me and said "Gee, that makes me feel better." After this, the nurse weighed Sophie without commenting, and then went and looked at Sophie's record book, writing the new weight in. Meanwhile Andrea watched her silently and intently. When the nurse had finished writing she looked up and enthusiastically announced the new weight, commenting that this "was nearly a pound in a week." The nurse then turned to me, asking if I had children. Holding Sophie's record book up she traced the line on the graph of Sophie's weight against the time line, directing me to look at how smooth it was, explaining to me that Sophie "was a wee dot at birth but she had never looked back." The nurse then said to Andrea "the increase in the weight explains it all, she has been spurting." Andrea looked much happier, and after another couple of routine comments the Plunket Nurse was on her way. (Fieldwork diary, 24 September, 1989)

There was also a sense of letting the mundane practical activity of repetitiously caring for Sophie take over, with these other sources being referred to when there was

something they felt uncertain about. As Brent put it, he "Just picked it up as I went along...just sort of got stuck into it." (AB2.p. 14) They also felt that to some extent Sophie determined what was done:[2]

> Brent: You've just got to do what she does, what she wants and just meet her needs and ...'cos if you meet her needs then she'll probably be a bit happier than, um, if you try to force her into your own routine I think. That's what I tried telling Andy, like, um, if she's only just fed her about an hour beforehand and then just fed her again, I say, well you've just got to do it, just keep her happy.
>
> Andrea: Yeah, just grit your teeth.
>
> Brent: Yeah.
>
> Andrea: It makes everyone's life a bit happier doesn't it, when you keep her happy, everyone's happy. (AB2.p. 14)

Andrea also indicated that she asked Brent his opinion a lot and this was something that persisted throughout the year:

> Andrea: I ask you everything don't I?
>
> Brent: Yeah.
>
> Andrea: Before I do anything, I say, Brent do you think I should put a cardigan on her, do you think I should do this, what do you think?
>
> Brent: Yeah.
>
> Andrea: I have to have a second opinion, I can't make any decisions on my own, I want to make sure he agrees with me before I do anything, just to make sure.
>
> Brent: Yeah, I get a bit sick of that after a while, it's just her in general, 'cos everthing she does she hasn't got the confidence, she's perfectly capable of doing anything she likes if she sets her mind to it, you know.
>
> Andrea: I just want to make sure you agree with me.
>
> Judith: So you...you ask Brent about things?
>
> Brent: A lot.
>
> Andrea: I suppose I know but I just want to make sure, you know, like at night I might say, do you think she'll be warm enough, do you think she'll need this extra blanket, already in my mind I've already taken them off, but I say do you think she needs it just to make sure. (AB2.p. 16)

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[2] The way she and Brent described this is very reminiscent of the position put by Penelope Leach that the baby's point of view should be paramount: "So taking the babies' point of view does not mean neglecting your, the parents', view point. Your interests and his are identical. You are all on the same side; the side that wants to be happy, to have fun."(Leach,1988, p. 38).

Andrea began to have a few contacts with other people when Sophie was about 6 months. Andrea started going to a local playgroup at the Playcentre. She valued the opportunity for Sophie to play with the musical instruments and toys but didn't find the other mothers particularly friendly, and felt that they tended to ignore her. One of the women who had been in the same antenatal class had visited a couple of times with her little boy and they had also had a couple of phone conversations. Brent had discovered that one of the other men in his class was a father and they shared the odd conversation about their babies. Andrea and Brent still talked about asking the Plunket Nurse and their parents what to do at times but they indicated they were becoming more selective about what they listened to:

> Andrea: And they all sort of give you little bits of advice, so you just take
> what you want sort of thing (laugh)."(AB3.p. 6)

Andrea described the Plunket Nurses as being really helpful because they agreed with what she said so she felt she was doing a good job:

> Andrea: They just basically go along with what you say and just give you
> some advice which you can take or leave, but they just do it to make
> you...like they're always saying to you, Oh you're doing such a good
> job here, and pat you on the back (laugh). Which is quite good. 'cos
> you go and you're feeling quite confident. (AB5.p. 17)

Around this time Andrea and Brent indicated that they were beginning to move from their previously held position of the baby's needs being paramount to a position in which the needs of Sophie were to be met in conjunction with other things that needed doing in the household. In part, this issue seemed to come to the fore with a visit from Andrea's mother. She had come to stay and they had found the visit difficult because they felt she had tried to organise their life her way. Also, Andrea had had to do everything for her mother because she was continuously playing with Sophie and picking her up. Andrea and Brent felt that it didn't hurt Sophie to play by herself, roll on the floor or cry now and again, and that it was just impossible to have things set up so that someone was spending so much time with Sophie. The desire to have a slightly less baby-dominated point of view on things was also reflected in Andrea and Brent's criticisms of Penelope Leach's *Baby and Child*:

> Andrea: It's quite good, but there's some bits that I think are a load of rubbish. Six months you should give them their socks and they should play with them and try to put them on their feet. You've got to be joking. She's nearly seven months. There's no way she can put her socks on (laughs). (AB3. p. 10)

And likewise with the advice in *Baby and Child* on feeding:

> Brent: We had a go at giving her...giving her the spoon, but I think she was a bit young for that.
> Andrea: In that book, um what is it called?
> Judith: *Baby and Child*?
> Andrea: Yeah, yeah, it says as soon as they can hang onto anything you should give them a spoon as well when you're feeding them, give them one to play with. It's just disastrous, they've got to be kidding, it just goes everywhere. I mean when you've just dressed her for the day you don't want it plastered absolutely everywhere, I mean I don't mind it on her face but she had flung it from one wall of the dining room to the other wall, all over the floor, all over the highchair, everywhere, it was absolutely a disaster, she was picking it up and flinging food everywhere, she thought it was great fun. (AB3.p. 13)

As the year went on, both Andrea and Brent conveyed a sense that they had their own style of parenting which they "nutted out together" but that it was basically a matter of common sense. Andrea continued to ask Brent's advice but then she made the final decisions:

> Brent: It's mostly common sense...it's common sense, eh?
> Andrea: Yeah. But the way I see it anyway, I mean I'm here most of the time, so I make the rules. I decide what happens with Sophie. (AB5.p. 12)

However, at the same time they both talked about aspects of their own family life that they did or didn't want to build on in terms of the life they were creating for Sophie. For Andrea these seemed to be aspects of her own family life that were connected with bodily practices and emotions rather than abstract ideas about what should and shouldn't happen. Andrea identified not being like her mother as the most important thing in thinking about how to live her life differently. In particular, she didn't want to be so fussy about the way the house was and how people could use it. Andrea saw it as being "just her but it used to drive me nuts, and I used to think I'll never be like that."(A4.p. 8) She felt

that the family hadn't been able to sit down and relax, that her mother was always on the go, cleaning, rearranging, putting away only to start all over again. She also had strict rules about where things could be done and Andrea wanted this to be different for Sophie.

> Andrea: As I said, Sophie is going to be allowed to play in her room, she's going to be allowed to sit on her bed (B4.p. 21).

Brent observed that Andrea's family home was more like a house than a home because her mother was continually cleaning it. He thought Andrea was a bit like her mother in that regard but not as bad. Andrea also didn't want to worry like her mother did, and in particular she did not want to worry about what other people thought. On the other hand, in explaining why she wouldn't want to work full-time, she referred to the way that mother, who worked outside the home, was always there after school and "that you've got to know your parents are there when you need them." (A4.p. 7)

This sense of her own lived experience resonating in Andrea's practices is expressed in a comprehensive way as Andrea explained how she disciplined Sophie:

> Judith: And what do you do now if she's doing something that you don't want her to do?
>
> Andrea: I slap her hand. I say no, if she goes back I slap her hand, not hard, Brent thinks I'm terribly mean, he won't do it. He goes "No, Sophie, don't do that" and he goes "Oh Andrea I can't tell her, you'll have to". He's pathetic, he's weak. He's going to be just like my father. When Dad was supposed to take us in the room and hit us he take the strap and hit it on the floor and we'd go "OW" and he'd hit the floor and we'd go "OW" (laughing).
>
> Judith: So that was how you were disciplined as a child?
>
> Andrea: Mum always used to hit us but Dad didn't. Brent's going to be the same.
>
> Judith: But you think it's OK to hit her?
>
> Andrea: I...yeah...I think, you know, you tell them no and if they still do it you smack them and they know don't they? Yeah. Like at Playcentre apparently you're not allowed to hit your kids. I mean you're not going to really...you're not going to half kill them or anything, you're just going to show them that you mean business, I reckon, because I don't think it hurts to give them a smack. My Auntie, the one that I thought was cool, who I don't think is cool anymore, she doesn't hit her kids and they're just absolute brats, she just says "No, don't do that" and they just don't listen to her. One's 4 and one's 7, and they just run riot and we were always well behaved as kids because we knew if we didn't Mum would biff us one. I

don't think it hurts. [ ] They're your kids, you should be able to discipline them.

Judith: It seems to be an issue that people feel strongly about, isn't it, one way or the other.

Andrea: I mean you can't reason with a 9-month old kid, you can't sit down and say "Now listen to me, this is the way we do it". I mean she knows, she knows she's not allowed to play with the video. She knows she's not allowed to try and pull the aerial down on top of her head like she did a couple of weeks ago. She knows now because she had her hand smacked. She doesn't go near them. If she does you go "No" and she'll roll away because she knows she's going to get her hand smacked.

Judith: And when you smack her do you give her a smack that hurts or is it...

Andrea: Oh she'll remember it (laugh). Oh no it's not just a tap, it's a smack. Yeah, but I mean she cries but it doesn't hurt that much, I mean it's not a real hard one, but it's just so that she gets the message. [ ]See my Auntie doesn't smack her kids because she reckoned that Mum smacked us too much. At the time, sure, we thought Mum was a real old witch but Eleanor can't take her kids anywhere because they just run riot. She's got no friends because they don't like having the kids round at her place...I mean they don't like the kids coming to their place because they are real little sods. They just don't do a thing they're told, they just need a good kick up the backside and they'll be fine. It's not their fault, they don't know any better. I mean she just goes 'No, don't do that', she's taken it too far, it's just ridiculous.

Judith: Did you get smacked for doing very naughty things or...

Andrea: Oh we didn't get smacked for doing nothing, sort of thing, we got smacked when we did naughty things, and we did a lot of naughty things, all kids do (laughing), I think I got smacked the most. I got, yeah, quite a few wooden spoons broken over my backside. I mean, it doesn't hurt you. You grow up knowing what's right and what's wrong, not like her kids. I mean they weren't really hard smacks. Well, when Aimee got older, Aimee started to hit back (laugh) and Mum used to pull Aimee's hair and Aimee used to be trying to claw Mum. Boy did they have some fights.(A4.pp. 20–22)

Brent thought that he would like to bring Sophie up in a way that was similar to his own upbringing – healthy with a good education and in a rural environment. He described his own parents as easygoing:

Brent: Let me think...I probably had a disciplined sort of upbringing, not strict you know. I knew what was wrong and what was right. That's the sort of upbringing I would like Sophie to have. Not take things for granted, I suppose.(B4.p. 22)

However, he thought that Andrea should do the disciplining, as had his mother. His father had a strap but had never used it, although he had "bowled" Brent when he was 15, for being smart and giving him lip. Brent thought the odd hiding had been beneficial.

An aspect of his own upbringing that Brent wished to build on for Sophie was an awareness of her Maori background. No one in the family spoke Maori, and they weren't "active in the culture" but they did spend time at their local marae:

> Brent: They're not very traditional. I don't know, they've done well for themselves though, considering, but they still stick to some Maori beliefs and that, which is quite good. I've learnt heaps of things off, you know, their way of life and that. (B 4.p. 3)

Brent valued the experiences he had had as a child with the Maori side of his family. He thought kids should be taught Maori in school and that going to marae and having hangi were experiences that enriched and made people more open-minded. For Sophie, he felt, being aware of her Maori background and learning something of it, "should make her a better person, hopefully." (B4.p. 24)

Andrea had quite different views about this:

> Andrea: I mean, I agree with him in some ways, I mean, I like Maoris, nothing wrong with them, normal people just like us, they're no different. Well, I don't think they are, I think everyone should just be the same.[ ] He'd like Sophie to learn to speak Maori and I said, well that's up to Sophie, you know, if she wants to fair enough. Anyone who wants to I think they should be taught, but I don't think everyone should be forced to speak Maori because, I mean, it's not going to do them much good really is it. Well, in New Zealand it will, but any other country it's not going to. But she can if she wants to, I don't mind. I want her to go to church and Brent doesn't, sort of thing. I want her to go to Sunday school and Brent doesn't, so it's the same thing. (A4.p. 18)

Andrea had gone to Sunday school until she was 14 when her mother said she could choose whether she continued or not. Her grandparents both went to Church, and her mother now went at Christmas and Easter, but Andrea herself didn't go. She felt it was going to be important to let Sophie go so she would have the opportunity to decide for herself.

Marie, Peter and Robin

Peter was 37 and Marie was 23 when Robin was born. They had met through a tramping club associated with the closed traditional fundamentalist church to which they belonged. After knowing each other for 3 years they had married, and 4 years later they decided to start a family. Marie had been born in the United States and lived there until she was 9 when she moved to New Zealand with her parents and her younger brother. Her mother was an American and her father a New Zealander. As a family they had moved quite frequently, mainly living in small rural towns in the general region of Spenceville. Peter's family had moved several times as a family and had shifted to Spenceville when he was a teenager. He had continued to live with his parents until he married Marie and then his parents had moved to Auckland. Peter was a welder but in the last few years a number of welding places had closed and he had been unemployed. He wasn't sure about what he would do for future employment but felt that he was too old to retrain. Marie had left school after her fifth form year and had been interested in going nursing. However, her whole ambition was to be a housewife and mother so once she had become engaged to Peter she thought it was better to be earning money than getting more education. She had worked in a factory for a year before they travelled in America and in New Zealand. It was towards the end of their time travelling that they decided to have a baby, and very shortly after that Marie was pregnant.

With neither of them working, Peter and Marie had to watch their money very carefully. They had bought a small house in small rural town near Spenceville but by the end of Robin's first year they had been forced to sell. They had generally just enough money from a social welfare benefit to buy the necessities, and they grew their own vegetables. Although there were times when the bills mounted and they wondered where they would find the necessary money, Marie never worried about it as she thought God would see them through. When Marie was young her family had also faced financial difficulties. Her father had worked as a carpenter but he was very susceptible to stress and spent a lot of time off work. The family frequently had to have garage sales to find money for the groceries and there was always trouble over finding money to pay the interest on the mortgage. Financial difficulties and the desire for a less stressed life were the main reasons

her father was keen to move back to New Zealand. In America their mother had initially home schooled Marie and her brother, and when they started at a church school their mother went along as a voluntary teacher's assistant. Her parents would never let them go out or stay with other people and although they were able to invite people to their own home her parents never really encouraged it:

> Marie: They were very careful about who they let us associate with because of the peer pressure influences that kids can have on other kids and they didn't want us to be exposed to a lot of things that were not very favourable to the development and, ah, of course those youngest years of a child's life are the most impressionable, they just felt that it was…it would have been better for us to be at home until we were older than to be exposed without personal supervision. (M3.p. 10)

Her parents had not allowed her to wear trousers without a long top over them and Marie used to feel funny and different:

> Marie: I think it was more a state of mind in us than anything. We sort of felt, like, because we were strange and different, nobody wanted to be with us, you know, we sort of isolated ourselves a lot of the time, I think.[] I sort of grew up with what you might call an inferiority complex type of thing. (M3.p. 12)

It was when Marie met Keith and realised that somebody was really interested in her that she started to "come out" and to be more proactive about meeting people. Marie wanted to make sure that Robin would have good relationships with people his own age so she joined a play group where she could personally supervise him. She hoped that she would be able to home school him in his first years of formal education but also make sure that he was involved with other children who were being home schooled. Marie and Peter saw Marie's parents a few times each week and felt that they had a good relationship with them. Marie hadn't had a lot of contact with members of the extended family in America or New Zealand, but had spent a lot of time on her visit to America with her mother's brother and his wife and children.

Peter had a younger brother and a younger sister. He hadn't had a lot of contact with his extended family because they were dotted all over the country. He had, however, enjoyed having contact with the children of his grandfather's second marriage, whom he had got to know as a young adult. After the war, his grandfather had returned home only to collect his belongings before marrying someone a lot younger. As a young child Peter

hadn't known anything about his grandfather or that he had another family. His other grandfather had lived with them for the last years of his life, which Peter felt had been very positive for them as a family. Peter had hated school and left after his third attempt at School Certificate. He drove trucks for a couple of years and then completed his training as a welder at trade school. Peter was a very keen tramper and naturalist, and particularly involved in saving an endangered native lizard.

Before Robin was born Marie and Peter went to antenatal classes at the hospital and Marie had dipped into a book that covered both pregnancy and the baby's first year. Very close friends had just had a baby but they lived more than an hour's drive away. Peter's sister had had two babies but they hadn't spent much time with them as babies. Neither Marie nor Peter felt that they had had much experience with babies. Marie had observed families for several years, thinking about what she liked and what she didn't like about the children and the way the parents did things. She had also talked to her mother about her experiences of giving birth. After Robin was born Marie felt that she had worked out what to do with Robin through trial and error. It had also been good to watch her mother and mother-in-law handling Robin to see how they settled him. Peter followed what Marie did.

Throughout the year, both Marie and Peter found having Robin more difficult and challenging than they thought it would be. Both Marie and Peter initially attributed the sense of difficulty to Robin being fussy:

> Marie: Well the first little while it was better than I expected but in the last six or eight weeks it's been harder than I expected, because he's been a lot more fussy than I thought he would be.
>
> Judith: Fussy in what sort of way?
>
> Marie: Oh, 'cos it's been so hot and he's had trouble with wind I think and of course when he had a nappy rash, that made him fussy as well, that was bothering him.
>
> Peter: Even now he seems to get bored a lot, he's taking an interest in things about him and if there's nothing happening he gets bored and he starts to get fussy. Also his attention span is a bit short. I mean if you give him something to play with, and within two minutes he's bored with that.
>
> Judith: When you say he's fussy what does that mean he is?
>
> Peter: He's grizzly.
>
> Judith: It's not really sort of loud crying?
>
> Marie: Well, it doesn't start off that way, it gets that way if you can't figure out what's wrong and deal with it. (PM2.p. 3)

Marie did most of the caregiving for Robin but Peter was around a lot and did do some things and spent time with him. Sometimes Marie took Robin outside in a pushchair to where Robin could watch Peter work in the garden. This gave Marie the chance to get some housework done. When Robin was 9 months old Marie began to go to a playgroup with Robin which had been started by Plunket as a source of friendship, exchange of information and support. She enjoyed going and thought that it was potentially a good source of baby-sitting contacts. She had also started playing squash one morning a week, at a time when other mothers played and watched each other's babies. However, on the whole Marie was only happy to leave Robin with her mother who had the "same standards and training techniques." She also felt that it would be some time before she left him personally unsupervised with other children because "they learn so many bad things from other kids." (PM4.p. 10) Amongst her friends from church Marie often talked about babies and she felt they shared a similar standard of moral development and obedience for their children. A woman from their church had written lots of books on child training and health and so people in the church had generally either read the books or observed the childrearing methods of people who had read the books so that "in the end, everyone's affected by it somehow." (PM4.p. 11) Marie was reading the books herself, and talked to Peter about what she read.

By the end of the first year, Peter and Marie said that the year had been a challenge in terms of the demands that Robin made on them and how tied down they felt by him; they had not been able to go biking, tramping or out socially. But they also felt that they had a lot of fun playing with him. Marie still felt that deciding how to care for Robin was a matter of trial and error and that "At a lot of times you don't know what to do". (PM4.p. 4). When she was really worried she rang her mother to ask her things, and occasionally the doctor:

> Marie: I mean the...oh was it a week...last week? Or the week before or sometime, he woke up at half past twelve and screamed solidly for an hour. And, um, you know, normally we just go in and tuck him in and he's right. But no, that didn't work, so I held down and it seemed like the more I held him, you know, so he couldn't climb out, he just screamed and screamed and screamed. And I couldn't think what on earth could possibly be wrong with him, and I offered him a drink of juice, in case he was thirsty or hungry or something, and he just...he wouldn't have anything to do with it, whereas

normally he quite likes it, you know. But um...and I tried, you know, in the end I tried to spank him and it just made it worse and oh I just didn't know what to do. And in the end I just got him up and held him in my arms and just walked the floor with him until he calmed down enough to go to sleep, you know. I still don't know what was wrong. You know, it's things like that you just try something and if it doesn't work you try something else and if that doesn't work you try something else and if nothing works and he's still screaming you call the doctor (laugh).

Peter: I've been up sometimes in the last...well not really recent, but about two months ago or two and a half months ago, sometimes about seven o'clock in the morning or six o'clock in the morning and take him for a walk down the street trying to get him back to sleep again. Usually when he wakes at five or five thirty, she gets up gives him a breast-feed and he'll go back to sleep. But on the rare occasions...when he wasn't sort of into that routine, he sometimes wouldn't go back to sleep. And he'd only want to play, and she'd try and put him back to sleep and he'd just scream, and so I would often get up and get dressed and get a pushchair out and take him for a walk around the street, I'd get about a block and a half and he'd be asleep (laugh). But I was wide awake then so there was no point going back to bed, so I just sort of...(PM4. p. 5)

Some people from their Church had suggested that Marie should start spanking Robin to get him to go to sleep without a breast feed, and although she felt that most children were not spanked enough these days she didn't think it was appropriate in this context:

Marie: And I didn't think that was really appropriate because he's...I think he's...he's young and needs the security in the...what would you call it...security, I guess, of having that breast feed before he goes to sleep, you know. And when he doesn't get it, it's not that he's being naughty by screaming, crying and trying not to go to sleep, it's more a psychological thing, I think, that he needs. He'll grow out of it eventually, but their idea is sort of that it was just his stubborn will that needed to be brought under control (laugh) type of thing. I tried it once or twice but it didn't seem to help, it just made him scream even more and, you know, got him so worked up there was no way he would ever go to sleep, you know. But I don't know, I do smack him sometimes when he's in the middle of the night. He's obviously just about to go to sleep and then he'll suddenly realise he's going to sleep and he'll let out an almighty scream, you know, and scream and scream and scream and scream, you know. Sometimes he needs a bit of a tap on the leg to get him out of it, you know, and let him

know you really mean for him to go to sleep. I mean, I never really whack him or anything, just... (PM4. p. 7)

Peter felt that he wanted to create a life for Robin that was a sheltered home with everything he needed and to be able to train him to have an interest in nature as his father had trained him:

> Peter: My Dad trained me along those lines because he had a great interest in it himself. And, ah, I guess I'm trying to follow that in Robin...hope he'll get to enjoy the same things. (P3.p. 15)

He also wanted to try and build a good character and planned to read some of their good character-building books to him until he would be able to read them himself.

> Judith: And what sorts of things go towards having a good character do you think?
> Peter: I think an enjoyment of the out-of-doors and nature is one thing, trust in God is another, of course, and I guess those are the main things. I can't think of anything offhand. (P3.p. 15)

Marie also wanted Robin to grow up with a love of nature, and be physically fit and healthy. But she wished him to have a well-rounded social nature and to be honest and hard working and "Yet I suppose to keep the flame burning and be independent and make those choices himself, you might say." (M3.p. 18) She saw this as being very similar to her own experience and she considered her mother as having been a very influential role model: she had never worked and was always there whether needed or not, and she had been caregiver, provider, entertainer, schoolteacher, everything. But Marie wanted to be different in terms of discipline:

> Marie: Well, I think in my own family, um, there was a lot of emphasis on discipline as in punishment. Um, whereas I don't know...I can remember having long, long, long, long lectures that you sort of don't listen to (laugh), 'cos you know what's coming at the end of it anyway. But I think I...there are a lot of things that I can remember getting punished for without really having a reason why. I mean I knew it was wrong because Dad said it was wrong, and Mum said it was wrong, it was just wrong. But, you know, I think if...if things like consequences had been explained more, and he'd say "Ok it's wrong because....all these things", then maybe I would have had more self-discipline not to do it again, you know. But um, I notice...I sort of haven't really got to that stage yet with Robin. (M3.p. 18)

Marie and Peter had really enjoyed spending time with her Aunt and Uncle when they were in America, and frequently travelled a long distance to be with them for the weekend. She considered them to be closest to the perfect parents and had made a lot of mental notes about their parenting:

> Marie: They've tried to keep it as close to what I would call the ideal family situation where the Dad goes to work and Mum stays home with the kids and spends all her time and energy, you know, in running the home and training the kids, which is good. That's the way I'd like to do...you know have our family, if we can work it that way. It's getting harder and harder all the time, the economic situation.[ ] She's just an ideal Mum, you know, I mean I've never heard them raise their voices and they never discipline the children in front of anybody, well, except like if they misbehave at the table or something they get sent to their bedrooms...they never threaten their children with discipline that they don't dish our later you know. Um, and there's a lot of love, they do all sorts of things together, and they do a lot of home canning and she teaches them how to cook and they grow a huge garden every year[ ]. I mean their whole life centres around their children and their family, you know, and it's really good. (PM1.p. 16)

These four narratives, along with those in Chapter Six and Seven have illuminated what Shostak (1989) referred to as "the identifiable in endless transformation" in the experience of becoming parents. The commonalities, variations and differences in these narratives will be explored more fully in the next chapter as they are analysed in terms of a more general argument about how these people became parents. It is important to remember, as stated in Chapter Seven, that in narratives, the events of the past are "reformulated and renarrated in the light of the present and in anticipation of the future" (Benhabib, 1986, p. 349). They are also recounted in a shared social moment and cannot be separated from "claims to be known in specific ways by others" (Calhoun, 1994). The questions remain as to what narratives these people would now tell about these experiences, and how they would recount them to others. These are questions that all of us can ask as we live our lives; they are not specific to this kind of analysis. The answers I would suggest do not detract from, but futher underscore, the power of narrative to reveal the intersubjective, processual and multi-layered nature of social life and subjectivity.

CHAPTER NINE

Becoming a Parent: The Map and the Itinerary

Introduction

In Chapters Six and Seven, I made an argument for working with the particulars of people's experience, located in context and in time so as to *represent* the complexities, subtleties, contradictions and shifting nature of life on a daily basis. In the six preceeding narratives I generated from my fieldwork I prioritised the knowledge by which people live; experiential knowledge gained through practical activity and intersubjectivity. Where I drew analytical abstractions from the material it was to reflect on the nature of experience and narrative as a vehicle for discussing experience. Now, in this chapter, I prioritise a different standpoint, scientific discourse, which foregrounds the knowledge of those who wish to explain how life is lived. In this analysis of the material from my fieldwork I will move between the tour and the map to analyse rather than represent the project of becoming a parent.

From the position of someone on the outside, to whom stories have been told for particular purposes, my analysis can only be suggestive. These reflections can best be understood as a series of partial understandings whose constellations may evoke insights that are not revealed through a logical ordering of abstracted ideas. It needs to be emphasised that this is not a textual analysis of expert knowledge or policy documents or theories that have been deliberated upon at length and articulated clearly and sequentially from one page to another. It is an analysis of the discourses that had a presence or that echoed in the lived experience of people as they talked intermittently about their lives, lives that stretched in many directions. As I have demonstrated, lived experience is a matter of intersubjectivity, and intersubjectivity is inescapably ambiguous. Grounding an analysis in intersubjectivity is to accept a certain level of uncertainty and to forfeit an expectation of determinate knowledge and tidy resolutions (Jackson, 1998, p. 14).

A number of things need to be accomplished in this chapter. Overall I wish to analyse in more detail the argument that the process of becoming a parent is primarily forged through experience and the practical activity of caring for a baby on a daily basis

and that this experience is mediated by the knowledge of trusted others, people's experiences of families and expert knowledge. It is also produced and constrained by the material and social realities of people's daily lives. I use these three "mediators" as "major landmarks" for structuring the main part of the discussion. There are also some other "detailed features of the map" to be considered. I revisit some of the theoretical points discussed in Chapter Two, and explore related issues that have been highlighted by the material in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. Throughout the discussion, I also examine discourses that had a presence in what was said and done by those involved in the research. Before I become involved in the discussion of the major landmarks, I wish to foreshadow some of the points to be explored as I attend to these other issues.

<div align="center">Some/Points of Reference</div>

To analyse from the standpoints of both experience and abstraction, the issue that has been at the heart of this thesis, I have taken my bearings from the work of a number of social theorists and philosophers. To rely on the work of one cartographer would have left the details of some areas uncharted and other landmarks of experience not represented at all.

The Sartrian project

Although I started with the work of Foucault on discourse, and have continued to find his ideas about discourse fruitful, as I suggested in Chapter Two, his conception of the subject and his subsequent work on the stylisation of the self were inadequate for explaining what people bring to a discourse and what they go on to make of it. Thus, in terms of the general features of the map, I suggest that an understanding of the process of becoming a mother and father can be enriched by the Sartrian notion of 'the project' (Sartre, 1968).

In defining the project, Sartre argued that,

The most rudimentary behaviour must be determined both in relation to the real and present factors which condition it and in relation to a certain object, still to come, which it is trying to bring into being. This is what we call the project. (1968, p. 91)

Although Sartre was referring to an individual's life here, I argue that in the process of becoming a mother or father there is a dialectical relationship, not only between the given and the possible within the project of the self, but between the project of the self and the project of the other, the child.   As mothers and fathers oriented their lives to creating a life for their child, they both embraced, refused and struggled with the givens of their own childhoods and other facets of their present and future subjectivity, such as their relationship to their work, their communities, their friendships, and their interests. This was an ongoing process in which they reflexively engaged with both the projects of the self and the other.[1] Although Sartre's notion of the given includes childhood and "our social conditioning by way of the family group" (Sartre, 1968, p. 100), there is an over-riding sense of his individual as solitary, self-contained, and detached, and accompanying this is a somewhat abstract notion of activity that is removed from social practices and relationships. As I have argued and as my partipants' accounts have demonstrated in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight, social life proceeds as a matter of intersubjectivity and interexperience; an analysis of the project needs to be grounded in the lifeworld and explore the interplay between the self and myriad others in that world.

The self: constituted, constituting, fragmented or coherent

To examine the more detailed features of the map, and "the real and present factors which condition" the project in the world, I will return to some of the ideas that were central to the debates and issues raised in Chapter Two where I assessed the adequacy of the Foucauldian concept of discourse for the purposes of understanding how women and men become mothers and fathers.   In brief, I proposed that Foucault's initial focus on conception of the subject as docile and a blank slate was a major theoretical problem, and one that he eventually recognised himself. However, I argued that the conception of stylisation of the self he developed to counter these problems was also theoretically flawed. It took no account of previous lived experience, provided no way of explaining why not all practices of the self are equally and easily available to all individuals, and focussed on the rational and intentional, ignoring the affective, the unconscious and those aspects of

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[1] Van Mannen (1990, p. 59) argues that the etymological root of parent is *parere* which means to bring forth, originate, to be the source, the origin from which something springs.

biology that cannot be 'rethought'. I suggested on the basis of these theoretical critiques that it was imperative to return to people's experience in the life world to test out these ideas that have so powerfully shaped contemporary debates surrounding subjectivity. These issues will be revisited in this chapter, from the standpoints of experience and abstraction. I will also consider two other contemporary "landmarks" whose features remain under debate and that have largely developed out of the engagement of feminist writers with Foucault's work surrounding subjectivity. One is the extent to which the self is constituted by and/or constitutive of discourse and the other is the extent to which it is useful to think of the self as fragmented.

Common sense

Throughout this chapter I will also identify the discourses people drew on as they talked about the various aspects that constituted the project of becoming a parent. The previous chapters have asserted that people explained that knowing what to do as parents was a matter of common sense or experience, trial and error, getting on with it. On the whole, common sense was talked about as if it was what came naturally and immediately to people, without really needing to be thought about or deliberated upon. Geertz (1983) argues that it is an inherent characteristic of common sense thought that it seems to be like this and it disguises the normative nature of common sense.

> If common sense is as much an interpretation of the immediacies of experience, a gloss on them, as are myth, painting, epistemology, or whatever, then it is like them historically constructed and, like them, subjected to historically defined standards of judgement. It can be questioned, disputed, affirmed, developed, formalised, contemplated, even taught, and it can vary dramatically from one people to the next. It is, in short, a cultural system, though not usually a very tightly integrated one and it rests on the same basis that any other system rests; its conviction by those whose possession it is of its value and validity. Here, as elsewhere, things are what you make of them. (Geertz, 1983, p. 76)

It was difficult to get people to explain or expound what a common-sense way of looking after a baby was because it seemed so obvious to them, so taken for granted, so natural that they could find little to say about it. For example, bathing a baby initially seemed self-explanatory to people and my asking if they could tell more about it seemed strange: you bath the baby. Then, on further reflection, some parents commented that they

did it at a different time from when their mothers had bathed them but that was because, in those days, mothers were following the Plunket schedules and nowadays mothers are freer to choose when and how to do these things. Some added that they did it at night so that their babies would be calm and relaxed before going to sleep, others added that they did it at night so that fathers could be part of it and bond with their babies or so that fathers could share the care of the baby. Sometimes then, or at a later date, it would become clear that for some the natural way of bathing a baby was in a deep water in a baby bath, to aid relaxation or to emulate the experience babies had had floating in the womb and restore a sense of calm. For others, the natural way was for the baby to bath with a parent, again for reasons of bonding and relaxing, and they found it hard to understand why people had ever done it differently. Sometimes this led to people wondering if it had in fact always been done differently. Others, it emerged, bathed their baby in the laundry tub because the small house they lived in had only a shower. And so on.

Aside from richly illustrating Geertz's evocative exposition of common sense, this example of an activity that is repeated in the care of a baby introduces two discourses dominant in the accounts of parents and that will be revisited in the analysis that follows: psychological discourse and the discourse of liberal feminism. Whereas the bathing of a baby at the turn of the century was articulated in terms of moral and physical hygiene and the cult of domesticity (see Chapter Four), here it is articulated within psychological and liberal feminist discourses. "Here," as Geertz has suggested, "as elsewhere, things are what you make of them." However, it is not enough to identify abstractly the discourses present in the knowledge that seems to come naturally. As I argued in Chapter Two, an analysis of the way in which common-sense knowledge is perpetuated and reconstituted also needs to examine what people bring to that knowledge, and what they then go on to make of it. I have suggested on the basis of the narratives that what people did as they "followed" common sense, became experienced, tried things out, or got on with it, was mediated by expert knowledge, the knowledge and practices of trusted others and their own family experiences.

Three major landmarks: Expert knowledge, trusted others, family experiences

Giddens (1990, p. 38) argues that social activity within modernity is characterised by reflexivity as "social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of increasing information about those very practices". However, he suggests that because there is now so much to know, and it is constantly under revision, most abstract knowledge systems are opaque to the majority of people, and people are therefore reliant on expert knowledge. Furthermore, he has argued that as tradition loosens its hold, and there is an openness of social life, plurality of contexts and diversity of authorities, lifestyle choices become increasingly important in the constitution of the self:

> The reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems. [] Reflexively organised life-planning, which normally presume consideration of risks as filtered through contact with expert knowledge, becomes a central feature of the structuring of self-identity. (Giddens, 1991, p. 5)

However, in contrast with the privilege he accords abstract and expert knowledge, the accounts of the men and women as they became parents emphasised the filters of the advice and practices of trusted others and the stories of their own upbringing as they engaged with expert knowledge. [2] Popular childrearing texts and many analyses of them have assumed that people do what the texts suggest. I use people's relationship to expert knowledge, and the way it was mediated by the knowledge of trusted others and own family experiences as a structure for organising the remaining content of this chapter.

Expert Knowledge

There was much common ground in the expert knowledge drawn on by the people I met and worked with during my research. However, there were also some variations. Penelope Leach's *Baby and Child*[3] was referred to by five of the families, and *The Sleep*

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[2] Ryan (1997, p. 169) argues that in the narratives of the people that she interviewed about their practices surrounding safe sex, their pre-existing narratives of the sexual self and personal trust relations were more central than expert knowledge.

[3] In Chapter Four I argued that Leach writes from a standpoint that was informed by the traces of discourses from the earlier childrearing literature, which were primarily psychological. Initially "you" (mothers) are seen to need to follow their instinctual responses but then to cater to the keystones of the post 1940s

Book[4] or the programme that it advocates was referred to by four of the families. All the families were visited weekly by their Plunket Nurse in the first 6 weeks and, then they continued to go to the Plunket Nurses' clinics for the regular check-ups.[5] A number of the people commented on the volume and variety of childrearing literature, that the doctor might tell you one thing and the Plunket Nurse another, or that the way things were done now was different from when they were babies. The narratives in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight show people experienced the volume and flux of advice available as giving them a choice in what they did or did not try, and that they needed to choose actively what fitted with their perspectives. As Giddens (1991, p. 14) has argued, everyone is "in some sense aware of the reflexive constitution of modem social activity and the implication it has for her or his life."

Professional knowledge, hints gleaned and embodied emotions

Liz and Martin's (pp. 136–150) use of expert knowledge is a useful place to begin considering the way in which expert knowledge was mediated and used by parents, and also to begin examining some of the psychological discourses that dominate the discursive field of parenting.[6] Liz and Martin were one of the couples who had the most ready access to "expert knowledge": as the narrative in Chapter Six revealed Martin was a social worker and this gave him, and also Liz, very ready access to psychological discourse. Martin made a distinction between what he considered to be the factual issues of caring for Lucy, which he saw as straightforward, obvious and neutral, and those issues that were informed by theories and hence debatable. Martin considered expert knowledge from childrearing texts

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childrearing literature: "emotional depth" and "keen intelligence". "Motherhood", as a creative and full-time job, is foundational and so are the baby's interests. These are seen to be identical to those of the parents and meeting the needs of the baby will keep everyone happy. The baby is portrayed as having both cognitive and emotional needs.

[4] *The Sleep Book* is written from a behaviourist perspective and provides techniques for people to teach their children how to sleep. The approach advocated focuses on how to fix the problem and sets out procedures for establishing clear rules and routines around sleep and for ignoring behaviour that does not comply with these and rewarding behaviour that does. Throughout "the programme" records are to be kept to monitor progress.

[5] I didn't meet all the Plunket Nurses but on the basis of those that I did, and my own experience with the Plunket Nurses who saw my three children, there seemed to be considerable variation in their approach.

[6] In referring back to the narratives I have been faced with the difficult issue of whether or not to repeat some of the material. I have decided that to assist the reader in keeping the details of the narratives in mind and to link the material to the theoretical issue at hand, some repetition is necessary but I have attempted to limit it. My apologies to any readers who have found this repetition unnecessary.

as a useful source of factual knowledge in the early days of learning how to look after Lucy. As she got older, and it became more a matter of "managing" Lucy, he argued that expert knowledge from childrearing texts was not so appropriate because he believed the issues considered were open to different theoretical perspectives and he felt he didn't need these. When Martin was talking with Liz about Lucy from the standpoint of his professional expertise, he mainly referred to ideas from the discourses of behaviourism and psychoanalysis, particularly ideas about the influence of experiences in early childhood for later development[7]. Liz, he felt, needed to be guided by his expertise and knowledge as Lucy got older and they also needed to discuss what worked best for them and what kind of child they wanted Lucy to be.

In different ways both Martin and Liz were bringing something to the expert knowledge they encountered in the antenatal classes, childrearing texts, and encounters with the Plunket Nurse and doctor. Liz initially had referred to the childrearing texts but the information was always put alongside or mediated through the knowledge that she had gleaned from snatched exchanges at dinner party tables, with neighbours in the street, mothers in the support group and clients she met through work (pp. 138–139). Her narrative in Chapter Six illuminates the "projected" nature of the project as she intentionally oriented her interactions towards the question of caring for a young baby. By the end of the first year, Liz felt that specific books were helpful for specific problems but even then there were "preconceived ideas", such as wanting to have a routine or wanting to foster closeness, that would affect what she took from the books. These preconceived ideas she saw as relating more generally to the kind of person that she and Martin wanted Lucy to be. As she talked about the shape of the life she hoped to create for Lucy, Liz referred back to her own childhood both to affirm and refute certain familial practices (pp. 141–42). Here she drew on multiple discourses, affirming the practices of a strict upbringing for instilling good manners and also the encouragement her parents had given her to do a variety of things. However, she also rejected what she considered to be her parents' racist

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[7] Linde (1993), on the basis of her research, argues that people's narratives contain semi-expert systems that provide a means of understanding, evaluating and constructing accounts of experience. These systems are related but not equivalent to beliefs held by the population in general and the belief system held only by some category of expert. The popular versions of the expert systems work with a smaller number of concepts and ones that don't challenge the concepts of other popular theories. In her research, the main semi-expert

discourse and discourse of parental authority that had restricted her freedom of expression. As she projected her desires for Lucy she also invoked a discourse that asserted the value of intimacy as she yearned to be more open with her children, particularly about the deeper, more meaningful things.

If we think of Liz here as working on the stylisation of both her self and Lucy as she strove for them both to "feel a little more New Zealand" or to share more meaningful things and be more open, it is clear that we need to think about lived experience. Martin saw Liz as less racist than her parents and also as changing, but he felt there were still going to be on-going discussions between them over the years about what he considered to be her racist ideas. Because of their different lived experiences, non-racist practices came less easily to Liz and this was something they both recognised. This example also affirms the need to think about the stylisation of the self in terms of affective aspects as well as rational choices. Liz didn't think she wanted a more meaningful relationship with Lucy: she yearned for it, as an embodied feeling of closeness, intimacy and deepness.

In the main, Martin brought his own professional expert knowledge to the expert knowledge he encountered, but also his ideas about what kind of child he would like Lucy to be, which affirmed much of his own upbringing (p. 142). However, what Martin and Liz brought with them was neither uncontested nor fixed. At times when I was with Liz and Martin and they were discussing an aspect of Lucy's life, each drew on different discourses as they tussled over whether something, like leaving a baby to cry for longer periods at night, was "common sense" or "good behavioural psychology". Liz was aware of the effects of articulating ideas from different standpoints and in her own way drew attention to the power of language to nominate the "right" categories. For example, sometimes Liz would immediately translate what Martin had said to me from the discourse of psychology into everyday language, saying "What he means is..." At other times, Liz would cut across Martin's more abstract treatise and tell of the experience of someone else, or a hint passed on by whoever she had met on her journey that day to authorise her point. Here, as Michel de Certau (1988, p. 129) suggests "what the map cuts up the story cuts across". The effect of the discourse of everyman or everywoman in this context

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systems were Freudian psychology, behaviorism and astrology, with some indications of feminism and catholic confessional accounting.

(discussions around the teapot and the table, in the kitchen, in a house, in the neighbourhood of Liz's authorities and her daily world) was to interrupt and accentuate the more abstracted discourse from which Martin spoke. If we had had these discussions in my office, at the university it is possible that context and practices associated with it may have precluded the possibility of Liz telling her stories.

Discussions with Liz and Martin over the issue of who should be the primary caregiver of babies illustrates a sense of shifting discursive standpoints, and the way in which emotional investments in particular standpoints may constitute subjectivity while engendering a sense of contradiction (pp.145 –46). Before Lucy had been born, Martin and Liz had closely considered Martin staying home to look after their baby. In discussing this then the issues had been articulated in terms of economics (Liz earned more than Martin) and professional development for Martin (the experience of looking after a baby would be useful for his work). When Lucy was nearly one year old and we were discussing whether or not babies should be left in the care of someone other than their parents Martin argued the need for continuous maternal care. He initially invoked psychological discourse, citing babies' needs for security, to support his position. When Liz challenged the need for that security to come from the mother rather than one other person, such as a grandmother, and reminded him that earlier he had contemplated taking on the role himself, he moved to a standpoint of personal belief to assert the importance for him that Liz, her mother, be Lucy's primary caregiver in the first year. Liz, drawing on the discourse of personal experience to support her position, responded that she thought babies were more adaptable, and in her experience Lucy loved being around other children, absorbed a great deal and was more animated. Hence, she also felt non-maternal care could be positive for a child. However, she also referred to feeling anxious in the light of information given to her by Martin that experiences in infancy could affect behaviour in adolescence so you wouldn't really know how things were going to turn out.

Over the course of the year, the discourse that dominated their discussion of who should be the major caregiver of Lucy had changed, suggesting that in the continuing project of being parents the discourse of psychology had folded more closely into the way they thought about and explained their lives. Liz had also said she had always wanted to be a mother. She also described herself as a good mother but a bad housewife, illustrating her

point with anecdotes of taking ages to make a bed as she tumbled Lucy in the sheets, or stopping her chores to just sit and watch Lucy engaged in her world. This suggests that Liz's desire to be a mother and the emotions evoked in the realisation of that desire, at this period, constituted her subjectivity more strongly than the rationalist economic discourse that she had also earlier invoked. However, she had also continued to work part-time in the evenings because she enjoyed her work and wanted to maintain her career, suggesting that being a mother was not the sole focus for her sense of self. Likewise for Martin, his emotional investment in his career or being a father who provided economic support for his family more strongly constituted his subjectivity than the discourse of lived experience as valuable for professional development. He asserted that the experience of regularly caring for Lucy in the evening while Liz was at work had affirmed for him their decision that he be the main income earner.

What I am suggesting here is that people invoked, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, various discourses to support their positions; however, these positions shouldn't be seen as fixed in time. These positions changed as people dealt with the constraints of daily life but also in response to yearnings from the past and desires for the future that emerged in response to the experience of becoming a parent. Although it was possible for people sincerely to believe something before becoming a parent, the on-going experience brought into play previously unrealised rivulets of desires and other interests. As life in flux proceeded, some of these turned into major streams while others dried up. However, that they emerged does support my point that previous lived experience must be considered part of the map of the subject.

In Chapter Two, I argued we need to examine the effects of particular discourses in specific contexts. Martin's work as a social worker gave Liz very ready access to the discourse of psychology but the effects of this can be seen to vary in different situations. Generally, as in the example above, one of the effects was to leave her uncertain or anxious about the long-term effects of her parenting practices. For example, Liz had been leaving Lucy to cry at times during the day when she was trying to get something done in another part of the house. Liz had thought Lucy would get used to being on her own by being left for longer stretches. However, her reading of Penelope Leach told her leaving babies would make them anxious, shy and frightened, and that babies are more outward and

friendly if they are not left. On the basis of this, Liz changed what she was doing, but she then wondered if the times that she had left Lucy were going to affect her later and make her "emotionally unstable". At other times, the effects of invoking a psychological discourse were more contradictory. For example in Chapter Six I referred to an instance where recourse to psychological discourse gave Liz support to assert her point of view when she challenged a mother who smacked the hand of a baby who was masturbating. But, the coda to the discussion that followed was that it was very difficult to know what would and wouldn't harm a baby. Although in daily life some people have access to the concepts and ideas of psychological discourse, it remains a discourse which ultimately asserts the need for an authoritative expert to preside over the application of its advice.[8]

Professional knowledge, an orientaion and pragmatic appropriation

Liz and Martin's narrative does not, however, serve as a basis for generalisations about the experiences of those parents with ready access to expert knowledge. Val and Tony (pp.181–189) also had direct access to expert knowledge through Val's work as a nurse but as a couple they had a different relationship to that expert knowledge from Liz and Martin had to the expert knowledge available to them through Martin's work. Val brought books home from work and was interested in reading a wide range of material but she never spoke of the way that she was caring for Charlotte from a standpoint of her professional expertise, and nor did Tony refer to Val's expert knowledge. It was not at all apparent from the discussions we had about how they cared for Charlotte that Val had been a community nurse several years previously and had worked with families.[9] Eventually I asked Val directly about the relationship between her professional expertise and the way that she cared for Charlotte. She claimed that it was a very different situation when it was your own baby, and went on to reflect critically on the kind of advice she had given people before having had a child herself, concluding that if she were now a community nurse she would do things differently. Tony reluctantly started reading bits of books that Val passed on but tended not to finish them because he didn't agree with them or because he doubted

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[8] Phoenix and Wollet (1991, p. 44) argue the applicability of much psychological advice will remain limited and its nature prescriptive because "psychologists insufficiently analyse the experiences of women and the impact of the contexts in which they mother."

the validity of the ground from which they were written. In particular, he reacted strongly to what he considered a generally pervasive negative discourse about becoming parents (p. 183). Also, for him it was important that people writing books have some practical experience about what they were writing. There was only one point in our time together when Val asserted her professional knowledge and that was when she commented that she didn't feel Tony was qualified to judge whether the books were "tripe"[10] as he claimed (p. 187).

It is impossible to explain definitively the difference in the ways in which these two couples took up the expert knowledge of one of the partners. The difference could be crudely interpreted as an effect of gender, whereby the expert knowledge in the case of the male was recognised and engaged with but the expert knowledge of the female was not. Furthermore, the expert knowledge of the female partner was associated with her work as a nurse, and female-dominated occupations like nursing and teaching have often not been recognised as professions having expert knowledge but rather as being on a continuum with mothering. This has not been the case with psychologists, whose professional status and expert knowledge have been unambiguous. However, such a reading simplifies the dynamics of these case studies. Liz both accepted and challenged Martin's knowledge, and Martin stated that he felt Liz bossed him around about caring for Lucy. Hence we cannot read this situation as a straightforward uncontested example of the imposition of male authority and dominance. Likewise Val, eventually, did not let her expert knowledge go completely unrecognised in the exchanges between her, Tony and me. How these couples negotiated the validity of their knowledge without the presence of a researcher is another matter. What this analysis does suggest, however, is the importance of recognising the way in which people continually negotiate their relationships with each other and with bodies of knowledge.

Val and Tony's responses to expert knowledge from other sources also illustrate the need to consider what people bring to that knowledge. Tony brought his farming knowledge and practice to what he read or to the expert knowledge he came to through the

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[9] I did know this however from a brief mention of it in the initial conversation when I had first met with Tony and Val to discuss if they would like to participate in the research.

[10] "Tripe" in Anglo Saxon cuisine is seen as piece of the butchered beast that has little value, that is rubbish. This is not the case in all cultures, for example within Italian cuisine tripe is considered good to eat.

antenatal classes. For example, when breast feeding was discussed at the antenatal class, he talked about his experience of different cows producing different amounts of milk, and the need to accept that not all women were as able to breast feed as easily as others (p. 184) When Val subsequently had difficulties in feeding Charlotte, he again put this argument. However, this was not the only discourse he drew on to contest what he perceived as a dominant discourse about breastfeeding which had oppressive effects for some women. When Val decided to take up running again shortly after Charlotte was born, her Plunket Nurse counselled her that this would further diminish her milk supply. Tony drew on psychological discourse to support Val's decision, asserting the psychological benefits for her of running.

Val and Tony also shared a consciously constructed orientation towards the project of becoming parents that was reflected in what they both said and did. This can be seen to have acted as a filter for the expert knowledge they encountered. Both Val and Tony had been adamant from the time I first met them that they did not wish to rearrange entirely their lives for a child, and that it was important to recognise the needs and interests of adults as well as the needs and interests of babies and children (pp. 188–9). Although they never articulated it as such, this standpoint resonates with the discourse of liberal feminism in asserting equality of opportunity for women and men to participate in all aspects of life. Other exchanges I had with Val and Tony support this reading. For example they chose not to buy a farm but to settle for a lifestyle block because the location of farms they could afford would have precluded Val continuing with her career. They both spoke of their agemates who had not left Cambridge living out the lives that their parents had, with the father working outside of the home and the mother working at home, rearing the children. They both claimed that they had not wanted to reproduce the traditional role of mother for Val. Val spoke of her mother's life having been limited by her father's view that she should not have a career but be at home with her mother. When Tony spoke of the life that he wished to create for Charlotte he wanted her to do what she was "best able" and "not to do the norm for a young lady to do." He also wanted to create a life for her that had a sense of security, stability and independence, which he saw as being quite different from his own.

However, there is a strong sense in which this is not an abstract philosophical stance of liberal feminism but a pragmatic appropriation of the ideas to ensure that some of the

things that had happened in their own lives would not happen for their children. Both Val and Tony's fathers had died unexpectedly and young. Aside from the pain associated with the loss of their fathers, difficult years had followed for both families as their mothers moved into low-paying unskilled employment, and there were further separations as changes followed in the living arrangements of the families to cope with the new situations. Tony felt that their lifestyle – a child, two full-time jobs, a hobby farm, rental properties, and living their lives to the full– was challenging but not impossible. Speaking through the discourse of the business world in which he was employed, he argued that like other things in life, it was a matter of extra hard work and organisation. He also recognised that having a "good little girl" contributed to the way it all worked. This example illustrates the ways in which, when we analyse discourses, we focus on particular ones, abstracting them from the context where they do not exist as discrete discourses but as continually overlapping and interacting. Hence, as here, people's accounts may be permeated with elements of many discourses.

Contradictions to be lived or explained

These accounts also suggest that in living life, people do not necessarily observe the contradictions that appear to those who analyse it. Cascardi (1992, cited in Calhoun, 1994, p12), for example, argues that the tension and incommensurability amongst the discourses that constitute our social world appear as a series of contradictions within the subject self. If people do observe contradictions, they are not always foregrounded or as problematic as they are in contemporary theoretical accounts. While she worked full-time, and had no wish to reproduce the traditional role of a mother at home, Val also desired to be available for her children in the way that her mother had. Likewise, Liz, who had always wanted to be a mother and saw herself as a good mother, had also continued to work at night and argued for the benefits of non-maternal care of children. Tony enjoyed the sense of shock from his clients when they stepped into his sports car and found a baby's car seat. The sense of the shift from "successful young businessman" to "successful young businessman and actively involved young father" was pleasurable for him. These aspects of Val, Liz and Tony's subjectivities were not articulated as in problematic contradiction, nor as either/or choices but as on-going aspects of their life to be worked out in the practical context of all else that

impinged upon family life. It is as if theoretical accounts are doomed to freeze life as lived and loose the sense of fluidity in life. They also mask the ability of people to live with, rather than explain, contradictory desires, incompleted projects, dreams that are on hold, precisely because they have to. The project, the daily repetitious tasks that are part of it, and the narration of the experience to others lend a coherence that eludes theory generated in the abstract.

Taking up the tools

Before moving on I wish to pause and reflect on some recent theoretical exchanges that have contributed to the way in which I have thought about this material and the material that follows. The issues of whether people are constituted by discourse or constitute themselves through the discourses available and whether an argument for an understanding of the subject with agency assumes a prediscursive self remain matters of debate.[11] Butler (1990, p. 145) has argued: "There is no self ...who maintains integrity prior to its entrance into this conflicted cultural field. There is only the taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very "taking up" is enabled by the tool lying there." However, I would suggest that the way in which Liz and Martin and Tony and Val brought something, melded from their lived experience, to the discourse suggests that it is not just a matter of a tool lying there but that there is "an already discursively constituted subject, a subject in process, a subject as a verb" (Davies, 1997, p. 274) that through the life they have lived and the life they are living towards may be more or less open to the possibility of being "enabled by the tool lying there". Liz, Martin, Val and Tony were not blank slates, nor finished tablets as they encountered the tool lying there.[12]

It may be that this current understanding of a subject who is continually created afresh and denied agency, which dominates much of poststructuralist theoretical literature, is an effect of a preoccupation with language. As I argued in Chapter Two, theorists working with the concept of discourse frequently focus on language, neglecting the realm

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[11] Here I am not so interested in all the convoluted turns of these debates and the misreading of others positions, but to put the issues alongside, and to test them out, against the empirical data of my fieldwork.

[12] I am aware that there is ongoing debate as to the appropriateness of using metaphors that denote binary oppositions of surface and depth (see Davies, 1997 for a discussion of some of the traps involved). However, my purpose here is not to resolve this debate in the abstract realm of maps but to move between the map and the journey to understand the constitution of experience.

of practices implied in Foucault's understanding of discourse. Benhabib (1995) makes a similar point when she responds in an exchange to Butler's performative theory of the constitution of gender identity. Butler (1995) writes: "To be constituted by language is to be produced within a given network of power/discourse which is open to resignification, redeployment, subversive citation from within and interruption and inadvertent convergence within such networks." Benhabib cites this quote and goes on to ask,

> What does it mean "to be constituted in language"? Are linguistic practices the *primary site* where we should be searching for an explication of gender constitution? What about other practices like family structures, child rearing patterns, children's games, children's dress habits, schooling, cultural habitus etc? Not to mention of course the significance of the words, deeds, gestures, phantasies, and the bodily language of parents, and particularly of the mother in the constitution of the gender identity of the child. (Benhabib, 1995, p. 109)

Reflecting on the narratives in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, it is clear we need to find ways to think more deeply about the practices and the embodied emotions that constitute lived experience. I suggested in Chapter Seven that at times people told different stories to explain the gaps, the ruptures, the longings or the moments of completeness, healing and fulfilment but I would suggest that these accounts reveal a sense of embodied emotions that resonate, some strongly, others a faint echo, creating more complex tones as they merge with other emotions in time, whatever the story/ies of their genesis. Frequently attention is focussed on the more extraordinary life experiences – fathers dying, being separated from a brother, families being reconstituted, someone who made a difference to the way the world was seen, moving to the city, going to boarding school, etc. But we also need to reflect on the daily experiences of people's lives, – being hit on the head for expressing your ideas, not being able to share things that are deep, living with parents whose relationship has frosted over, the continual regulation of bodily practices, always being encouraged, parents always being there, having the opportunity to pursue lots of interests, always feeling secure, always feeling loved for sure. We need to ask how these experiences, and the embodied emotions connected with them, resonate with other discourses that constitute the ways available for us to live our lives.

In short, I am suggesting it is a mistake to think that there is no self prior to the discourse which continues to constitute the self. Lived experience effects ways of thinking

about the world and embodies emotions that amplify, diminish and resonate with the newly encountered. It is the lived experience and the life we are living toward that affect the way we take up "the tool lying there", thus creating a field of possibilities within the given. Sometimes the realised possibility preserves, and at other times it makes over the pre-existing circumstances. As Sartre (1968, p. 100) has noted, we surpass the given "by the simple fact of living it", and in the end human freedom appears as "the small movement which makes of a totally conditioned social being someone who does not render back completely what his conditioning has given him" (Sartre, 1969, p. 45).

Trusted Others

In the examples I have considered so far, I highlighted the effects of access to expert knowledge and some effects of the knowledge in specific contexts. In this next section I consider the way in which the knowledge of trusted others mediated expert knowledge and both extended and restricted what were considered acceptable and unacceptable practices.

A change in dominant discourse

Nicola and Simon's (pp. 156–170) trusted others changed over the time I worked with them and their experiences provide a useful place for beginning to consider the ways in which the knowledge of trusted others mediated expert knowledge. Nicola and Simon had ready access to expert knowledge through the wide variety of childrearing books that Nicola read, her involvement with the La Leche League, and later the parenting seminars and courses organised by their Church. Simon did some reading but mainly he and Nicola talked extensively about what she was reading and the ideas she came across through the various groups and seminars she attended. In the initial months of being a mother Nicola's descriptions of how she was caring for Edward were similar to the psychological discourse which dominated the books she read and the discourse of La Leche members. She talked a great deal about the needs of the baby governing what she did, giving into him, working around him, accommodating him, bonding with him (p. 158). Although she belonged to another informal support group, Nicola felt she relied more on the support and knowledge of those she met through La Leche.

Both Nicola and Simon had talked of wanting to have a more open and intimate relationship with their children than they had had with their own parents (pp. 162–3). Many of the practices suggested through discourse of La Leche members and the books on their approved list claimed they offered a way for Nicola and Simon to do this. For example, a strong emphasis on breastfeeding for fostering a sense of security, closeness and intimacy and likewise the advocating of a family bed and babies and children sleeping with their parents. The idea of sleeping with their baby had initially seemed taboo to Nicola and Simon but they had started doing this when they were away with other people and hadn't wanted Edward's crying to keep others awake. They then went on to refer to what they had read in one of the childrearing books, *Nighttime Parenting*, as they reflected on the ways in which where children sleep is a cultural construction, not an ahistorical or acultural given. However, Nicola also felt that sharing a bed with her child was not something that she wanted to discuss freely with people, as she thought a number of people would consider it odd, and make judgements about them.[13]

Later in the year, Edward's broken sleep had become a problem for Nicola and Simon (pp. 159-161). When it was evident at a church camp just how often Edward woke during the night, their Pastor and his wife recommended *The Sleep Book* to them. Somewhat bemused that they had been influenced to try something by others whom they respected but which was contrary to their orientation, they went ahead with the sleep programme for Edward. After the birth of their second child, when Nicola was wondering how to juggle an active toddler and a new-born baby, she went on to read literature and participate in parenting seminars made available to her through the Church (p. 166–9). She described these books and ideas as being articulated through a biblical discourse, emphasising order and regularity, the importance of the family, the sanctity of the relationship between husband and wife and the importance of mothers staying at home with their children. For a while she also went to La Leche, where she said she kept quiet about her newly acquired parenting practices, but eventually she stopped going.

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[13] This example supports McNay's criticism, referred to in Chapter Two, that "Foucault does not distinguish sufficiently between practices that are merely 'suggested' to the individual and practices that are more or less 'imposed' in so far as they are heavily laden with cultural sanctions and taboos". (McNay, 1992, pp.74–5).

When I asked Nicola about the change from drawing on the knowledge and experience of La Leche members to the people of her Church she said she valued the congruence between the literature and ideas that she was learning about and the values she saw as governing other aspects of her life. Right from when I first met them both Nicola and Simon had talked about the importance that their Church placed upon the stability of the family for the stability of society. Initially, in terms of their parenting practices they had articulated what they were doing within the child centred psychologically oriented discourse of La Leche, and parenting books such as *Baby and Child,* and *Nighttime Parenting*. It was as if with the passing of time the discourse of the Church on the family had folded more closely into the way they thought about their parenting, supplanting one that had given more dominance to the needs of the child. More generally, as they moved from having been one of the young couples of the Church to being one of the families, the balance shifted to give more weight to the discourse of their Church community, and the literature provided through the Church.[14]

Sense of self: continuing and changing but not fragmented

Associated with this change in the discourse that constituted their accounts of their parenting practices were changes in the subject positions available to Nicola as a mother and Simon as a father. It is important to stress, however, that this was by no means straightforward or something that occurred straight away. Initially, Nicola had been anxious about stopping working when Edward was born because she felt work had been such a big part of her life that without it she would lose a sense of her identity. Then once Edward had been born and she had experienced being at home all day with him, she thought about going back to work to ease her boredom and loneliness. But this made her feel guilty. Also, she felt that some of the deep feelings she had for Edward and the special moments she experienced would only occur if she stayed home with him. At this point she and Simon considered the possibility of Simon being the primary care-giver for Edward. Simon's own father had worked outside the home but Simon considered that for the era, he

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[14] Once again, I would not like my discussion of this case study to serve as a basis for generalizations for families involved with the Church. Christine was also a member of the same Church, and Richard attended with her to support her but considered himself agnostic. As will become clear in the material that follows the influence of trusted others from the Church was different for these two families.

had been unusually involved in caring for his six children. Simon was open to the idea of being the primary caregiver but at the same time recognised he had an emotional investment in the subject positions of femininity and masculinity as articulated by the gendered discourse of the nuclear family. He hoped he could "get past these ideas". When Simon became self-employed he arranged his work so he could look after Edward when Nicola was at work. Nicola made the point that she wasn't working for financial reasons but that she did it for herself. Once again, although this was not stated as a feminist position it echoes liberal feminist discourse that asserts the right for women, like men, to "pursue their own interests or self-fulfilment, as they define their interests and understand their fulfilment" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 174). With the birth of her second child, Nicola gave up her part-time work. Nicola described this period as a turning point in which she gained a different perspective on the aspects of being a mother that she had previously found draining. From the biblical and traditionally gendered discourse of the parenting seminars and literature of her church, and the ex-feminist writings of Mary Pride she "learnt to be able to see past" the difficulties. The aspects of looking after the children that she had found "regular and routine" were now valued as "building something into them" (p. 168).

At the end of their first year of being parents, both Nicola and Simon talked of a sense of growth, of discovering other aspects of themselves along with a loss of freedom. There was a sense from both of them that their subjectivities were partly constituted by the project of another – their child. After the birth of their second child there was a clear sense from Nicola that she was constituted and had constituted herself differently as a mother. The possibility of her subjectivity projecting her interest or self-fulfilment had receded into the background and in the foreground was the always available mother who abnegated her own needs or desires as she devoted herself to the project of her children.[15] This example illuminates the poststructuralist understanding of subjectivity as being constituted within a variety of discursive practices and as "precarious, contradictory and in process" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). However, there was not the sense of fragmentation and being constituted afresh that is strongly argued for in some poststructuralist thought. Nicola seemed to have a continuing sense of herself, a coherent core within these different discursive contexts,

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[15] Unfortunately I did not talk with Simon at this time. It would be interesting to know what exent Nicola's investment in the subject position of mother as articulated within the gendered discourse of the traditional nuclear family had affected Simon's desire to move beyond those positions.

although this was not a self that was fixed but one that was growing.   This issue will be taken up further on in the present chapter.

From the "needs of babies" to the "needs of adults" also

The narrative of Christine, Richard and David (pp. 172-181) is also useful for thinking about the mediation of the experience of becoming a parent through the knowledge and experiences of trusted others. Christine and Richard, as outlined in Chapter Eight, lived with several other families in the first year of David's life, including two families with young babies. During this time, Christine in particular observed what others did, tried it out for herself, and reflected on how it could be done better or could suit them as a family. When they were eventually in their own home Christine had the support of several neighbours with young children who were members of the same Church. She also regularly spent time with some friends whom she had met when she was doing her nursing training. They also had young children. Christine referred to the practical and emotional support she received from her friends from within the Church, commenting that her other friends never cared for her in this pastoral way.   On the other hand, she frequently commented on the fit between her own style of childrearing and that of the friends with whom she had done her nursing training. She felt herself to be more open to ways of doing things congruent with her understandings of child development that she had gained through her training. Although the church community Christine belonged to was clearly important to her, she never explicitly referred to ideas about parenting suggested to her either through seminars organised by the Church or parenting materials available through the Church. In a sense, Christine's trusted others were positioned within different discourses. Her friendship with the members of her Church was articulated within a pastoral discourse effecting care and support. Her friendship with classmates from her nursing days was articulated through a discourse of child development and shared professional experience, effecting the exchange of ideas and practices and sociability.

Christine and Richard's account of how they came to use the sleep programme with David provides another useful example of the way in which experience was mediated by trusted others (pp. 176–178). The sleep programme made a clear difference between what babies want in terms of sleep and what they need, and nominated parents as the ones to

regulate a baby's sleep: "You decide when and how much sleep your child should have". (Leslie Centre, 1985, p. 4). Although the Plunket Nurse had suggested using the sleep programme at one stage to help David go to sleep, Christine and Richard had resisted this suggestion because it did not fit with their experience of what might be possible for him. Before deciding to use the sleep programme Christine had talked about David's sleep in terms of his needs, physically, for a certain amount of sleep, and psychologically, for contact with her and Richard. Christine referred to what she had read in Penelope Leach to support her practice of letting David decide when and how much sleep he had. However, as the months went by both Christine and Richard, but particularly Christine, became more and more exhausted. Then the friends they were living with at the time used the programme successfully with their child, and two other friends also used it to get their babies sleeping well. Christine and Richard starting talking about their own needs for sleep. Finally, they decided to follow the sleep programme for David.

At this stage there were also other indications that there was a shift in their broader discourse that constituted their parenting, away from privileging the needs of the baby to recognising the needs of adults also, particularly the needs of the mother (p. 181). A series of discussions between Richard and Christine that acknowledged that Christine had given up more than Richard as they became parents helped Christine to feel more positive about her situation and to assert some of her own needs as a person. She began to go to a gym regularly to try and lose the weight that she had gained with her pregnancy and which did not sit well with how she saw herself. Despite initially feeling uncomfortable with leaving David in someone else's care, she started doing relief work again. She also organised to meet with her close women friends and their children for a glass of wine and takeaways on a Friday night.

As she talked about this, Christine came the closest of anyone with whom I worked in describing a multiple and fragmented sense of self that is proposed by poststructuralist theory: "If I'm feeling good just as Christine, as opposed to David's Mum, then David's Mum is a lot better." At this period, Richard also talked about the importance of supporting Christine not just as a mother but as someone with other interests to follow. However, implicit in Christine and Richard's understandings of the self is *a* coherent core that underlies other aspects of the self, such as the mother, the nurse, the daughter-in-law,

the partner. Furthermore, this was an enduring sense of self, not created afresh each time but continuing although accompanied by a sense of growth and change. As I have indicated, the other people I worked with also articulated a coherent sense of self, not necessarily immune to contradictions or conflict, and one that changed and deepened with experience. The question remains how to explain this gap between poststructuralist understandings of a fragmented sense of self, and the sense of self articulated in the narratives of these people as they lived (not explained) their lives. There are a number of theoretical, philosophical and empirical avenues that I will explore, and I would suggest they all shed some degree of understanding that is worthwhile.

Fragmentation or multiplicity and coherence?

The poststructuralist critique of a universal, overarching and absolute "god's-eye" viewpoint revealed a standpoint that was historically specific, white and male, and that subordinated "other" voices. Contra a universal standpoint poststructuralists have advocated a vision of multiplicity and fragmentation. At the level of the group, this is expressed as multiple viewpoints, forms of life, world views, cultures, outlooks, etc., and at the level of the individual as a sense of a multiple and fragmented sense of self. A unified sense of self is understood to be an effect of humanist discourse and an oppressive concept, "The unitary self is an effect of many kinds of relations of domination. It can only sustain its unity by splitting off or repressing other parts of its own and others subjectivity" (Flax, 1993, p. 109).

The fragmentary, precarious and fluid conception of the subject that has accompanied a discursive understanding of subjectivity has been particularly attractive to feminist writers for thinking about the contradictions, conflicts and ambiguities women and girls have experienced in their daily lives, and for asserting the value of these aspects of their experience (Walkerdine, 1986; Weedon, 1987). Davies (1994, p. 3) captures these points when she argues that the concept of subjectivity arising out of poststructuralist theory

> ...shifts attention away from the unitary non-contradictory selves that we
> each struggle after as a result of our immersion in humanist discourses and
> focuses on the shifting fragmented multifaceted and contradictory nature of
> our experiences. It enables us to see the diversity and richness of our
> experience of being a person as we find ourselves positioned now one way

and now another, inside one set of power relations or another, constituted through one discourse or another in one context or another.

It has also been attractive for the possibilities it has afforded for contributing to a transformational politics and emancipatory struggle (Davies, 1992; 1994). Gibson-Graham (1995, p. 182) points to the potential for poststructuralist analyses to "liberate a multitude of political subjectivities and to make possible a wide variety of possible interventions". Flax (1993, p. 93) argues that "Only multiple subjects can invent ways to struggle against domination that will not merely recreate it."

As my discussion of people's experience has suggested, in accepting the multifaceted and contradictory nature of our experiences we do not need to jettison the idea that there may also be a coherent core of individual identity. This, however, is a coherence that is achieved, not given. Benhabib (1992, p. 198) argues that the view that the unified self is a fiction overstates the issue and obscures the ways in which not all difference is empowering or can be celebrated. Drawing on Hannah Arendt's emphasis on our immersion in "a web of narratives", she makes the case that we can think of coherence as narrative unity.

> The individual with a coherent sense of self-identity is the one who succeeds in integrating these tales and perspectives into a meaningful life history....A coherent sense of self is attained with the successful integration of autonomy and solidarity, or with the right mix of justice and care. Justice and autonomy alone cannot sustain and nourish that web of narratives in which human beings' sense of self unfolds; but solidarity and care alone cannot raise the self to the level not only of being the subject but also the author of a coherent life story. (Benhabib, 1992, p. 198)

Likewise, Giddens argues that contextual diversity need not lead to the fragmentation of the self or multiple selves:

> It can just as well, or at least in many circumstances, promote an integration of the self....A person may make use of diversity in order to create a distinctive self identity which positively incorporates elements from different settings into an integrative narrative. (Giddens, 1991, p. 190)

Falzon (1998) has critiqued the post-structuralist vision of fragmentation at the level of the group from a philosophical point of view, arguing there are several grounds on which to reject it. He argues that

> to see fragmentation as the inevitable consequence of the rejection of metaphysics is to continue to suppose that the only possible kind of unity we can have is that which is grounded metaphysically. If we cannot have an absolute metaphysical grounding to give order and unity to our existence, then there is no unity at all, and "anything goes". (Falzon, 1998, p. 17)

He also argues that it is impossible to articulate a sense of fragmentation without using a conception of unity; some sense of unity needs to be preserved to talk about the multiplicity of viewpoints and cultural outlooks as themselves unified. Moreover, he argues that the unity on which this vision of fragmentation relies is a metaphysical conception of unity and that "a single, all-embracing metaphysical unity has simply been replaced by a multiplicity of local metaphysical unities, a series of little universes, each governed by their own deep rules or all-embracing, fundamental principles, each speaking their own language" (Falzon, 1998, p. 18). One of the on-going tasks of post-structuralism has been to disrupt and deconstruct the binary oppositions through which we structure and represent our knowledge of the social world, others and ourselves. However, continuing to talk of unity or fragmentation is to remain within the realm of binary thought and is not in the long run helpful. Both the narratives of the people I worked with and Falzon's critique support this.

Another possibility to consider is that the lack of empirical support for a fragmented sense of self within this research can be explained by matters that relate to the itinerary as well as to the details of the map. It may be that the coherent and generally but not always unified sense of the self evident in people's accounts was in part an effect of the sheer repetitious nature of much of the caring work involved in looking after a child, and that was the focus of our discussion. It may also have been an effect of the narration of that experience to support group members, neighbours, friends, church members, family and me, as a researcher. As daily events were repetitively related to others they took on a greater sense of coherence. It may also be that the lives of those involved in the research were lived out in a relatively small number of contexts, and generally those of the dominant culture. All but one of the participants saw themselves as Pakeha. Although none of the participants expressed any sense that they belonged to any social class, a class analysis would describe five of the families as middle class and the other as working class[16].

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[16] Determining the class location of people is a complex question. These comments about class are based on the educational attainment of the people I was working with. Clearly educational attainment is not identical to class position, but it is closely linked to class background and life chances. Educational attainment has

Although the lives of a number of the couples did not reproduce exactly the gendered practices of the traditional nuclear family, none of the families were living lives that blatantly cut across the discourses that constitute these gendered practices.[17]   All the couples were heterosexual.   Although many of the participants made references to distinctive aspects of the regions they had lived in as children, the city they lived in or nearby was not marginalised or dominant in the discourses that articulate it as a sense of place. What I am suggesting here is that in terms of the discourses usually discussed as constituting the broad parameters of subjectivity (ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and regionality) most of these families were fairly homogeneous and similar to what are considered the dominant groups of New Zealand society.[18] Although having a child disrupted the previous lifestyles of the families, it may also have been that with one very young child the lives of all those in the households were logistically less complex than at other points yet to come in the life of the family. As these families "age" and children enter school, mothers start working full-time, and mothers and/or fathers return to study, get new jobs, upskill, lose jobs, split-up, reconstitute, go on committees, attend parent-teacher interviews, swimming lessons, Saturday morning sport, and do different things for their now ageing grandparents, it may be that these men and women experience their sense of self as multiple and fragmented.

It may also be that a sense of fragmentation of identity dominant in much post-structuralist thought is a by-product of the way that academics explain their lives, without giving due reflection to the difference between how they live their lives as opposed to how they explain their lives. Is there such a strong sense of fragmentation in the moment in which a life is lived in the world, as opposed to the moment afterwards in which it is explained in a context that privileges the theoretical and binary modes of thought? In reflecting on their own experiences as evidence for a fragmentary sense of self, which moment are these theorists writing about? This point relates to a similar one made on p. 161

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frequently been used by other studies on becoming parents to overcome some of the pitfalls associated with other measures such as occupation or level of income (see McMahon, 1995, p. 44 for a discussion of this).

[17] In the one family where both parents were working full-time many of the daily tasks of looking after the baby were shared during the week. At the weekend the mother was the main caregiver while the father worked outside, sometimes having the baby with him. This family also talked of a time when the mother would be based at home more.

where I argued that in living their lives people do not observe or problematise the
contradictions that preoccupy those who analyse them.

It is perhaps salutary to return to the point I made at the beginning of this chapter
when I argued for the need to live with ambiguity and indeterminacy in our analyses. This
too is supported by Falzon's argument that we need to abandon the idea fundamental to
both the metaphysical and fragmentation visions, that we can completely comprehend and
organise the world. He proposes that dialogue, by which he means reciprocal interaction, is
the appropriate alternative:

> But we break decisively from metaphysical thinking when we recognise
> that, although we may struggle to domesticate and shape the world, the
> world can never be completely captured or wholly organised. It always
> resists and exceeds our grasp. In seeking to order the world, we inevitably
> come up against that which is other, that which eludes our categories and
> which is able to affect and shape us in turn. In other words, we inevitably
> engage in dialogue. (Falzon, 1998, p. 4)

The narratives of the men and women I worked with support this notion that we inevitably
engage in dialogue, and that it is through dialogue that the given is perpetuated and
transformed. I shall come back to Falzon's conception of dialogue in the next section.

External regulation, self-government and techniques of the self

Christine and Richard's narratives (pp. 172–181) about David's sleep are also useful
for thinking about some of the issues that were raised in Chapter Two about Foucault's
understandings about the regulation of behaviour. In his initial work, Foucault was
interested in the external regulation of human activity and he focussed in particular on the
ritual examination, a procedure involving both surveillance and normalising judgements.
Historically, the Plunket Nurses have been positioned within the discourse of infant care as
the external regulators of mothers and babies.[19] There were echoes of this in some of the
descriptions parents gave of their interactions with Plunket Nurses, and this was evident in
the description in Chapter Eight of the Plunket Nurse weighing the baby and comparing her
position on a graph with other babies. However, there was a sense from both mothers and

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[18] One of the families was clearly different, in terms of these broad sociological markers, in that they
belonged to a closed Church community who were keen to keep their children isolated from outside
influences. This will be discussed more fully later in the chapter.

[19] See Sue Kedgley (1996) for examples from the experiences of mothers that illustrate this.

fathers that Plunket Nurses were positioned as those who might have instituted a form of external government but that they no longer really wielded the power to do so and now they were more concerned with making mothers feel confident.[20] While they made references to "admitting" things to the Plunket Nurse, they also talked of the Plunket Nurse going along with what they were doing and giving advice which they could take or leave or of ignoring the Plunket Nurse's advice when it didn't fit with their experience or their orientation towards an issue. [21]

In the work of his middle period, as Foucault's attention turned from the body to the self, he focussed on the techniques of self-government, arguing that individuals have come to surveill and govern themselves. He pointed to the act of confession and the expansion of the methods of the social sciences as part of a move from external regulation self-government.[22] There were the echoes of this in some of the descriptions mothers gave of their encounters with their Plunket Nurses; for example, Christine felt "sheepish" when she "confessed" to the nurse that David was still feeding at night (p. 177). The addition of "builder of confidence" to the Plunket Nurse's role illustrates the way in which the psychological sciences have contributed to the process of self-government and objectification of subjectivity, as something to be rationally managed through the continual monitoring of the self, guided by experts from the human sciences. However, I would suggest that in the main the process of self-government surrounding parenting was carried out on a daily basis during the intense exchange of information between parents and their friends, support group members, neighbours, family members, etc., about the care of babies. As I remarked in Chapter Five, I was initially shocked at how much detail parents shared with each other, and other people they met about the care of their babies. They

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[20] Many of the rhetorical devices that previously legitimated the Plunket Nurse as an authority figure have gone, for example, the black bag and the nurses uniform, including the hat and veil, which have been replaced by a discrete badge. However, there is still considerable power in the ritual associated with the weighing of a baby, stripped naked and enclosed in a nappy, hanging from the kind of scale that you would use for weighing a good sized trout.

[21] The Plunket Nurse who visited me with my first baby was one of the older style nurses. She had just become a grandmother for the first time and often talked about her daughter and newborn granddaughter when she visited to weigh and check Maryse. On one of these visits she too, speaking as a grandmother, gave the sense that Plunket Nurses were the external adjudicators of mothers as she prefaced what she went on to say, aghast, "And do you know what the Plunket Nurse said to her, that the baby wasn't thriving."

[22] This process of self-governance need not be seen as necessarily negative; being shaped in accordance with cultural forms is part of the process by which people become historically constituted. However, this is not to negate that it can also be a repressive process of domination and regulation

discussed all sorts of aspects of their babies' daily life, behaviour and growth in detail, reporting not only on the baby but also themselves. These interchanges can be understood as an exchange of information but they can also be understood as a subtle form of self-governance in which people negotiated what was within a range of the acceptable, sometimes moving beyond what they had previously considered acceptable. It was very rare to hear anyone criticised for what they said, and what was said was often stated as muted or in twilight zone. As I indicated in Chapter Five one of the childbirth educators described the tone of these interchanges as "perhaps not actively speaking what to do but just discussing how you do it kind of thing." That Christine and Richard eventually decided to use the sleep programme, and Nicola and Simon accepted that Edward might sleep with them, illustrates the way in which these exchanges negotiated the boundaries for what was possible.

In the latest period of his work Foucault's attention turned to the way in which individuals created themselves within the patterns proposed, suggested and imposed by their culture (Foucault, 1988b). In pursuing this question Foucault travelled the path of a textual analysis of philosophers in the Classical and early Christian eras and focussed on the stylisation of the self. Various critiques of this latest turn in his work were outlined in Chapter Two, but the most relevant of these for this research was that his "aesthetics of existence" privileged an isolated process of self-stylisation and did not explore the way in which the self is styled in a social world of cultural and political constraints and collective practices. This critique is clearly supported by this research, which represents the way social life is a matter of inter-experience and intersubjectivity (Jackson, 1996, p. 26). Furthermore, it suggests that while Foucault concentrated on "limit experiences" in terms of pushing out the boundaries of what is possible, it is important to consider the more modest acts of resistance and changes ordinary people live towards in their daily lives. For example, one of the families remained very committed to the gender roles inscribed in the traditional nuclear family and articulated this within the discourse of a closed, fundamentalist Christianity. However, generally speaking the other families had forged modes of parenting that, while still "doing gender"[23], had chipped away at the boundaries

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[23] Scott Coltrane (1996) uses this term, coined by Candace West and Donald Zimmerman (1987), to capture the way that through everyday interactions people sustain expressions of an underlying feminine or masculine "nature". In his book *Family man: fatherhood, housework and gender equity*, he argues on the basis of his

of what it was possible for women and men to do as mothers and fathers. Clearly, there were variations between the families but in comparison with their own family experiences the fathers were doing a broader range of caring tasks for their babies, having time when they were solely responsible for the baby, and also taking responsibility for some of the baby's visits to the Plunket Nurse and doctor. They were also more engaged in some aspects of the inside domestic work of the family, such as tasks associated with the washing and cooking for the family. In contrast with their own family experience, these mothers worked outside the home before their children were at school, and they also expected to have some time for their own interests. These differences were not articulated as part of any feminist discourse on family life, but more broadly seen as common sense and important for the psychological well-being of the family members. As I suggested at the beginning of the chapter, the discourses of psychology and liberal feminism have come to constitute much of what is common sense for this group of middle-class families.

Falzon (1998) has argued that a minimal, 'thin' understanding of dialogue as reciprocal interaction is useful for thinking about the way the social world is ordered and transformed. As we attempt to order our world and that which is *other* in it, in terms of *our* categories and frameworks, we interpret the world. However, the other does not always yield to our interpretations, it resists and affects us, forcing the revisions of interpretations, effecting an interplay, a dialogue. Falzon's account does not deny that the world is characterised by various forms of order and hierarchy that establish relatively stable hierarchical relations and dominant understandings. However, in so far as these forms of order are understood to arise out of dialogue "they are continually challenged by new forms of resistance and otherness. They are destined to be transformed through continuing dialogue." (Falzon, 1998, p. 5). At particular points, he argues, when otherness is totally overcome and dialogue is interrupted particular forms of life become closed and unchanging. However, these moments of domination are best understood as temporary, and destined to be overcome as the inevitable dialogue in the middle of which we exist creates the possibility of renewed forms of resistance. Falzon argues that a dialogical

research that most men "will spend significantly more time in the day-today activities of parenting than the generation that preceded them....because of the many underlying demographic, economic, and social forces that continue to shape their lives" (Coltrane, 1996, p. 206). In terms of sharing household labor, he saw the

picture of "an open-ended, reciprocal interplay or combat of corporeal forces" (Falzon, 1998, p. 45) is also found in Foucault's account of social and historical existence.

This thin notion of dialogue as reciprocal interaction is helpful in explaining the ways in which people's parenting practices were transformed through their interactions with others. The 'thin' aspect of it seems particularly helpful in understanding how people live with what seem like contradictions, as they gleaned bits from here and there to forge a *modus vivendi*. Sometimes it was what they observed or in books or on television, and at other times a verbal exchange that started the process of engagement with the other. Sometimes these interactions happened in the past but the echoes remain, in the present. For example, it was when she visited her friends' families during the school holidays that Christine's understanding of what was possible for family life was reordered and she carried this with her into the life she was trying to create for David (pp. 173–4). Liz talked of wanting to create a life for Lucy in which she would be able to share the deeper more meaningful things with her parents. She thought that observing how things were done in the Cosby Show would help her with this (p. 142). Other parents I know have talked about taking up aspects of family life they observed in novels to go beyond the family life they themselves had.[24] Sartre describes the way in which the givens of our childhood are both preserved and transformed in the project of the self: "By projecting ourselves toward our possible so as to escape the contradictions of our existence, we unveil them, and they are revealed in our very action although this action is richer than they are and gives us access to a social world in which new contradictions will involve us in new conduct." (Sartre, 1968, p. 101) However, the narratives of Christine and Richard highlight the way in which the project of the self is not self-contained but intersubjective. Christine's desire to give David a sense of love, security, and knowing who he was, was not just because she hadn't had this herself and she had seen the daily familial life of others who had (p. 173). She felt that because of his own family experience Richard thought all this came naturally, and she knew it didn't. So, she talked about it to Richard, came back to it again and again.

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changes occurring as neither revolutionary nor inevitable but depending on many piecemeal decisions in daily life.

[24] bell hooks (1991, p. 54)) evocatively explains the way that literature transformed her life, "Novels brought me close to myself, helped me overcome the estrangement that dominantion breeds between psyche and self. Reading, I could vicariously experience, dare to know and feel, without threat of repression, retaliation,

Richard's account of the life that he wanted for David did include those things that Christine yearned for, but not stated so passionately, and he also talked of other things too, like children seeing a good parental relationship, learning perseverance, being financially secure which related to his own familial experience (p. 174).. These various moments of dialogue that have a bearing on these lives reveal that "As human beings we are both interpreted, shaped and organised by other human beings, and able to transgress imposed limits, to create new forms of thought and action, to shape and transform these others in turn." (Falzon, 1998, p. 41)

Own Family Experience

So far, the discussion of this chapter has been structured around the mediators of expert knowledge and trusted others. However, I have inevitably already been drawn into considering the way in which "own family experience" also mediated the experience of becoming a parent. In this section I want to focus on aspects of the experiences of two of the families who, for different reasons, were not integrated into the dense network of young families that were a major part of the social world of the other families involved in the research. Again, these narratives do not serve as a basis for generalisations for other families in this situation.   They do illuminate the way in which without so many possibilities of dialogue with others in a similar situation these families seemed to be thrown back on their own family experiences more, although. as will be evident, neither family was merely reproducing the givens of their own life.

Embracing and surpassing external authorities

Andrea and Brent (pp. 189–98) were younger than the other parents involved in the research and had no friends or brothers and sisters with young children.   They were living away from their hometown while Brent completed his study, and so were removed from their usual networks of trusted others. With one car, and living in a rented house on a farm Andrea spent much more time at home and by herself than the other mothers. Andrea and

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silencing. My mind became a place of refuge, a sanctuary, a room I could enter with no fear of invasion. My mind became a site of resistance."

Brent also claimed that knowing how to care for babies was a matter of common sense but in contrast with Liz and Martin, Val and Tony, Nicola and Simon, and Christine and Richard they had little recourse to the knowledge of other parents or the range of expert knowledge that these families drew on. The dominant standpoints from which they responded to expert knowledge from were the immediate concerns of the day and their own family experience. Andrea and Brent initially made the most references of any of the families to asking the Plunket Nurse something or looking something up in "the book". Initially, both Andrea and Brent found "the book" good, and early on there were very clear echoes of the discourse of Penelope Leach as they spoke about doing whatever it took to keep Sophie happy (p. 193). However, as the year passed and there was the sense that they had sorted out nuts and bolts of caring for Sophie, they became more critical of Leach's advice (p. 195). Implicit in these critiques are the echoes of their inherited world and the outline of the life they were living towards.

Andrea had identified not being like her mother as the most important thing about the way that she was caring for Sophie (p. 195–6). However, there were also occasions on which she directly or indirectly affirmed her mother's practices. Andrea, who thought of herself as not as bad as her mother but still fairly fanatical about keeping the house clean, felt that allowing a child to try feeding herself at the age suggested by Penelope Leach was "disastrous". Likewise, she felt her advice about letting 6-month-old babies try and put their socks on was "rubbish". Both of these bits of advice are articulated by Leach within a general discourse of allowing babies to have fun and enjoy what is being done to them by letting them feel that they are in control. Parents' are counselled to find pleasure in guiding babies without them noticing it, or distracting them before they object to something, and finding ways to stay on the same side as the baby. These bits of advice are also articulated within a broader psychological discourse of encouraging sensory and motor development and exploration, and independence. Both bits of advice were seen by Andrea and Brent as creating more hassle, and their responses suggest that for them, in terms of daily routines, always catering to the interests of the baby was not desirable. As the year went by, Andrea and Brent also began to feel that Sophie had to fit in with the needs of other members of the family, both in terms of getting household chores done or making "space" for Andrea to go off for a run, or start playing netball again on a Saturday morning and for Brent to pick up

rugby again on Saturday afternoons. This shift was articulated within the discourse of popular psychology in terms of the (psychological) needs of adult family members and making space for those needs to be fulfilled.

Embodied practices

Andrea and Brent's discussion of the way that Sophie should be disciplined also illuminates a sense of people bringing previous lived experiences to discourse (pp. 196–98). In contrast with the dominant contemporary discourse of expert knowledge that advocates not physically punishing children, Andrea drew on her own experiences as a child who had been physically disciplined to support her practice of slapping Sohpie's hand when she did something which Andrea didn't want her to. She also reflected on the way in which her aunt hadn't physically disciplined her children because she felt that Andrea's mother had smacked Andrea and her sister Aimee too much. Andrea also drew on a discourse of the family as a private domain in which parents have the right to decide how to discipline their children. Brent drew on his experience of the odd hiding to support the view that Andrea should physically discipline Sophie when necessary. For both Andrea and Brent the discourse of physical discipline was a gendered practice, one that nominated mothers as the person to do it, and fathers, if they had to be involved, to feign physical discipline. The dominant sense of their discourse about their own experiences of physical discipline as children was that it had been about instilling a sense of knowing what was right and what was wrong. However, in both of their accounts, at the edges, there is also the resonance of a discourse of physical violence as Andrea described the fighting that occurred as Aimee began to hit back at her mother, and as Brent described the last occasion of physical discipline, when he had been "bowled" by his father.

The issue of whether parents were going to discipline their children physically or not was just beginning to surface in a more tangible way for many of the families as I was completing my research with them. It came up, as topic of conversation at two different support groups at which I was present, and it was by no means a free and easy dialogue. Generally, there was a sense of constraint as a number of the participants acknowledged they had been smacked as children and either thought it hadn't hurt them so they would also do it, or they could imagine that over certain issues they might smack their children.

In one instance, two of the support group members who did not agree with smacking reported to me afterwards that they had felt very uncomfortable with the discussion but unable to speak out about it. Over other issues such as breastfeeding and where babies slept, some of the parents made references to the practices of other cultures or different moments in history to support what they were doing that was different from the dominant way of doing things. However, the issue of physical discipline was not reflexively questioned in this way. I would argue this constrained dialogue, at times verging on silence, suggests the dominant discourse that has constituted smacking as part of an acceptable disciplinary regime is beginning to be challenged by a counter hegemonic discourse. This emerging discourse has contested more general cultural practices that have obscured and so condoned physical domination in daily life in New Zealand. Until recently, physical confrontations in sport and school bullying have largely been seen as something to be accepted as part of life, particularly for boys and men. Domestic violence has been seen as the private business of the family. Increasingly there are more voices from different positions claiming these issues to be ones of community concern and there is the recognition that to change these practices requires the involvement of both communities and individuals. There is also resistance to these changes.

Sense of self in process

Andrea and Brent's discussions about the life they wished to build for Sophie also illuminate the notion of subjectivity being discursively constituted and constituting, a matter of intersubjectivity and a continuing process. It also attests to the importance of an understanding of discourse that incorporates both language and practices. Brent's mother was Maori and his father Pakeha. Brent described himself to me as "both half and half, getting the best of both worlds" and he wanted Sophie to have an awareness of her Maori background. Andrea saw Brent's ethnicity as "changeable, one minute he's Maori and the next minute he's not", and noted that he didn't look Maori. Brent drew on the discourse of his lived experience both to assert what he valued about being Maori and implicitly to counter other regulating statements that could be used to question his Maoriness (p. 198). He and his family did not speak Maori. They were not "active in the culture". They were not very traditional. But he felt his life was tangibly different, enriched by his lived

experience as part of a Maori family. He had something of "their way of life", accrued through hanging out and being on the Marae with them. This was something that no one could take away through invoking categories, such as linguistic ability or traditionality or physical appearance. In his discussions with me, Brent didn't give a sense that this multiple positioning led to a fragmented sense of self, but rather that in some contexts one aspect of himself was foregrounded and in other contexts the other was foregrounded. Andrea drew on a universalising nationalistic discourse of sameness and normality, attempting to arrest Brent's assertion of difference, claiming "we should all be New Zealanders, there shouldn't be any Maori or Pakeha". As Andrea put her view about Sophie's awareness of her Maori background she reduced the issue to whether she should learn to speak Maori and the importance of Sophie having a choice about that. She drew a parallel with the issue of Sophie attending Sunday School so she could at some stage choose whether she would go to Church (p. 199).

Closed systems of thought and dialogue

Peter and Marie (pp. 199–205) were also comparatively isolated from other young families with children. One lot of friends had just had a baby, and Peter's sister had two children but both these families lived too far away to see regularly. Neither of them was employed so they didn't ever refer to conversations they had shared with the people they worked with about parenting. Marie eventually joined a Plunket-initiated support group but saw it more as a source of baby sitters than of ideas or ways of doing things. Peter and Marie were both members of a closed traditional fundamentalist Church and were very anxious about harmful influences on their family from outside the Church. They mainly accessed expert knowledge about childrearing through their church community. A member of an American branch of the Church had written many books on childrearing. Church members either read these books themselves or gained access to the ideas through their conversations with those who had read them. For Peter and Marie their trusted others shared the same expert knowledge.

Peter and Marie's accounts are interesting for reflecting on the way in which dialogue can be limited by the unthinking closure of discourse that is grounded in dogma. In this case, only categories that fitted with the social order and forms prescribed by the

discourse of their Church were admissible, and other categories were suppressed. Clearly prescribed gender roles were foundational to this. Peter and Marie articulated this as stipulating that the father would go to work to provide for the family and the mother would stay home and spend all her time training the children. However, in reflecting on the contradiction between this and their own situation, with Peter having been unemployed for some years, they added that this was in an ideal world. Ideas about children's wills and supervising children so as to guard against bad influences from outside the church community were also part of these regulatory statements. For example, Marie referred to training the child, standards and training techniques, personal supervision of Robin so he would not learn bad things from other children, the need for home schooling, controlling his stubborn will, and spanking him to control his will (p. 203).

Generally, Marie drew on the discourse of childrearing that came to her through the community of their Church. However, at other times, at least in her conversations with me, Marie hesitantly drew on the discourse of psychology, to resist some of the practices suggested to her by members of the Church or her parent's treatment of her as a child, which she now considered inappropriate. Marie read no other literature than that provided by the Church, and her own formal education had stopped when she was fifteen. However, it was as if she had access to some of the ideas of psychological discourse through cultural osmosis. She talked of not spanking Robin when he wouldn't sleep without a breast feed because she considered him to have a need for security and that it was a psychological thing and something that he would grow out of. As she reflected on her own upbringing, and the parenting practices of an Aunt and Uncle she admired, she argued how she felt had her parents explained the consequences of her actions to her as a child, it would have helped to foster a sense of self-discipline. She felt the long lectures and the physical punishment that followed had not done this. She also talked about the need to foster social relationships for Robin with other children so that he would not have the inferiority complex she felt she had had as a child (p. 200). Here the effects of a psychological discourse were empowering as it gave her an alternative position to "dialogue"with, if only in her mind, against practices she found oppressive. This underscores the way no discourse is inherently liberating or oppressive but needs to be examined in its particular situation.

Peter was not positioned by the childrearing discourse of the church to have any substantial involvement in the daily parenting of Robin. Peter read none of the books Marie had borrowed from the Church nor did he talk about Robin with fathers outside of the church community. Peter's access to discourses about childrearing seemed limited to his own family experience, what Marie talked to him about, and the broader discourse of their Church governing family life and regulating the practices of men and women. Although Peter was also at home, both he and Marie considered looking after Robin was Marie's job. Robin was occasionally with Peter but this was primarily when he was asleep, being walked in a stroller, or watching Peter garden. As soon as Robin awoke or he tired of being walked or watching Peter, he was Marie's responsibility. Sometimes when Peter spoke with frustration about Robin it seemed he had no understanding of what Robin could do, what might be reasonable to expect and how he might be changing as got older (p. 203). For example, when Robin was around 2 months Peter thought Robin got fussy and bored very quickly and seemed unable to concentrate on a toy beyond 2 minutes. When Robin was 8 months he spoke with frustration of having to walk him around the block at 7.00 am to get him back to sleep. In his comparative isolation from the on-going exchange of experience the other fathers and mothers reported, and positioned by the discourse of his community as a providing father rather than a sharing-the-care father, Peter's acculturation to being a father was restricted to a much narrower range of cultural categories, forms and practices. At the time I did the research, Peter wished to reproduce his own childhood for Robin, but hoped he would be able to spend more time with him than his own father had.

In this section I have focussed on the ways in which the families who had less contact with other people with young children drew on their own family experiences. However, what is interesting in all the narratives is "the heartfelt wish to provide for one's own child what was lacking for oneself" (Cox Walkover, 1992, p. 179) or as Nicola put it "I guess, you know, the parent in you always wants to give your child more, things that you missed out on in your upbringing that you want to make sure they don't miss out". This point will be returned to in Chapter Ten. However it underscores the argument I have been making that in the practice of parenting the project of the self and the other are intertwined.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have proposed that becoming a parent can be understood as a project, an oriented life. Sartre (1968, p. 150) proposed that "Man defines himself by his project. This material being perpetually goes beyond the condition which is made for him; he reveals and determines his situation by transcending it in order to objectify himself – by work, action or gesture". However, I have argued that in the project of becoming a parent there is a dialectical relationship between the project of the self and the project of the other, the child. As people lived their lives towards creating a life for their child, they projected across not only the possibilities of the life of the child, but also their own life, and what they themselves had succeeded in making of what they had been given. Furthermore, I have suggested that the project of becoming a parent is situated in intersubjectivity; it occurs within and between social relationships, including those from the past as well as the present. I have also argued for the need to recognise the embodied lived experience that people bring to the project. In particular, I have suggessted this may engender a certain proclivity for individuals to be constituted by particular discourses, or to speak through certain discourses as they orient themselves towards creating a particular life for their child. People drew on a variety of discourses as they described how they had come to know how to care for their child. However, I have suggested the echoes of the discourses of psychology and liberal feminism can now be found in what is considered common sense in caring for a baby.

As the year passed, a number of the families moved from asserting the primacy of the needs of the baby to asserting that the needs of adults have to be recognised. To return to the point made in Chapter Seven, that people chose to talk about this change in this way, underscores the way that we think of narratives as made from social experiences. However, the babies' bodily requirements are a reminder that there are biological aspects of an individual's being, that exist and have real effects, but that cannot immediately be rethought, although with time they may change. Connell (1995, p. 386) reminds us that pushed to its limit the social constructionist position becomes a form of idealism and can make the body disappear.

Throughout this chapter I have also examined the extent to which the people I worked with experienced themselves as having a fragmented sense of subjectivity or a unified sense of self. On the basis of my research with this particular group of people in the initial stages of family life I have argued that we should entertain the possibility that people may live their lives with multiple and sometimes contradictory subjectivities and with a sense of a coherent core identity that is forged not given. However, I have also stressed that it is those who study social life who are more preoccupied with the contradictions than those who are living life. Giddens (1991) has argued that expert knowledge has a filtering role in reflexively organised life planning as self-identity is structured. However, I have proposed the advice and experience of trusted others and the narratives people had constructed about their own up-bringing mediated the expert knowledge.

PART THREE

CHAPTER TEN

Points of Insight, Connection and Future Possibilities

In the last part of the thesis I have been exploring and constructing tours and maps concerned with the experience of becoming a parent from a very close standpoint. I now wish to retreat to a more distant position and examine the broader features and research context of this study. I go back to the initial research question and those raised as possible avenues of inquiry in Chapter Two and consider the findings to the questions that emerged throughout the course of the research as most central to this thesis. I also examine how the findings sit alongside some other studies broadly concerned with the experience of becoming a parent. Limitations of the research are reflected upon, and implications for future research are discussed. I then consider what the findings of this research suggest about parenting and "the good". I conclude by revisiting the strengths of an analysis that is informed by contemporary phenomenology's attention to the temporal and intersubjective nature of experience and which heeds the demand of radical empiricism to work with "the plurality of all experienced facts, regardless of how they are conceived and classified"(Jackson, 1996, p. 7)

Research Questions

I began this research with the question : How do people become parents? To answer it I embarked upon a two-pronged research approach: an examination of discourses surrounding becoming a parent, and an 18-month period of fieldwork with a small number of people becoming parents for the first time. Initially, I engaged with the work of Foucault as I explored what his project (the examination of the ways in which the individual is constituted, both as an object and a subject in western culture) could offer to our understanding of the process of becoming a mother or father. In Chapter Two I identified a number of possible questions for analysing discourses and for examining their effects. However, I also argued that these questions needed to be examined not just in the literature but in people's experience in the lifeworld. Drawing on Contemporary Phenomenology, I argued that it was crucial to go beyond linguistically and cognitively determined models to interogate the way the experience is

also constituted by bodily practices, memories, feelings, and the body itself. The following are the questions, broadly stated, I have pursued in this thesis:

- What are the dominant statements about the experience of becoming a parent?
- What ideas are foundational to these statements?
- How do they conceive of the subject?
- What are their effects?
- How do people become parents in the life-world?
- What is the relationship between discourse and the self in the life-world?

These questions are a subset of those I identified as possible paths of inquiry in Chapter Two. As I proceeded with the research, I chose not to follow the path of analysing the genisis of particular discourses. Given the constraints of what it is possible to do within one thesis, I chose to pursue the questions related to the identification of discourses within the previous research literature and the popular child-rearing manuals, and to the relationship between discourse and lived experience in the life-world. Previous studies about the experience of becoming a parent have not focussed on the intersection of discourse and lived experience, hence this was a particularly important path to explore.

Findings

In the academic literature, previous researchers have worked within a discourse that asserts the experience of becoming a parent is a (normal) crisis and can be understood in terms permeated by psychology. In the earlier psychological studies the idea that biological changes effect a psychological counterpart was foundational, whereas in the later psychological studies and the sociological studies the idea of oppositions in cultural meaning was foundational to the discourse of crisis. In both the psychological and sociological literature, the idea that a gendered sense of self colours all experience was also foundational. I have suggested, in Chapter Three, that in the main previous researchers have been constrained by the dominant objectivist scientific discourse. Although they have asserted that their inquiry is about experience, they have failed to take people's experiences, including their own, seriously. Hence, the subject is conceived in terms of categories imposed, by the researchers, on experience as higher

order explanatory concepts. In doing this, the flux, the contradictions, the emotions and the embodied nature of experience, and the complex sense of self born from experience, are lost.

As well as shaping the meaning of people's experiences, I have argued that the discourse of crisis legitimates the intervention of professional experts in the family, and contributes to a domiant psychological discourse about family life. Rose (1996) argues that the psychologisation of things to do with family life is important for the government (directing, ruling, regulating, influencing, mastering, leading) of social life more generally. Psychology, he contends, provides a justification for the authority of those who claim authority over social conduct, transposing the project of living a good life from an ethical to a psychological register. Hence, the possibility of on-going dialogue about the nature of the good life is foreclosed by the legitimation of expert discourse about these matters. Furthermore, Rose argues that psychology has turned each of us into a psychologist by "incorporating its vocabulary into our ways of speaking, its gaze into our ways of looking, its judgments into our calculations and decisions" (1996, p. 123), hence imbricating us in the processes of self-government.

This link between psychology and governmentality is clear in my analysis of the childrearing literature. In Chapter Four, I argued that the overarching dominant discourse of the childrearing literature throughout this century was one in which the social ills of each generation were to be remedied for the next through individual change. In the early years of this century, the dominant statements were underpinned by ideas about physical and mental hygiene and a moral order based on habits. By the middle of the century, the dominant statements were founded on ideas about normal emotional and cognitive development and a moral order based on social adjustment. As a discourse of normal development became more dominant, mothers became positioned as the source of emotional stability for children and as regulators of children's emotional development, and then also as a source of constant intellectual stimulation. Initially, fathers were excluded from the dominant statements but then they became positioned to be a link to the outside world and a playful companion. In recent years the dominant statements have been articulated in terms of parenting. Although a close reading of the texts reveal that much of what is said in the name of parenting can be read as directed at women, I argue that this shift in the subject of the statements has effected a space in the literature which legitimates fathers' involvement in a much wider range of caring tasks.

Whether it be directed at mothers or fathers or parents, the child-rearing literature clearly lays the responsibility for rearing with children with individual (private) families. It also reduces the issue of social ills to one of better techniques of self (and child) government. The idea that the next generation will provide what was lacking for the previous generation was manifested in the narratives of the people I worked with. However, it was articulated in terms of the individuals within families and not generations within society. A close reading of the child-rearing literature suggests that many of those who have written childrearing texts have been moved to do so partly on the basis of problematic aspects in their own experiences of growing up.

My own research has suggested the people I worked with became parents through experience; by trial and error, observing and undergoing the journey. Their experiences were mediated by the practices of trusted others, their own familial experiences and expert knowledge. However, there is no simple line of argument to be taken through this as they at times both refused and affirmed the constituting power of the discourses manifested in the advice and practices emanating from these sources. In the context of these families' lives, a discourse of becoming parents through experience was empowering, affirming the knowledge of ordinary people and specifically mothers and fathers like themselves, in contrast to that of expert knowledge. It validated a sense of themselves, as they experienced this period on a minute-by-minute basis, as active agents, caring and strategising the best they could for their child. It also enabled them to live *in* the world, not radically split or alienated from it. However, I have also argued that experience itself is not outside culture and free of discursive practices. As people narrated their experiences, they often used the vocabulary and judgements of the discourses of psychology and liberal feminism, with both oppressive and liberatory effects. They also referred to the discourse of "common-sense". The details of the participants' accounts have thrown into relief the intersubjective nature of experience. However, the dominant statements *within* their narratives and in the child-rearing literature constitute an understanding of matters to do with the family as private and individual concerns.

It became clear that the people I worked with did not seem as perplexed as contemporary researchers and theorists about the inconsistencies or contradictions in their narratives as they lived their lives. They either dexterously wove them into the narratives they constructed about their lives or ignored them, knowing that their lives go on without the need to explain all contradicitions or inconsistencies. Narrative is seen

as a way of creating and maintaing a sense of cohesion; however, I have argued it is not the only mode of maintaining a sense of cohesion. The repititious tasks of caring for another, and the habitual bodily practices born from that repetition also contribute to a sense of cohesion.[1]

As I considered the relationship between discourse and self in the lifeworld I argued that the process of becoming a parent can usefully be understood in terms of the Sartrian notion of "the project". As the mothers and fathers oriented their lives to creating a life for their child they both embraced, refused and struggled with the givens of their own childhoods and other facets of their present and future subjectivity. This was an on-going process in which they reflexively engaged with both the projects of the self and the other. However, I have argued that Sartre's individual remains too solitary, self-contained and detached and so have suggested a notion of the project that is grounded in social practices and relationships. The extent to which parents expressed the desire to try and foster more meaningful, intimate, communicative relationships with their children, than they had experienced with their parents, supports the argument for an understanding of the project grounded in intersubjectivity.

Links to Other Studies

In Chapter Three, I focussed solely on previous studies that had been concerned with the experiences of people becoming parents for the first time because I was interested in the ways academic research had constituted the experience. It was also necessary to place some limits on what was feasible to examine within the vast literature to do with parents in general. I now wish to discuss briefly some similarities and differences between my findings and some other studies. These are studies that had a slightly different focus than mine and/or emerged in the literature after I had carried out my research. A consideration of these studies now affords the opportunity to reflect on the resonances between my findings and research within the broader field of research about parents, and this in turn suggests some possibilities for future research.

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[1] McMahon (1995) makes a similar point when she argues that the everyday practices of being a mother helped to produce a gendered sense of self, and that becoming a mother was both a gendered and engendering process, "The women produced babies but having those babies produced 'womanly persons'" (p. 269).

Mediators of experience

What people bring to expert advice on childrearing and how it is taken up or refuted has not been explicitly explored by other studies. However, there are some similarities and differences between my study and those focussed on other aspects of being a parent, in terms of with whom parents discussed their children and their parenting practices. All the studies referred to in the material that follows were concerned with families with more than one child or with a broader age range of children, and so many of the children were older than those in the families I worked with and the parents had been parents for a longer time. There were also significant differences in the cultural composition of the groups studied. Although these studies were all broadly qualitative there were differences in the specific methodologies used.[2]

Backett (1982) found in her research that the parents exchanged ideas with friends as a means of gaining wider experiences on which to base decisions and this was seen to be qualitatively different from seeking expert advice. For about one third of her respondents to seek advice from medical or professional advice was an admission of failure. However, they considered that nothing could really prepare women and men for the experience of being a parent and rearing children, and that the experience of doing it for your own children was the only source of truly relevant knowledge. Ribbens (1994) made a distinction between the influences on the way mothers are with their children inside the home and outside the home. Within the home, she argued, "these women had stronger parallels with their own mothers' views than with the perspectives of their husbands...Where women had developed different childrearing ideas from their own mothers, they had incorporated their mothers' ideas rather than rejecting them" (Ribbens, 1994, p. 80). Outside the home, Ribbens argued that the women's ideas were more variable and independent, often reflecting their own experiences as adults. For many of the women Ribbens interviewed, their own mothers were almost as involved with the childcare, in terms of practical help and discussions about the children, as the fathers. McMahon (1995) found that middle-class

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[2] Backett (1982) conducted five interviews over a 15-month period with 22 middle-class English couples with two children, one of who was to be younger than 3 years of age. Ribbens (1994) did quasi life history interviews with 24 white women living in middle-income households in England over a period of 4 years, with the oldest child in the family being 7 years of age when the research commenced. McMahon (1995) interviewed 59 Canadian working-class and middle-class women who worked full-time with at least one preschool child. They were interviewed once using an interview schedule that contained structured, semi-structured and open-ended questions.

women talked about their children with their partners and other parents but not with the people they worked with. Working-class women talked about their children primarily with members of their female network, including friends, workmates and female kin, with male partners having a secondary role.

I noted earlier that Giddens (1991) privileged the role of expert knowledge as a filter within the reflexive project of the self, but that in the accounts of the people involved in this research they emphasised the way knowledge and practices of trusted others and the stories of their own upbringing mediated expert advice. The findings of the studies by Backett, Ribbens and McMahon also suggest that the mediational role of others is important in filtering expert knowledge.

Clearly there are a number of factors, including variations in methodology, that may have contributed to these similarities and differences. One of the more interesting questions for future investigation would be to explore more fully the ways in which sociality more generally is constructed within particular cultures (and subcultures), and how this facilitates and constrains the sharing of advice and practices. In four of the six families with whom I did my research there was a lot of coming and going of friends and family, often unannounced and spontaneously initiated.[3] Many of the mothers regularly attended support group meetings hosted in the members'own homes. Two of the families spent considerable amounts of time living with other families while their houses were finished. This suggests a different sense of being with people from the other studies, and helps to go some way to explaining how expert advice was mediated by the advice and practices of trusted others.[4] The picture painted by Ribbens of English familial life suggests that there are firmer and clearer boundaries drawn around the home in England as the place where family life is lived out, while friendships are more commonly conducted outside the home. These arrangements would support more parallel views between mothers and their own mothers on childrearing practices within the home.

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[3] The situations of the other two families were different. One of the families was more isolated because of having a child away from their hometown and at an age where none of their friends were even contemplating having children, and also they lived in the country. The other family belonged to a Church whose members tended to keep to their own community.

[4] It is also my impression that New Zealand culture is to some extent anti-intellectual, as is evidenced by phrases commonly heard such as "it is just a theory" or "that's academic really", implying that an intellectual understanding of the world has little to offer. This may also explain the way in which expert advice was mediated by these parents and not merely accepted.

Desiring to do things differently

The people with whom I worked were able to express both a sense of happiness, satisfaction, and respect for their own childhood and their parents' contribution to that, and a sense of dissatisfaction, fuelling a desire to do things differently from their mothers and fathers. Frequently, the desire to do things differently was articulated in terms of fostering more intimate, communicative relationships that were deep and meaningful. Coltrane (1996, p. 120–121) claims most mothers and fathers he interviewed were trying to raise their children differently from the way they had been raised, and that this usually included seeking a greater sense of intimacy, connection, emotional closeness and communication than they had had with their own fathers.[5] Ribbens (1994) argues that the parents involved in her research were clearly involved in the development of "corrective scripts", to put right what they felt had been wrong with their own upbringing, and for some this went well beyond developing a "better way of doing things". These parents were attempting "to put right their own memories of hurt, through a form of projection and then reparation through their own children as psychic extensions of themselves"(Ribbens, 1994, p. 197).

Barbara Cox Walkover (1992, p. 179) argues that for parents the sense of starting afresh with their own child, along with "the heartfelt wish to provide for one's own child what was lacking for oneself is fertile ground for reproducing the powerful illusion of the ever-elusive perfect family." This heartfelt desire is clearly evident in the stories told by the participants in this research. However, what is not so clear is to what extent people believe in the "illusion of the ever-elusive perfect family". In their accounts of their experiences as parents, the people I worked with expressed both a sense of deep fulfilment, personal growth and joy in the project of rearing a child and a sense of frustration, loss of freedom and denial of aspects of the self that were important.[6] The expression of the aspects that people found hard about parenting did not take away anything from what they had found so enriching about it; it wasn't that

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[5] Coltrane (1996) conducted interviews with dual income families with at least two school-age children, hence these families were at a different point in their lives than the ones I worked with.

[6] McMahon (1995, p. 168) suggests that in her research where mothers referred to self-sacrifice and self-denial they were "using the language of a traditional ideology of motherhood to symbolise the process of self-change they experienced in adapting to lives that were more concretely difficult but at the same time deeply meaningful". Hence, self-sacrifice refers to the death of an earlier sense of self rather than the self as mother.

one was traded against the other but that these feelings could exist alongside each other. In many ways, the stories told in these accounts attest to the ways in which people were able to live with both a deep sense of fulfilment and a sense of loss, and that daily life becomes a matter of continually fine-tuning and drawing on a variety of sources to construct and justify a workable life.

Gender, caring and household work

Many of the studies that have been done on the experience of being a mother or father in the late 1970s and early 1980s focussed on the sexual division of labour and gender roles within the home. These studies can be seen to reflect the concerns of feminist theory in the seventies with equality and independence for women and the family conceptualised as a site of oppression. A number of these researchers claimed to have embarked on their research in part to contribute to changing the sexism inherent in family life, but were surprised that this was not a goal held by the participants in their research. LaRossa and LaRossa (1982) argued that their research demonstrated that attitudes had changed towards a sexual division of labour but not necessarily towards what people did, and that men and women were very skilled at negotiating themselves into sex-stereotyped divisions of labour. They concluded that "For many the head seems willing but the heart is weak" (p. 219). Backett (1982) suggested the claims of parental-sharing by middle-class parents are overstated because they are committed to the ideals of gender equality. Lewis (1986) argued that although many of the men in his study claimed to do more than their fathers, longitudinal data suggested that this would not necessarily be the case as their children got older. He contended that "true symmetry between spouses cannot occur without major societal reorganisation. Yet two major institutions which are resistant to such change are motherhood and fatherhood themselves"(Lewis, 1986, p. 190).

In the mid-1980s there was a shift within feminist theory towards an assertion of difference. Instead of striving for equality with men, there was an affirmation of women's difference from men. Also, the differences between women were explored through the development of "identity politics", especially around ethnicity, class, sexuality, age and disability. This shift towards assertions of difference has been reflected in the research on becoming a mother as researchers have gone beyond documenting an acceptance of a sexual division of labour to an exploration of what it effects in a positive sense for women and to document more closely other aspects of women's identities beyond being women.

Ribbens (1994, p. 71), for example, argued that women in her research acted "to secure the cohesiveness of the family" and that rather than desiring to curtail their own family responsibilities they sought to incorporate more fully their husbands within the family. McMahon (1995) found most women in her study were quite clear that parenthood was a gendered experience. They

> grounded their claims to a distinctly female experience of parenthood in the gendered organisation of their households, in particular the division of domestic work; in their feelings of responsibility; and in the different or special awareness or consciousness they had of their own children. (McMahon, 1995, p. 235).

The middle-class women in her study reported more sharing of family work than other studies in the literature had, while the working class women described a more unequal division of family work. Both groups of women interpreted the division of family work in terms of whether it was legitimate, fair or reasonable rather than because it was equal. For these women, the experience of motherhood was not oppressive and although it brought with it some costs it was perceived as providing opportunities for growth and development. The greatest reward of being a mother for these women was the sense of connection they felt with their children, and this sense of connection was not experienced as a loss of self but as a basis for a morally transformed sense of self. McMahon (1995) argued, however, that the women in her research did not expect men to undergo this transformation. Her research did not include men.

Gender roles and a sexual division of labour were not the major focus of this study, and I also worked with people's accounts and these did not foreground gender as an issue.[7] At this point in their lives as parents a discourse about the sexual division of labour was not referred to as they recounted their experiences, although some references were made to a gendered sense of self. On the one occasion when the the division of the labour associated with parenting was explicitly commented on, the mother sought to have it acknowledged that the she had given more up than the father in becoming a parent. She was felt that this was reasonable as long as it was acknowledged. Like the women in McMahon's study, she was not making a claim for equality but fairness and reasonableness. More generally, apart from one couple who were firmly committed to a traditional sexual division of labour, the families claimed that the husbands contributed far more to family work than their fathers and father-in-laws had, and this

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[7] Ribbens (1994, p. 36) argues that working with "insider" accounts "may make it more difficult to perceive issues of gender within childrearing".

was seen to be important for supporting the mother. The sense of a "moral transformation" reported by McMahon resonates with both the experiences of women and men in my research who were surprised at qualities they had "discovered" within themselves and the ways in which they felt they had become a "better person".

Coltrane's (1996) research also explored the potential of the day-to-day activity of caring for children as a means of transformation of the self. Many of the men Coltrane (1996) interviewed were attempting to heal themselves through nurturing their children. Coltrane argued that this is not such a novel phenomenon, that women use motherhoood as a vehicle for fulfilling themselves and to gain identity whilst also admitting to the monotonous, stressful and isolating aspects. Coltrane remarked that men who had been "sharing parenting for years were much less likely to consider parenting a therapeutic self-actualisation exercise"(p.123). Furthermore, it seemed that middle-class men's emphasis on the self-fulfillment that accompanies involved fathering was a "by-product of first being able to be an economic good providor" whereas the marginally employed men focussed more on "the mundane realities of managing home and children"(p. 125).

The numbers involved in my research are clearly too small to make for sound comparison with Coltrane's study. However, the resonance between the experience of the father who was unemployed in my study, and the findings of Coltrane's reseach support the need to consider the relationship between differential access to economic, cultural, social and political resources and the nature of the experience that people have.[8]

Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

The account I gave in Chapter Two of Foucault's on genealogical analyses clearly identified the need to examine the historical conditions that have made it possible for certain kinds of statements to emerge and others to be excluded. That task

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[8] Desjarlais (1996, p. 70) goes further than this, and his argument, combined with the evidence of his fieldwork, is compelling. On the basis of his fieldwork with people living in a downtown Boston shelter, Desjarlais argues that experience "which many take to be universal, natural, and supremely authentic, is not an existential given but rather a historically and culturally constituted process". He suggests the conditions of life on the street, set up a form of being that does not give rise to experience, that "inwardly reflexive process that proceeds, coheres, and transforms through temporally integrative forms". In a world in which they have few possessions, lack of privacy or shelter, no economic resources, and are often plagued with concerns commonly associated with mental illness, such as hearing voices or anxiety and fears, these people "'struggle along' by way of an acutely tactile mode of perception that attends to episoidic, temporally finite encounters".

has been beyond the scope of this thesis. As I stated, I have primarily been interested in applying Foucault's ideas about discourse and the subject to the life-world, and hence I have been more concerned with how discourse is manifested in people's accounts. However, being able to locate this material in the context of a deep genealogical analysis of the academic and popular child-rearing literature would have added to this research. There is clearly scope here for future study.

Although I have argued throughout this thesis for the need to attend to bodily practices, bodily apprehension and embodied emotions, these remain areas that have not been well illuminated by this research. People did not spontaneously talk about these aspects of experience and when I directed attention to them people had little to say. Bodily practices they saw as self-evident and, in the main, as coming naturally and hence needing no explanation. Being from the same culture and sharing the same taken-for-granted-understandings I also found it difficult continually to examine bodily practices in an analytical way. When I talked of apprehending things through the body and experiencing emotion in an embodied way, for some there was a distant sense of recognition but very few could think of specific experiences at the time. In part these may be experiences that are hard to *think* of and recount *linguistically*; they may be experienced at the moment but unless one is interested in them analytically they may not be mentally noted and hence difficult to retrieve cognitively and express in words. Western culture more generally is founded on a dualism between the body and the mind, and this may preclude a strong and lasting recognition of experiences that refuse the divide between body and mind. Given the extent to which people in this research talked about doing things in a way they had observed others doing or that were similar to their own experiences of family life, I would argue that (for those wishing to explain the way that life is lived) it is important to pursue examining these bodily aspects of experience.

This research has examined the experiences of a small number of men and women as they became parents for the first time as members of a nuclear family. Although there were some similarities in terms of sociological markers, such as class, ethnicity, sexuality, and regionality, there were also differences. Clearly it is not possible to generalise on the basis of these experiences. Further research of this kind is needed to fill in the experiences of other kinds of families, and families from different ethnic, class and regional positions. Desjarlais' (1996) arguments questioning the

universality of experience provide a challenging point of departure for such further research.

The discussion of links to other studies and the limitations of this research have suggested a number of directions for future research.   In addition, it would be valuable to see research of this kind conducted with families who have gone on to have more children. As I have suggested in Chapter Nine, as the families "age" and the daily life of the families becomes more complex for a variety of reasons, a different range of discourses will constitute the possibilities of being a parent. There was a sense from a number of the parents involved in the research that although they had been very open to the suggestions of others in the early days of being parents, by the end of the first year they had come to feel that they were "a bit more seasoned" and not so interested in others' ideas and practices. As part of a process of encouraging debate and dialogue around issues to do with child-rearing and parenting, for parents further into parenthood, this issue needs further illumination.

In the next section I discuss the possibilities for creating a democratic culture of dialogue and debate around issues concerned with parenting and family life more generally. While this idea, in the abstract, seems worthwhile and important, it would also seem important to examine aspects of this more closely in the lifeworld. What barriers currently exist to creating such a culture? What kinds of skills and resources do people need to participate in such a process? Currently there is, again, more attention being focussed on parenting, particularly through some of the Television Magazine style shows and radio talk-backs. What range of possibilities is explored in these presentations and what is excluded? How do people experience these current developments?   What are the effects in the life-world?

<center>Parenting and "the Good"</center>

Since I have been involved in this research many people have commented that its findings should be very useful for helping to produce better parents. I have always protested that this was not the question at the heart of my research, and furthermore that the research had been done with a very small group of parents and it would be inappropriate to generalise about their experiences. However, having now understood something of the process of becoming a parent for a small group of parents, I am prepared to consider what these very particular understandings suggest about the experience of becoming parents and "the good". As I think about this I am reminded of

the words of Foucault that a discourse in itself is neither inherently oppressive or liberatory but that we need to look at the effects of a specific discourse in a particular historical context. What this, and the findings of my research suggest is that it is not so much a specific discourse that should be invoked in the name of the good but the practice of dialogue and conversation. As Foucault argued "The good is defined by us, it is practiced, it is invented. And this is collective work" (Foucault, 1980, p. 13, cited in Weeks, 1993, p. 209).

Both Benhabib and Falzon have explored the possibility of a dialogic ethic as a means of defining the good through a process of dialogue, conversation and mutual understanding. Benhabib draws on Arendt's notion of "enlarged thought" which involves making up one's own mind but "needs the presence of others 'in whose place' it must think" (Arendt, 1961, p. 220–21, cited in Benhabib, 1992, p. 133). It does not function in solitude or isolation but in "an anticipated communication with others with whom I know I must finally come to some agreement" (Arendt, 1961, p. 220–221, cited in Benhabib, 1992, p. 133). This agreement does not necessarily mean consensus but that we are morally obliged to consider the viewpoint of others to reach a mutual understanding:

> The more human perspectives we can bring to bear upon our understanding of a situation, all the more likely are we to recognise its moral relevance or salience. The more perspectives we are able to make present to ourselves, all the more we are likely to appreciate the possible act-descriptions through which others will identify our deeds. Finally, the more we are able to think from the perspectives of others, all the more can we make vivid to ourselves the narrative histories of others involved. (Benhabib, 1992, p. 137)

When the voices of others are absent, this requires imagining the conversation, thinking the dialogue of the other. Thus there is a continuous process of conversation, with agreement and disagreement and understanding and misunderstanding at work, and infinite revision and indeterminacy of meaning. This approach requires a civic and public culture of democratic ethos, which is constituted by practices and institutions that enable the multiple and diverse perspectives of others, often strangers to us, to be expressed.

Falzon (1998) argues for a similar position when he advocates a dialogical ethics based on "an ethical attitude of openness and respect towards the other which promotes resistance to closure, and facilitates the movement of dialogue" (p. 63). In its reflective

form Falzon argues that it is an attitude that is critical towards itself, acknowledging the historicity and finitude of its point of view.[9] Fundamental to Falzon's position, introduced in Chapter Nine, is the belief that we cannot escape dialogue. Interaction with the other is going on all the time and we are continually influenced by and influence others. Human beings also attempt to order and organise the world and hence are implicated in forms of order that suppress and dominate others, arresting the possibility of dialogue. The issue for a dialogical account of ethics then is

> "...given that such encounters go on all the time, given that we exist in the realm of dialogue, how the emergence of one-sided states of domination can be avoided, and how the possibility of a two-sided relation, a continuation of dialogue can be promoted" (Falzon, 1998, p. 95).

This dialogical account does not propose that we are caught in a trap of relativism; we inevitably interpret and morally judge the other as we encounter them. However, we should, Falzon argues, recognise that no perspective is absolute or all embracing. Likewise, he argues, that this position does not suggest that we have to reject all forms of order, unity or community as oppressive but rather "avoid the absolutisation of particular forms of order, the establishment of forms of social and political closure....avoid producing or contributing to forms of domination" (Falzon, 1998, p. 96). Within this view movements of resistance are accorded no privileged status. They are yet another movement in the continual interplay of social forces. They too are open to criticism should they establish forms of domination, and hence should heed an attitude of openness to others to avoid the establishment of new forms of domination. Falzon, like Benhabib, is at pains to stress that this call for dialogue is not just a matter of appearances but ensues the emergence of new and different voices can have real effects in the culture.

A multiplicity of discourses and practices at the turn of this century effected an implicit right for individual families to determine the good for their children, and hence in the Western world there has not been a genuine public culture of dialogue around issues of child-rearing.[10] As my analysis of the child-rearing literature in Chapter Four

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[9] Falzon (1998, p. 70) argues that Foucault's intellectual ethos of "excavating our own culture in order to open up a space for innovation and creativity" (Foucault, 1988, p.163) can be understood as the critical form of the ethical attitude of openness to the other. Benhabib and Falzon's conception of open dialogue with others provides a way forward from the critique of Foucault's conception of the stylisation of the self occurring in isolation (see Chapter Two).

[10] It is not possible here to analyse the way in which this occurred; however, the effects of urbanisation, industrialisation, immigration, demographic changes, familial ideology, the cult of

has shown, much of the material written as advice for parents has been about the attempt to impose a dominant perspective on how child-rearing should proceed. The analysis of that material and my fieldwork also shows that issues to do with parenting and child-rearing are still primarily articulated within a discourse of individual families' private concerns. The material from my fieldwork also shows that whether it be about questions of how we can know about things, or how to conduct ethical research, or how to get enough sleep for babies and adults, or how to discipline children, people *do* engage in dialogue influencing and shaping the other as they are influenced and shaped by the other, even while others attempt to suppress the dialogue. The challenge is to bring these questions into open debate and to create a public culture of dialogue that realises the need for inventing the good through collective work and that understands that this is not just a matter of tolerating the other but of exposing oneself to the possibility of being challenged and transformed by the other. This, ultimately, is not a matter of intellectual understanding or insight but of courage.

Temporality, intersubjectivity, indeterminacy and insight

For those who are interested in "things such as how everyday comes together" (Desjarlais, 1996, p. 72) this research affirms the importance of a method that introduces time and intersubjectivity to our analyses, to enable us to attend to the flux of daily life and the multi-layered, processual and relational nature of identity. To engage with such a method necessitates an acceptance of a certain level of uncertainty, ambiguity and indeterminancy in the knowledge we produce. However, as this thesis has demonstrated, this is offset by the richness of the insights gained. These insights would not be revealed through a logical ordering of abstracted ideas or beginning such an exploration from categories and concepts that reflect the concerns and interests of those wishing to explain life.

As I conclude writing this thesis I am struck by the discontinuities that reside between the various chapters. I remember feeling perplexed in the early days of writing, wondering how I could bring about the sense of cohesion I understood to be one of the hall-marks of a well-written thesis. There were moments of resonance between material from my fieldwork and the previous studies, the theoretical literature,

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domesticity, women's suffrage, the rise of the scientific method, compulsory schooling, a public interest in children, nationalism, eugenics, social control, Darwin's theory of evolution, and the child study movement would all need to be considered.

and the popular literature. But more frequently I felt alienated from and often alarmed at the way these different bodies of literature had portrayed people's experiences of becoming parents. How could I relate the categories of "bad mothers", "concern about wife's loss of figure", "continous coverage of care", "normal crisis", to the mundane detail of the daily activities of the parents and the stories they told about their lives, with their moments of satisfaction, yearning, contentment, disappointment, laughter, and sadness? How did the advice of the popular literature, asserting its authority despite protesting its non-expert status, relate to these details and stories? How could I put my understandings, forged from being drawn into the lifeworld of these mothers and fathers at their antenatal classes, during visits from Plunket Nurses, at their support groups, on visits to the park and in their homes with their families and friends, alongside those who had done all they could to remove themselves to some position they perceived as transcending the lifeworld? How could I talk about the way in which the people I worked with increasingly incorporated me as someone who was about to become a mother, showing me that "The agent of scholarship is a living person, not just a mind" (Hastrup, 1994, p. 235), when others confessed their potential to fall from objective grace, and then bracketed off any exploration of how this may have, in part, constituted their experience of the research? The very personal way other academics and participants in seminars have responded to my research over the years, as if to assert another kind of meaning, suggested that I was not alone in this feeling of alienation and desire to bridge the gap between the map and the tour.[11]

On further reflection, I have understood that there is a sense of cohesion here, and it derives its power from the imperative of radical empiricism, that we not give any particular form of knowledge foundational status. Rather, we should understand there are different standpoints points from within the field of enquiry that enable us to apprehend different understandings of the world. We must then critically evaluate the various realities these standpoints enable to be revealed. As Desjarlais (1996, p. 72) explains it: "Asking about experience can tell you about some things such as how everyday comes together, just as asking about labour relations or clan lineages can tell you about other things." The matter then, is one of adjudicating which are the questions we need to ask, and then being clear on what is effected by the standpoints

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[11] See Chapter Five where I discuss the reactions to my proposal from those on the committee evaluating proposals for funding, and from colleagues at seminars.

from which we seek to answer them. Moreover, the discontinuities between the chapters in this thesis and within the stories told by those who people it remind us that "although we may struggle to domesticate and shape the world, the world can never be completely captured or wholly organised. It always resists and exceeds our grasp" (Falzon, 1998, p. 4). The challenge of how to proceed, whilst acknowledging this, extends beyond this thesis, to all those currently involved in research about social life.

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APPENDIX ONE

The fieldwork process

Recruitment of participants

To contact people who might be interested in participating in the research I attended antenatal classes organised at the Public Hospital and the local branch of Parent Centre. During the classes, at a point convenient to the person running the class, I was given 5 minutes to talk about my research and answer any questions people had. I then handed out an information sheet (see Appendix Two) about the project that requested any one who was interested in the research to phone me so we could discuss it further.

Once people had contacted me, we met to discuss in more detail what the research would involve and answer any further questions. At this meeting we also signed the consent forms (see Appendix Three). All the people who telephoned to express interest in the research agreed to participate after our initial discussion. Throughout the period of fieldwork I primarily worked with eight couples. I also interviewed various people associated with antenatal classes, parenting magazines, and parent education.

Data Collection

Data was collected through participation, observation and interviews. As well as attending antenatal classes to recruit people for the research, I also participated in and observed the series of antenatal classes run by the hospital and Parent Centre. All of the couples were formally interviewed five times during the period I was working with them. The basic interview schedules in Appendix Four provided a framework for each interview but these were then adapted to the situation of each family. I departed from the framework of the interview to pursue issues that arose during the interview but which were not addressed by the framework. The first of these interviews took place around 3 weeks before the baby was born and the last interview occurred as the baby turned one. When the baby was 3 months old the participants were also required to keep a detailed account for a week of what they were doing for the baby on an hourly basis, and I interviewed them about this account. The participants were also given a video camera for a week and asked to document some of the things they did in caring

for their baby (see Appendix Five for instructions). We then watched the video together and I interviewed them a week later about what they were doing. Information from these interview transcripts has not been included in this analysis. It may be used in future analyses of this research. At the time, I found it difficult to interview people fruitfully about something that they were still so close to. Watching the video together did contribute to my general understanding of what the parents were doing and how they were doing it.

I also regularly spent time with each of the families when I wasn't doing interviews with them, observing the things they were doing and the interactions they were having with other people around caring for the baby. Three of the mothers belonged to the same new mother's support group and I attended that weekly until the babies were 1 year old. I also attended the support groups of two of the other mothers involved in the research. For each of the families, I observed a regular visit from their Plunket Nurse. I was also invited by several of the families to spend time with them when grandparents were visiting, and I went on to interview two of the grandmothers about their experiences of becoming a mother. One mother contacted me two years after the initial period of fieldwork because she had changed her practices of caring for her second-born child and she wished me to document this change. Material from this interview is included in the analysis.

APPENDIX TWO

m ile

Research Project - Becoming a Parent

I am currently looking for people who are about to become parents for
the first time and who would be willing to participate in a research
project. The research is part of work I am doing for a Ph.D and is
concerned with the ways people learn how to be a parent. Although
various aspects of being a mother or father have been investigated in
New Zealand before, there has not been a general study which has
looked at both mothers and fathers, and which has considered the
daily experiences of people as they become parents. Among other
issues, I am interested in tracing-out how parents "learn to parent"
through such sources as family, friends, books on parenting,
educational services and the public media. I am also interested in
what people then do with that knowledge and how this influences their
style of parenting.

I would like to be able to work on this research with people from
just before their baby is born to the end of the baby's first year.
During this time we would do several semi-structured interviews, and
I would observe you with your baby in various daily situations and
discuss these situations with you. At some points I would also video
you handling your baby so that I could ask you specific questions
about what you are doing and how you have learnt to do it.

I believe that most new parents would enjoy the contact we would have
together over this research project. It should provide an
opportunity to reflect on the process of becoming a parent, to
discuss it with someone else, and to have your experiences of this
particular time in your life documented.

Those who participate in the research will be asked to sign a consent
form. The consent form sets out assurances from me which are
designed to protect the identity of those who are involved in the
research, giving individuals access to all the research materials
that relate to them personally, and guaranteeing those participating
the right to say when we would work together. It also states that at
any time you are free to withdraw from the research. The procedures
I have set in place to ensure that our working relationship is a
positive experience have been approved by the Massey University Human
Ethics Committee.

If you are interested in being involved in this research I would welcome the opportunity to talk about it in more detail with you, and answer any questions you may have. Once you have decided that you would like to participate in the research we can then set about arranging the details of your participation. At this stage we would also discuss and sign the consent forms mentioned above.

I can be contacted by phone on the following numbers:
294-701 or
69-099 extension, 8303

Judith Loveridge,
Education Department,
Massey University.

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PROJECT: BECOMING A PARENT

I, ..., consent to participate in the research project "becoming a parent". I accept the assurances:

1. That at any time I may tell Judith Loveridge, the researcher, that it is not convenient for me to see her, and that this will be respected.

2. That confidentiality will be kept through the following measures:

(1) All names and any special characteristics that would lead to my identification will be changed.

(2) Interview tapes will only be listened to by Judith Loveridge, and/or an assistant who will transcribe the tapes. The assistant will sign an agreement that she or he will treat the tapes as confidential and will not discuss them with anyone other than Judith Loveridge.

(3) The interview tapes will not be released to anyone.

3. That I will be shown all transcripts from interviews and will be given the opportunity to indicate material that I do not wish to be used, or that can be used but not connected with the fictitious name I will be given.

4. That I will be given the opportunity to view all visual material and to be able to say under what conditions it may be seen.

5. That if I request access to publications from the research it will be supplied.

6. That at any time I am free to withdraw from the research project.

7. That at any time during the research I can renegotiate this agreement with Judith Loveridge.

I give my permission for Judith Loveridge, to use the information gained during the research in her PhD thesis, and any other published and unpublished papers.

Signed

....

...........................(Independent Witness)

.... Date

I have discussed the nature of the proposed study with ...., including the possible benefits and disavantages of being involved in the research. I will act in accordance with the assurances set out above.

Signed

.... Date...............

APPENDIX FOUR

Interview Schedules

Interview One – before baby is born, interviewed together

(Introduction: This interview is primarily to let me know a little more about you and your situation as people who are about to become parents. The questions are mainly concerned with your social networks and the experiences that you have had so far as you are becoming parents)

1. Current situation as a couple
a) How long have you been living in this area?
b) Why are you living in this area?
c) What are your current work situations?
d) How is the birth of the baby going to effect these?
e) How long have you known each other, been living together/married?

2. Family network
a) Can you tell me about your extended family?
b) How close do you live to other family members?
c) How much contact do you have with members of the immediate family? Extended family?
d) Do any other family members have or are having babies/children?

3. Friendship network
a) Can you tell me about your personal and jointly shared friends?
b) Can you tell me about the kinds of contact you have with friends?
c) Can you tell me about the kinds of contact you have with friends who have or are having babies?

4. Other social affiliations.
a) Can you tell me about any other social affiliations you have (work mates, clubs, neighbours, church, sport etc)?
b) Are many of these contacts having babies?

5. Becoming and being pregnant.
a) Can you tell me about realising that you were going to have a baby?
b) What has it been like to be pregnant/the partner of someone who is pregnant?
c) What have been the reactions of other significant people?
d) What previous experiences have you had with babies?

6. Sources of information about birth and parenthood.
a) What are some of the things you have done to inform yourself about birth and becoming a parent? (What did you think of ...?)
b) Who has been your main source of information?
c) What are they things you have needed to ask about?

d) What sorts of things have others told you?

7. Specific preparations for the arrival of the baby
a) What are some of the things you have done in preparation for the arrival of the baby?
b) What items have you bought or borrowed?
c) Have you made any particular arrangements for that time?

8. Looking ahead
a) From what you have been told, or read, or know of others' experiences, what do you think the first six weeks are going to be like?
b) What about the first year?

Interview Two – at approximately six weeks, interviewed separately.

(Introduction: The purpose of this interview is to ask you about your experiences of the first six/seven weeks of your baby's life. The questions will be about your impressions of this time, what you have actually been doing with your baby, why you are doing those particular things, sources of guidance, and what you think the next two months will be like. At the end I'd like to ask you about a few of the things we talked about in the last interview.)

1. Initial reactions
a) What have your overall impressions been of the first six weeks?
b) How have they been compared with what you thought they would be like?
c) How would you describe your experience of your baby compared with previous experiences you had had with other babies?

2. Caring for the baby
a) I'm interested to know what you actually do with and for _____. So, could we begin by looking at an ordinary day: What do you do?
b) Does this change at all during the week? (e.g. weekends or particular commitments)
c) It would be useful to look at some of these things in more detail. What do you do when: feeding, changing, bathing, entertaining, doing the washing, getting the baby to sleep, soothing, expressing affection, any other things?
d) Do you feel you have a routine for _____? If so, what sorts of things have influenced it?

3. How have you known what to do with _____?
4. Are there any ways in which you think that you influence each other as parents?
5. Looking back to the birth and these last six weeks:
a) How well prepared have you felt?
b) What sorts of things have seemed straightforward?
c) What are things you would have liked to know more about?

6. Going back to the antenatal classes, and some of the articles that are currently in magazines there seems to be an emphasis on a change in the relationship between the mother and father after the birth of a child. One particular magazine I have looked at describes it as a time of crisis for the father.
a) Do you feel that your relationship has changed? (If so, in what ways)
b) In view of your experience so far, what do you think of the view expressed by the marriage guidance councilor at the antenatal class?
7. What do you expect the next two months will be like?
8. If you think back to just before _____ was born:
a) What would you now say to someone who was about to become a parent about the experience?
b) What would you say about the way you had thought it would be?

Interview Three - at approximately six months, interviewed together

1. Can we begin by talking about what has been going on in yours lives and with____ since I saw you last?
2. Could you tell me about an ordinary day in the life of _____? (prompt for detail on sleeping, feeding, changing, bathing, entertaining, soothing)
3. Do you have a routine for _____? (If so what has influenced this?) (Pick-up on previous response to this question, explore changes and continuities)
4. Talk about specific questions here to do with the written accounts of the daily schedules.
5. Are there any aspects of caring for _____ that you have wondered about, asked people about, looked up books? In what way are the questions that you have now different from the ones that you had when s/he was younger?
6. Do you have any sense that there are expectations of:
a) What you should be like as a mother/father?
b) What you should do as a mother/father for your baby?
7. At the time of the second interview you felt that the first six weeks had been (insert appropriate material). What about these last four months?
8. How have you known what to do for _____?
9. What has influenced the way you care for _____?
10. How have your lives changed over these last six months?
11. Pick up on specific issues from visits and other interviews etc.

Interview Four - Notes for life history question areas, interviewed separately.

Basic biographical data
Date and place of birth
Parents names, dates and places of birth
Places lived in

Early family history
Occupation of parents
Brothers and sisters
Position amongst siblings

Earliest memories of family life
Contact with extended family
Parents' stories of their childhood, the way they were raised

School years
Early memories of school
Memories of high school
Subjects taken, reasons for
Career choices

Work experience
Jobs held (why, where, when, how long, conditions of work)
Current work situation
Place of work in life

Significant events/moments in life

Married and family life
Where, when and how met spouse
Relationship with spouse's family and own family as a couple
Parents' stories about their life at a similar stage
Grandparents' stories about their life at a similar stage
Division of labour in the household
Life trying to create for children: how differs/builds on own family experience
Important aspects of the way parenting
Description of self and description of self as mother/father/parent
Desired life style changes

Interview Five – at approximately one year, interviewed together

1. Can we begin by talking about what has been going on in yours lives and with_____ since I saw you last?
2. Could you tell me about an ordinary day in the life of _____? (prompt for detail on sleeping, feeding, changing, bathing, entertaining, soothing) Are there any days on which this changes substantially? (If so, how?)
3. What are the questions that you currently wonder about in relation to _____?
4. What are your current sources of guidance?
5. How do you go about making decisions in relation to _____? Does a situation ever arise where you disagree? (If so, what happens?)
6. At different stages of the study there seem to have been different issues that preoccupied parents, e.g. starting solids, sleep. Is there anything that currently preoccupies you?
7. Looking back over the year, how would you describe it?
8. How have you known what to do?
9. Are there any particular things that you have felt that other people have considered you should or should not be doing for _____?
10. A number of previous studies have focussed on whether parents have experienced the first year of their baby's life as a crisis. Does that seem a valid way to talk about your experiences of the first year?

11. Some other studies have focussed on whether the mother or father should be the primary caregiver. What do you think about this?

12. Some of the studies have suggested that fathers are now more involved or more active than fathers in previous generations. But other suggest that while fathers might be involved in a wider range of practical care of children, the overall responsibility remains with the mother.

a) How would you describe each of your involvement in looking after _____?

b) In what ways are the things that you each do the same or different?

13. Some of the other studies have focussed on whether babies should be cared for by people other than their parents. What do you feel about having someone other than yourselves care for _____ on a daily basis? Why?

14. When you meet with other mothers and fathers what do you talk about?

15. Have your lives changed since you became parents? (If so, in what ways? Were there any surprises?)

16. How would you define a good mother? A good father?

17. Is there anything about your experience of becoming a parent that you feel that I should have asked about?

18. Do you have any questions about the research?

APPENDIX FIVE

Video Instructions

Nicola and Simon

Could you please video entire sequences of the various things that you do in caring for Edward? For example, feeding, changing, bathing, playing, soothing (if possible), putting to sleep and any other things you do.

If it isn't possible to get complete sequences do not worry, but if it is that would be great. When you are shooting it can sometimes feel like long sequences will be boring but it will be most useful for the research to have the beginning and the end if possible.

Once you have recorded these on the tape it would be useful to sit down and watch it together. The video will be useful to give me a more detailed account of the things that you do, and as a prompt for you and me when we are talking about the things that you do for Edward and how you have arrived at that way of doing things. If you wish we could arrange to have a copy made of the tape for you.

Many thanks,
Judith

APPENDIX SIX

Construction of Narratives

Narratives were constructed for six of the eight the families I worked with during the fieldwork. The material I gathered from the time I spent with the other two families did not lend itself so well to this type of analysis and so narratives for these families have not been included in this thesis. In one case, the family had twins and this contributed to a different focus in our interactions. It was difficult to get beyond "the twins" to the questions that I was asking the other parents. However, our time together did yield interesting and rich data about the experience of having twins. The other family became involved in the research after their baby was born, they lived in the same small rural community as myself and although the mother wanted to be involved in the research the father seemed more ambivalent. Despite persisting with the research over 15 months we never managed to build the same kind of relationship I established with the other families, and the material I had for their narrative did not offer the insights the others did.

The narratives included give different weight to the various aspects of the families' experiences because their experiences were different. However, as I put the narratives together I endeavoured to ensure they included information across similar categories. These categories were as follows:

1. Biographical information (age, length of time together as a couple, family history, friendship networks, work outside the home before and after birth)
2. Preparation for the birth
3. Support Groups
4. Influences on initial care
6. Influences on later care
7 Nature of life creating for child

The names used in the narratives are pseudonyms, and biographical details have also been changed to protect the identity of the people I worked with. Where these changes

have been made, they are consistent with the actual details. For example, if the person grew up in a small rural town the name of the town will have been changed to another rural town of similar size, or the location in which their family is now living will have been changed to one a similar distance away.

APPENDIX SEVEN

Transcription of Interview Material

The interview material comes directly from transcripts of recorded interviews. I requested the person who transcribed the interviews to transcribe the interviews as they were, including repetitions, ums and errs, laughter, etc. Pauses in what people were saying have been indicated with the use of ... Where I have then edited material out of the transcript I have indicated this with [ ]. Generally, material has been edited out where it either repeated material previously stated or was not immediately relevant to the materal under consideration. Much of the "irrelevant" material related to conversation that was directed to the baby or other people who were spoken to about other matters during the course of the interview. The codes at the end of the interview excerpts relate to the name of the person being interviewed, the number of the interview, and the page number in the transcript.

. HOSPITAL BOARD
ETHICS COMMITTEE
EXAMPLE PATIENT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORMS
This example information and consent form is intended as a guide only. The accompanying sheet lists the elements of a good information and consent form.
.. HOSPITAL BOARD LETTER HEAD
<u>NONESUCHMYCIN STUDY</u>

NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR IN
.:...................... Phone...............

PATIENT INFORMATION/CONSENT FORM

We are interested in studying a new drug called Nonesuchmycin. This drug promises to have some advantages over existing standard drugs for the treatment of hairy legs. Studies performed on animals and on several hundred humans have not so far encountered serious side effects, and minor side effects noted have been no more frequent than with similar standard drugs.

If you take part in the study you would have a blood test before starting, and then again six weeks later, and a third sample 3 months later.

For the first six weeks you would take two tablets daily. These would be either the new drug or a standard one in an identical form so that neither you nor the doctor knows which is which until the end of the trial. You would then take no tablets for two weeks. You would then take the test tablets again for another six weeks.

If you are taking other medication under medical advice you should continue to do so, but we would wish to record the names and doses of other medication.

You may withdraw from this study at any time if you wish. If you do not agree to take part in the study, or change your mind and withdraw later, you will continue to be treated quite normally. There is no pressure on you to enter or remain in the study.

Your rights are in no way affected by signing the consent form. It is simply a record that on the basis of your present understanding of the study you agree to take part.

CONSENT FORM

I.................................understand the above and consent to take part in this study on the basis of the information provided. Any other questions I have have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I understand that if I later withdraw from the study this will not be held against me.
Signed................................   )
)...........
Witness (other than investigator)...................) Date

STATEMENT BY INVESTIGATOR:
I have today discussed with..............(Patient's name) the above study. I have discussed the alternative treatments and possible benefits and disadvantages of the alternatives.
Signed..........................(Investigator) Date.........

Two extra copies required:Original held by investigator.
        1 copy to patient.. 1 copy to patient's hospital file.