

SIDE BY SIDE:  
REINVENTING MOTHER/DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS

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Beginning with mother/daughter film classics such as *Stella Dallas* (1937) and *Mildred Pierce* (1945), and moving to consider recent mother/daughter texts, *Anywhere But Here* (1999) and “Gilmore Girls” (2000 -), this thesis, in both its written and visual components, examines the multiple and often contradictory ways in which mothers and daughters have been represented in popular culture. Challenging the discourses that singularly stress struggle and separation, this research highlights representations that emphasize mother/daughter connection, and examines how such identification empowers mothers and daughters.

This project is guided by cultural studies and feminist film theories. The first two chapters outline past and present paradigms of mothers and daughters respectively; the third chapter examines the goals and findings of the visual component.

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By

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## INTRODUCTION

*The cathexis between mother and daughter - essential, distorted, misused - is the great unwritten story. Probably there is nothing in human nature more resonant with charges than the flow of energy between two biologically alike bodies, one of which has lain in amniotic bliss inside the other, one of which has labored to give birth to the other.*<sup>1</sup>

This widely quoted analysis of mothers and daughters from Adrienne Rich's now classic book on motherhood, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976 and 1986), for years has been the rallying call for feminists and scholars to recover and reexamine mother/daughter relationships. In struggling with her own motherhood and daughterhood, Rich outlines a multitude of challenges mothers and daughters confront in a culture infused with mother blame, mother guilt and patriarchal constraints. Yet her examination, which encompasses not only personal experiences, but representations of mothers and daughters in history and literature, gives readers hope for transformation in the form of imaginative and courageous mothering and daughtering. Recognizing that women growing into a hostile world "need a very profound kind of loving," Rich writes that "the most important thing one woman can do for another is to illuminate and expand her sense of actual possibilities."<sup>2</sup>

Since Rich's book was first published in 1976 there has been a proliferation of books, articles, and narratives written on mothers and daughters, particularly in the field of pop psychology, and as the subject for talk shows, television miniseries and film narratives.<sup>3</sup> With this upsurge of attention, two recurrent themes have emerged to further this ongoing examination - one of mother/daughter connection-empowerment-transformation, and one of mother/daughter disconnection-restraint-containment. Studies have explored ways in which mother/daughter relationships have and can be strengthened, and ways in which these relationships have been fractured and negotiated by cultural forces.

While Rich laments that the "cathexis between mother and daughter - essential, distorted, misused - is the great unwritten story," recent feminist scholars have argued that we *do* know the patriarchal mother/daughter stories. Although typically "playing cliched melodrama to the epic narrative of mothers and sons," mother/daughter discourses have stressed struggle and separation, and almost exclusively defined mother/daughter relationships within rigid psychological dichotomies - love/hate, proximity/distance, autonomy/dependence.<sup>4</sup> It will become clear, as I look at mothers and daughters in film, television and print narratives, that these discourses, so often represented in conflict and opposition, have their origins both in social shifts and the cultural practices that developed alongside them.<sup>5</sup> For example, the popularization of Freudian theories in the 1940s and the disapproval of working mothers in the late war and postwar years are reflected in films such as *Now, Voyager* (1942) and *Mildred Pierce* (1945),



presenting mothers as fully responsible for the psychological health of their children, and in Mildred's case, condemning them for working outside of the home.

Given past and present ideological agendas inscribed in defining/representing mothers and daughters, Suzanna Danuta Walters, in her influential book on mothers and daughters in popular culture, *Lives Together, Worlds Apart* (1992), rightfully calls for a reexamination, a rethinking of these relationships. Arguing that mother/daughter relationships have persistently been defined within psychological description and linked to terms such as bonding, symbiosis, separation, differentiation, and autonomy, Walters strives for an analysis located in the more varied and comprehensive realm of culture and society.

Certainly, in examining the social construction of mother/daughter relationships, the influence of media representation emerges as a central question. How have mothers and daughters been represented in our culture through media's increasingly varied and prolific channels of communication? Walters writes that it is almost impossible, given mass media's presence and influence within our cultural landscape, "to understand any given interaction without reference to the multitude of mass produced images;" messages that often seem distant to the "real business of social forces."<sup>6</sup> In so much as the term "mass media" is defined as mediums to reach a multitude of people, of "getting the story over the new and wider markets in the least time," their wide-reaching potential for reproducing ideas and/or disseminating symbols cannot be overemphasized.<sup>7</sup> Because our cultural consciousness has become increasingly defined by media presence, Walters argues, mothers and daughters come to

understand their relationship, not only through “the exigencies of family life, economic survival, and social policies, but through the systems of representation and cultural production that help give shape and meaning to that relationship.”<sup>8</sup>

Herein the term “ideology” reflects the connection between media as institutions with social power and the ideas that they circulate. It is, as media/cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall suggests, ideology, rather than ideas, that stresses “the social, transindividual nature of the thinking that circulates,” and carries with it the “consideration of *clusters of interlinked* ideas.”<sup>9</sup> This study, in both reviewing and examining new paradigms of mothers and daughters, underscores Hall’s conviction that “ideologies do not consist of isolated and separate concepts, but in the articulation of different elements into a distinctive set or chain of meanings.”<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, there are important historical/cultural forces that have been, and continue to be of influence to mothers and daughters and their relationships, most significantly: the 1960’s women’s movement; the period of backlash and revisionism that followed; the recent third-wave anti-essentialist feminism; and the emergence of 1990s girlculture, encompassing the study, celebration and consumer status of young girls. How have these historical/cultural changes affected mother/daughter relationships; have they encouraged or obstructed mother/daughter connectedness? Recent studies have just begun to explore the relationship between feminism and mother/daughter connection/empowerment, asking questions such as how is feminism “passed down” generationally, and how do daughters respond to their mothers’ advocacy of or resistance to feminism and position themselves in relation to “The Movement.”<sup>11</sup>

Although American culture maintains strong elements of neo-traditionalism, women's and girls' lives *have* become significantly de-traditionalised; no longer are they expected to fulfill inevitable roles revolving around husbands and children.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, ongoing dialogue about adolescent girls' well-being and their connection/empowerment with their mothers questions Western culture's mandate, and specifically normative psychological theory, that separation from parents (particularly mothers) in adolescence is required for the merging adult to achieve an autonomous sense of self.<sup>13</sup> This recent interest in young girls and mothers and daughters began, in part, with groundbreaking studies such as *Meeting at the Crossroads* (1992) by Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan and *Reviving Ophelia* (1994) by Mary Pipher. In documenting the psychological and social status of young girls, these studies underscored an adolescent endangerment discourse and highlighted girls' dramatic decline in self-esteem, body image and academic performance at what has been termed *the crossroads* - the point in time when girls are poised to enter adulthood. Increasingly, these studies have prompted more inquiry into mother/daughter relationality and female adolescent empowerment.<sup>14</sup>

I approach this project guided by a cultural studies perspective that examines the roles and representations of mothers and daughters in the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural texts. I begin with 1930s melodrama and the women's picture, examining how cultural productions construct and deconstruct the identities of mothers and daughters, as well as exploring the social and cultural contexts within which these representations circulate. I look

at recent mainstream media representations of mothers and daughters, film narratives such as *Tumbleweeds* (1999), *Anywhere But Here* (1999), the Warner Brothers' television comedy/drama "Gilmore Girls," GAP commercials/advertisements that feature celebrity mothers and daughters and popular books on the subject that, to some extent, reexamine and recontextualize these relationships and find in them a new marketing value. As discussed in Chapter 2, mothers and daughters, although attaining more visibility in media outlets, are not only commodified, but often compromised in trendy advertising and marketing techniques.

While many of these new representations are encouraging and positive, what is clearly lacking in the heightened mother/daughter visibility is the inclusion of mothers and daughters of different races, ethnicities, classes, sexualities, religions and nationalities. Instead, our culture insists these representations be white, middle-class and heterosexual. In her analysis of post feminist media, *Prime Time Feminism* (1996), Bonnie Dow writes that American postfeminist representations are directed to "the women who have benefited the most from the [women's] movement's gains and who are in the best position to practice individualist feminism."<sup>15</sup> What this implicitly creates is a definition and image of "feminist" and "feminist mothering and daughtering" that is both exclusionary and privileged over other interpretations.

While media have ignored representing diverse models of mothers and daughters, progressively, recent maternal scholarship has embraced them. For example, the Association of Research on Mothering (ARM) at York University, Toronto, Ontario, a new organization that held its first international conference on mothers and daughters in 1997, is exploring the

mother/daughter connection-empowerment-transformation trajectory along various life paths to include differences of race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, class, religion, and nationality.<sup>16</sup> Editors Andrea O'Reilly and Sharon Abbey write in their book *Mothers and Daughters: Connection, Empowerment and Transformation* (2000) that “in spite of societal scripts and imposed patriarchal values, some mothers and daughters have developed strategies of resistance and a politic of empowerment,” including “the use of alternative fictional characterizations of the mother figure, historical caricatures, and cultural images, as well as autobiographical accounts of diverse intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality.”<sup>17</sup>

Last, but not least, I also incorporate ideas realized by my own experience as a mother of two daughters, now ages twenty-three and nineteen. My motherhood experience, central to my life, has been not only my inspiration in pursuing this project, but provided me with what Rich differentiates from the *institution* of motherhood, constructed within patriarchy, and the *experience* of mothering that implies new and feminist possibilities.<sup>18</sup>

## CHAPTER 1:

### PAST MOTHER/DAUGHTER REPRESENTATIONS: MELODRAMA, TELEVISION AND DOCUMENTARY

#### Melodrama

Classic Hollywood depictions of mothers and daughters in films such as *Stella Dallas* (1937), *Now, Voyager* (1942), *Mildred Pierce*, (1945) and *Imitation of Life* (1959) have all become central texts for feminist scholarship in examining the socio/historical construction of mother/daughter relationships.<sup>19</sup> From the sacrificial model of mothering a daughter (*Stella Dallas*) to a model of malevolence and blame (*Now, Voyager, Mildred Pierce, Imitation of Life*), these Hollywood genre films, known as maternal melodramas, have conceptualized ideas surrounding female identity, sexuality, the working woman, and maternal activity.

Melodrama is arguably a term that is “vague” and difficult to define, with a wide range of potential and actual applications. It does, however, according to Mary Ann Doane in an article entitled, “The Moving Image” (1987), have its own “specificity in relation to characterization, temporality, setting, and the organization of affect.”<sup>20</sup> Typically, the cinematic melodrama revolves around the private world of sexual relationships and the family, representing

the “other side” of male genres such as the western.<sup>21</sup> For most purposes of study, the melodrama is analyzed in terms which situate it “as a ‘feminine’ form, linking it intimately with the woman’s film in its address to a female audience.”<sup>22</sup> Precisely because melodrama allies itself with the feminine and the “cultural positioning of women,” Doane argues that it is “not surprising that the social function most rigorously associated with femininity - that of motherhood - should form the focus of a group of films which exploit the pathetic effect and which bear the label *maternal melodrama*.”<sup>23</sup>

In many ways, melodrama inscribes the ideological agendas of its era, ideologies that developed alongside enormous changes in pre- and post-war America. While I briefly review them, and the analysis of the films themselves, building on the work of E. Ann Kaplan, Linda Williams, Maria LaPlace, Jackie Byars and Suzanna Danuta Walters, I look critically at their resemblance and/or departure from more recent mother/daughter film narratives, such as *Terms of Endearment* (1983), *Mermaids* (1990), *Tumbleweeds* (1999), and *Anywhere But Here* (1999), while incorporating new mother/daughter scholarship.

Also worth mentioning is that while these early films contain mother/daughter themes, not all were marketed or even specifically recognized as mother/daughter narratives. For instance, *Now, Voyager* has been critiqued more as a classic Cinderella tale or as a hopeless love story rather than a mother/daughter narrative.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1943) is most often recognized as a coming-of-age story rather than a film about a mother/daughter relationship.<sup>25</sup> However, what is significant is that the majority of these early

films were enormously successful at the box office, exemplifying “mass” entertainment, and coming to represent, particularly *Stella Dallas* and *Mildred Pierce*, “classic” Hollywood depictions of mothering and mother/daughter relationships.<sup>26</sup>

#### Maternity and Social Class: *Stella Dallas* (1937)

The story of the loving, sacrificial mother, *Stella Dallas* (1937) has endured many adaptations. First published as a popular novel in 1915, it was turned into three film versions in 1925, 1937, and 1990. In addition, *Stella Dallas* was a long running radio serial, playing on National Broadcasting Company (NBC) from 1937 to 1955.<sup>27</sup> I find it significant that the story’s longevity, and the appeal of its maternal sacrifice theme has remained relatively “intact” in America’s cultural consciousness thus far. It is, however, the 1937 film version, directed by King Vidor, and starring Barbara Stanwyck, that is regarded as one of the “classic” maternal melodramas, or “weepie” films of all time.

The film narrative performs ideological work attuned to depression era America, emphasizing experiences of hardship, deprivation and sacrifice. In addition to the film’s specific maternal sacrifice theme, the film intersects with a pronounced class theme, “when questions of equality, class mobility, and governmental responsibility came to the fore.”<sup>28</sup> Consequently, as Walters claims in her book *Lives Together, Worlds Apart* (1992), there was a whole genre of



class conscious films produced in the thirties, many of which focused on women and family, where ideas about maternity and social class became intimately linked.<sup>29</sup>

In the film, Stella is an ambitious working class woman, who pursues an upper class man to marry and ascend the social ladder. While her spiral up the social ladder (she marries the upper class Stephen Dallas) is largely attributed to her looks, her resourceful talent in catching a man (being at the right place at the right time), and her willingness to improve herself (taking night business courses), her spiral down, resulting in divorce and separation from her daughter, Laurel, is the result of her working class status, and her resistance to upper class ideals of womanhood. For Stella doesn't just dress and act "inappropriately." More significantly, she doesn't conform to specific conventions of mothering.

Many feminist critics have argued that Stella's resistance to a certain mothering style and her unabashed sexuality "position" the film as a representation of the mother/woman dichotomy.<sup>30</sup> Certainly, Stella's struggle with appropriate mothering, in the form of desiring sensual pleasure, expressing herself in eccentric style of dress, and growing close with her daughter support the woman/mother dichotomy "problem" in the film.<sup>31</sup> However, Walters argues that the relationship between class and ideologies of motherhood is perhaps more significant. It is not that Stella objects to mothering or the responsibility it entails, preferring to be "woman" (coded as sexual, active, free) that is the central conflict of the film, but the two different sensibilities about mothering itself: a mothering image that is culturally sanctioned and deemed "appropriate," and Stella's resistance to that version of "correct" mothering and use of

mothering experience. Therefore, Stella's way of dress and self-expression are all "signifiers of *class*, not sexuality."<sup>32</sup>

In fact, it is the "excessive presence of Stella's body and dress," critiqued throughout the film, that emphasizes her "pathetic inadequacy" in upper class society, rather than as any desirable sexual presence.<sup>33</sup> To exaggerate this point, when Stella and Laurel vacation at a fancy hotel to mingle with the upper class, Stella is ridiculed by a snobbish young man who claims she looks more like a Christmas tree than a woman. Stella's lower-class qualities, and her "masquerade of femininity" (obvious to all except Stella) are what signify her "otherness."<sup>34</sup> As E. Ann Kaplan convincingly argues in her article "Mothering, Feminism and Representation" (1987) "the film punishes her first by turning Stella into a 'spectacle' produced by the upper-class, disapproving gaze (a gaze that the audience is made to share through camera work and editing), but secondly, and most devastatingly, by bringing Stella to the recognition that she is an unfit mother for her daughter."<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, throughout the film, mothering "experience" and "inappropriate" mothering are harshly criticized. These patterns of inappropriate behavior and devaluation of a mother's experience are set early in the film, as Stella, after the birth of her daughter, challenges her husband and the medical establishment: "Why is it that doctors and nurses and husbands always seem to think they know more about this maternity business? Don't you think a mother learns anything in that little room they wheel her into?" And after months of being cloistered at home during her pregnancy - not to mention a probable lengthy hospital stay - Stella resists

norms of “appropriate” mothering behavior by insisting on going to a dance: “Gee, I just want to get a wave and a manicure and get all dressed up again and go hear some music and forget all about doctors and hospitals and nurses.” She goes to the dance, (her husband pouts and Stella has great fun), but each time she breaks the rules, or transgresses “proper” behavior, the repercussions are isolation for herself, and later for Laurel, from the upper-class world to which they both aspire to belong.<sup>36</sup>

Film genres such as horror in the 1960s and 1970s - *Psycho* (1960), *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968), *Carrie* (1976) - often centralize maternity by constructing the maternal figure as “abject,” horrible, and a “site of conflicting desires” from which the child struggles to break free.<sup>37</sup> However, melodrama, and its hybridizations in forms such as talk shows and soap operas, centralize conditions of “inappropriate” or “bad” mothering. In *Stella Dallas*, as well as recent mother/daughter “chick flicks,” *Mermaids* (1990), *Anywhere But Here* (1999), *Tumbleweeds* (1999) mothers are unsuitable as they are and must either be “fixed” or pay the ultimate price; becoming permanently separated from their daughters. For Stella, her “inappropriateness” is unmistakably linked to her lower class roots, and as Walters points out, “in a time of deprivation and hardship - of sacrifice - a powerful narrative of social ascendancy asserts itself strongly and often depends on some sort of parental sacrifice, typically of the mother.”<sup>38</sup>

But while this film epitomizes the ultimate sacrifice, of a caring, loving mother having to give up her equally caring and loving daughter, Linda Williams, in her influential article,

“Something Else Besides a Mother” (1984), reveals an alternative reading, focusing on the more positive aspects of the film - the love between the mother/daughter pair, and the strangely triumphant look Stella walks away with at the end of the film.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, what I find significant in *Stella Dallas*, (and Walters does as well) that is often missing in the later films about mothers and daughters, is the amount of devotion and concern that mother and daughter share for each other. Unlike later mother/daughter film narratives, the conflict is *not* between mother and daughter, but centered upon class restraints and a culture obsessed with social ascendancy. In fact, I would argue the mutual concern and connectiveness that Stella and Laurel share *is* the film’s main “resistance” and threat to patriarchy. Indeed, Kaplan argues that one of the reasons mother/daughter separation was necessary was “because it was enjoyed too much by the participants.”<sup>40</sup>

One of the most poignant scenes between mother and daughter that represents Stella and Laurel’s “connectiveness” takes place on a train ride back to their home, after Stella realizes her “lower class” qualities are an embarrassment to her daughter. Both Stella and Laurel, sleeping in upper and lower berths on the train, overhear Laurel’s friends joking and gossiping about the vulgar “Mrs. Dallas.” Laurel, hoping that her mother is asleep and didn’t hear the rude comments, crawls into the lower berth and whispers, “it’s lonely up there, Mother. I want to come down here and cuddle with you.” It is a tender, loving scene, as the daughter strokes her mother’s head and falls asleep beside her. Their compassion for, and understanding of each other seems secure. But now Stella begins to see herself through her daughter’s eyes,

realizing the handicap she has become to Laurel's social ascension. Williams, writing about this particular scene, claims "it is this vision, through the daughter's sympathetic, mothering eyes - eyes that perceive, understand, and forgive the social graces Stella lacks - that determines her [Stella] to perform the masquerade that will alienate Laurel forever by proving to her what patriarchy has claimed to know all along: that it is not possible to combine womanly desire with motherly duty."<sup>41</sup>

With this "new vision," Stella now fabricates a plan to push her daughter into her father's world; a plan that her daughter initially rejects. After all, Laurel grasps the almost inexpressible connection she and her mother share. But Stella eventually succeeds with her plan, and the final scene showcases Stella's victory walk, in the pouring rain, handkerchief clenched between her teeth, turning ever so slowly away from the window (after being prodded along by a policeman) where she has been watching her beloved daughter's wedding ceremony.

I cannot watch the ending of *Stella Dallas* without feeling a profound sense of loss - mother to daughter, daughter to mother - and hoping upon hope for some sort of mother/daughter reconciliation. Both my daughters refuse to watch the film (I briefly summarized the plot for them), because they don't want to experience the heart-wrenching ending. I try to persuade them, giving them all the positive mother/daughter renditions the film offers, conditions surrounding connectiveness and understanding that are rare in mother/daughter film narratives. It is after all, as Williams summarizes, through this emphatic

identification, and witnessing the “ambivalent positioning” of motherhood under patriarchy that the female spectator can criticize and question the price the victim/heroine has to pay.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps, *Stella Dallas* is the female tragedy Rich, in her germinal book *Of Woman Born* pleads for - “of mother/daughter passion, rapture, and loss.”<sup>43</sup> Certainly, Williams reasons that the film embodies those themes, if only misguided by the mode of tragedy: “For unlike tragedy, melodrama does not reconcile its audience to an inevitable suffering. Rather than raging against a fate that the audience has learned to accept, the female hero often accepts a fate that the audience at least partially questions.”<sup>44</sup>

Clearly, *Stella Dallas* foregrounds the mother/daughter connection and empowerment (albeit within patriarchy) that has become the new concern of maternal scholarship. It also stands apart from a proliferation of conflictual mother/daughter film narratives to come, that demonstrates specific ways in which mother/daughter connection and mutuality can be considered as a site of empowerment in women’s lives. It is, as Williams writes, through the mediation of the mother and daughter’s “look” at one another, “moments of resistance in which two women have been able to represent themselves to themselves through the mediation of their own gazes,” that the female spectator recognizes not only the limitations of women’s representation in patriarchal language, but a belief in its transformative authority.<sup>45</sup>

Psychoanalyzing Mothers and Daughters: *Now, Voyager* (1942) and

*Mildred Pierce* (1945)

In the early pre and post war years, two films about mothers and daughters, *Now, Voyager* (1937) and *Mildred Pierce* (1942) set the Freudian stage for which mothers would become the source of blame for both the psychological and social mishandling of their daughters.<sup>46</sup> These potent and destructive discourses focusing on overprotective/domineering/smothering moms were, to a large part, made acceptable and/or motivated by the publication of Philip Wylie's book *A Generation of Vipers*, published in 1942. Wylie's attack on mothers, which conceptualized the term "momism," focused on the belief that prewar America was being weakened from within by a horde of omnipotent "moms."<sup>47</sup>

His treatise begins with the idea that "megaloid momworship" has taken hold of public consciousness, "Mom is everywhere and everything and damned near everybody, and on her depends the rest of the U.S.," and then launches into a "rhetorical excoriation of 'Mom' for all the United States' ills."<sup>48</sup> While his concern was primarily with mothers and sons (men who would be required to defend our nation), momism's threatening model for girls was one of "endless generational reproduction," and the realization that daughters would turn out to be just like their domineering mothers.<sup>49</sup>

Even articles in women's magazines at the time questioned the concept of "instinctual motherhood," including the possibility that it might be destructive, resulting in "two broad

categories of bad mother - the rejecting mother and the overprotecting mother - mirror images and equally malevolent.” Nancy Walker in her book on American women’s magazines, *Shaping Our Mother’s World* (2000) writes that “articles in women’s magazines seldom featured the angry, sarcastic tone of Wylie’s best-selling book - the magazines had no interest in alienating their readers - but the debates about motherhood in the magazines’ pages, like the debates about other areas of domestic life, reflected concerns about women’s perceived power.”<sup>50</sup>

Walters comments that this era, before America entered the war and large numbers of women entered the work force, “signaled the beginning of one of the darkest periods in history of ideologies of motherhood.”<sup>51</sup> As “mom bashing” took hold of popular consciousness, and Freudian thinking integrated ideas concerning “good” mother/daughter relationships - ideas that stressed conflict as inevitable, and separation as the necessity for mature individuation - film narratives moved from the “larger field of social and class relations” to the personalization and psychologization of mother/daughter relationships.<sup>52</sup>

*Now, Voyager*, although as previously mentioned focuses largely on the heroine, Charlotte Vale (Bette Davis), and her transformation from dowdy spinster to glamorous socialite, also presents a scathing portrayal of a controlling, possessive mother and her manipulative power over her insecure, introverted daughter. The nefarious mother, Mrs. Vale (her first name is never revealed) is immediately cast as the cause of her daughter’s mental illness by Dr. Jacquith, the psychiatrist brought in to cure Charlotte of her “strange habits.” “If



you had deliberately and maliciously planned to destroy your daughter's life," he tells Mrs. Vale, "you couldn't have done it more completely." Thereafter, the film goes to great lengths to suppress any sympathy or sensitivity the spectator might have towards her. In fact, as Kaplan points out, unlike Charlotte, who is accepting of Dr. Jacquith's help, Mrs. Vale, who admits to distrusting medical experts, *must* be punished. Kaplan writes that "only by punishing Mrs. Vale sadistically, and forcing the spectator to hate her, can the narrative pry Charlotte and her mother apart, sever the mother/daughter bonding."<sup>53</sup>

The mother/daughter connection in this film is thwarted, in part, because the spectator is never permitted access to Mrs. Vale's subjectivity; therefore, there is no strength of character, no quality of knowledge to celebrate. Other than the fact that she survives (a strength the audience would rather see denied), or that she is resilient (continuing to assert her maternal authority), Mrs. Vale's character is left almost totally undeveloped. Instead, the centrality of the story becomes "a woman's discovery of her identity and recovery of her sexuality, not one of mother/daughter identification."<sup>54</sup>

While resolution for mother/daughter is never fully achieved in the film, there is one "glimpse" of consideration between Charlotte and her mother that I find significant, one in which Mrs. Vale attempts to come to terms with her daughter's newly attained independence. In a visually poetic mother/daughter setting, Charlotte, arranging flowers from her suitor, Elliott Livingston, confides her impending engagement to her mother. In asking her how she feels about the engagement, Mrs. Vale, whose face has become noticeably softer in this scene,

temporarily relinquishes her maternal control and replies rather sarcastically, “You know as well as I do it makes no difference to you how I feel about it You do exactly as you please.” Her mother approves of her forthcoming marriage to Livingston, the son of a prominent Boston family, even as she insensitively tells Charlotte she is surprised she could “bring such a feather to the family cap.” But Charlotte’s decision to end the engagement brings about their last quarrel. Hearing her mother’s strong disapproval, Charlotte, who has moved away from her mother’s view, tells her, “Dr. Jacquith says that tyranny is sometimes the expression of the maternal instinct.” At this point, Mrs. Vale has a heart attack, slumps in her chair, and dies. Although Charlotte blames herself, she is revived this time, not by a physical make-over (as in the beginning of the film), but by the prospect of re-doing motherhood through Jerry’s (her married lover) child.

In summarizing the film, Jeanine Basinger, in her book *A Woman’s View* (1993) argues that *Now, Voyager* is yet another film that suggests motherhood replaces any need for a man. In “adopting” Jerry’s child, Charlotte realizes she must choose - motherhood or sex. She asks Jerry to “please let her go,” making him understand she can only be Tina’s mother if the two of them stay apart. Again, the mother *must* sacrifice. This time, Charlotte must give up her lover for his child.<sup>55</sup>

For Charlotte and so many other mothers in film narratives, it is an intractable dilemma to be a mother and also be a sexual woman. Later on, when portrayals of mothers in films such as *Mermaids*, *Tumbleweeds*, and *Anywhere But Here* are openly sexual, they are given harsh

reprimands, often by their daughters. Walters writes that “to be a mother in our culture is to be desexualized, an object of either veneration or scorn, but an object nonetheless.”<sup>56</sup> As a result, Charlotte must choose. But her decision to become Tina’s surrogate mother and “give up” Jerry is viewed as a “choice,” perhaps a more palatable way of addressing sacrifice.

While it seems obvious that films representing mothers are not allowed to “have it all,” the significant mother/daughter ideological work in *Now, Voyager* mandates that achieving an identity as a healthy mature woman, which involves entering a world of male identification, must come at the expense of separating from the mother.<sup>57</sup> Maria LaPlace in her comprehensive work on *Now, Voyager*, “Producing and Consuming the Woman’s Film” (1987), writes that the first discourse of female desire in the film involves Charlotte’s repression of female sexuality (here clearly linked to her lack of independence from her mother), and the second is her separation from her mother and her achievement of an independent identity.<sup>58</sup> Significantly, the struggle of separation from the mother is so strong in this narrative that both characters emerge quite literally in a constant state of physical and emotional “tug of war.” While Charlotte’s continued attempts to separate are often obstructed by her mother, she is able to make the separation complete with the help of the two most important men in her life, Dr. Jacquith, her doctor, and Jerry, her married lover. Her transformation from repressed, neurotic daughter to glamorous, sexual female is only made possible by the intervention of these two male characters. This theme, of male characters either redeeming or separating mother and daughter, is persistent in later narratives as well.

In the end, Charlotte wins the battle over her controlling mother. She also learns to persevere, and finds a certain inner strength by conquering her hardships - love with a married man and life with a tyrannical mother. But she fails at creating a relationship that would have conceivably provided her with more confidence, more personal empowerment. In never considering her mother's needs, desires, and losses, by never sharing her needs, desires, and losses with her mother, she has missed a strength gained from a sharing and an understanding of each other's lives. Instead, Charlotte and her mother remain permanently lost to each other.

The theme of mother/daughter separation, either through sacrifice, conflict, neglect or death is a persistent pattern in mother/daughter narratives. Like *Now, Voyager, Mildred Pierce* also depicts the loss of mother/daughter intimacy as well as the psychologization of motherhood. Combining melodrama, a traditionally female genre, with film noir, a traditionally male genre, *Mildred Pierce* presents two paradigms of mother/daughter relationships - maternal sacrifice and maternal deprivation.<sup>59</sup> However, unlike Stella's sacrifice, viewed as a sign of love and devotion, Mildred's sacrifice is seen as "a sign of smothering, overinvolvement, and ultimately, pathology."<sup>60</sup> Additionally, the maternal deprivation theme is linked to the "back to the kitchen" agenda of the late war and postwar years, and society's growing disapproval of mothers working outside of the home.<sup>61</sup>

From the very beginning of the film, Mildred's (Joan Crawford) attachment to her older daughter, Veda is viewed as suspicious, even a bit abnormal. Basinger writes that the film, adapted from the James M. Cain novel *Mildred Pierce* required several key changes, most of

which are “prime indications of what the image of the American woman on-screen was supposed to be.”<sup>62</sup> While in the book, Mildred is sexual, even incestuous, her screen persona is significantly toned down, eliminating most of her sexual affairs. Additionally, Veda, a more fully developed person in the novel, becomes simply a one-dimensional character: a spoiled brat who shoots her mother’s second husband, Monty. In the book, however, there is no such murder. Instead, it is Mildred who tries to strangle Veda when she finds her in bed with Monty. The book also overtly examines Mildred’s incestuous feelings for Veda, which are totally repressed and removed in the film.<sup>63</sup> Even so, despite eliminating this “key” element in the film narrative, Mildred’s obsessive attention to Veda does not go unnoticed, either by the audience or many of the characters in the film. In an early scene, as if predicting the tragic consequences to come, Mildred’s first husband, Burt, questions if it isn’t a bit abnormal that Mildred is so devoted to and sacrificing for Veda. “There’s something wrong Mildred,” he tells her. “I don’t know what, I’m not smart that way, but I know it isn’t right.”

Of course, Mildred’s need to buy love from her children is just the start of her unhappy life. Her separation from Burt, and later her success as the owner of a chain of restaurants, is all done for the benefit of Veda, who is a bottomless pit of selfishness and greed. Even Mildred’s second marriage to Monty is done to bring Veda back home, and provide her with a desirable social status. Consequently, Mildred’s obsessive/sacrificial model of mothering is not only viewed as unnatural, but somewhat dangerous.<sup>64</sup> Kaplan argues that both *Mildred Pierce* and *Now, Voyager* set the pattern for the fifties and later films in their portrayals of the alternatively

masochistic and sadistic mother. “Close mother-daughter bonding is now seen not merely as ‘unhealthy,’ but as leading either to evil, or to neurosis.”<sup>65</sup>

What is unfortunately lost in this sordid tale of bad mothering, is the relationship between Mildred and her second daughter, Kay. Hardly given the time of day by her mother, Kay, who despite her limited presence in the film appears to be a well-adjusted and amiable child, mysteriously dies of pneumonia the day that Mildred is out on a date with Monty. Curiously, Mildred’s grief for Kay is short-lived; neither her name or memory is ever mentioned in the film again. It is a loss the film never reconciles, and remains as mysteriously undeveloped as Mildred’s obsessiveness toward Veda.

The maternal deprivation theme in the film works on two levels as Mildred is viewed as a sexual mother (her affair with Monty the night Kay develops pneumonia and dies clearly brands her as a “bad” mother), and as a mother working outside of the home. At the time *Mildred Pierce* was produced, mothers working outside of the home were already being aggressively attacked by the media. Walters, in her thorough examination of this widespread tactic, presents evidence that even the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover contributed to the growing sense that there was a relationship between the spread of juvenile crime and the increasing number of women in the work force.<sup>66</sup>

Persistently, representations of “working” mothers have continued to be negative and disapproving, despite the fact that recent research has determined that a mother’s employment is not related to children’s development; in either short or long term, “the quality and quantity of

stimulation and of parent-child interactions are the same.’<sup>67</sup> But in the context of 1940s ideology, Mildred is held responsible for her daughter’s wayward behavior, and her preoccupation with work and status as a successful businesswoman are unmistakably linked to her irresponsible mothering.

While Mildred, of course, “sacrifices” everything for her spoiled daughter, the stark difference between *Stella Dallas* and *Mildred Pierce* is explicitly linked to the representation of mother/daughter attachment. Stella’s and Laurel’s connectiveness is seen as loving and supportive. Mildred’s and Veda’s attachment is seen as debilitating and essentially unhealthy.<sup>68</sup>

#### Mutual Recognition: *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1943)

A film that stands out as an exception to the mother/daughter paradigms already discussed is *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1943). Like Walters, I reference this film because, on a number of levels, it provides concepts which not only challenge mother/daughter stereotypes, but presents a model of mother/daughter mutuality that is rare in film representations of mothers and daughters. Walters points out several contributing factors that distinguish this film: First, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is not a “classic genre film,” and does not conform to a narrative resolution revolving around a male character; second, it is adapted from a best-selling serious novel (Book of the Month Club selection) by Betty Smith; and third, its

historical, ethnic, and working-class setting sets it apart from the other genre films already discussed.<sup>69</sup>

The story, a touching coming-of-age narrative, is about a young Irish-American family struggling against poverty in the slums of Brooklyn in the 1920s. The daughter, Francie, played by Peggy Ann Garner, and her brother, Neely are taught the lessons of survival early, often making “ends meet” a childhood game. Their mother, Katie, is a hardworking, practical woman, whose cleaning work and meticulous spending habits essentially support the family. The father, an alcoholic, is an unemployed singer and dreamer who fuels Francie’s imagination and desires to become a writer. While Francie is clearly depicted as “daddy’s girl,” it is her relationship with her mother that defines and distinguishes this complex and sensitive narrative. Throughout the first half of the film, Francie is naturally drawn to her flamboyant father, who dotes on her and calls her “prima donna.” But after his death, Francie is pulled into her mother’s world, a world of difficult concerns and choices, including a new baby on the way, and the ever present uncertainty of poverty.

Because Francie blames her mother for her father’s death (her mother’s unsympathetic nature surely contributed to his loss of spirit, his willingness to give up) Katie works hard to regain her daughter’s trust. She tells Francie that she will be needed when it is time for the baby to be born; she cannot afford to go to a hospital and will have the baby at home. “There isn’t even going to be enough money for a woman to come and help,” she tells her daughter. “I’m going to need you Francie. Don’t ever be far away.”



The knowledge that her mother needs her now becomes the catalyst for their eventual reconciliation.<sup>70</sup> In a pivotal scene when Katie is in labor, Francie, helping her mother with her pain, begins to open up. She reads her mother her essays, and they talk about the loss they both feel for Francie's father. More importantly, Katie talks about *her* life, and the limitations and choices she has had to make.

Walters writes that there are “no great epiphanies in this scene of coming together; yet the coming together is apparent in the daughter's caretaking, in the mother's expression of the double binds, and in the way this scene is tied to the daughter's coming of age.”<sup>71</sup> Likewise, I conclude that the important element in this scene is the mutual recognition Katie and Francie share through their understanding of each other's experiences. It is a scene in which their differences are shared, where mothering and daughtering come together in mutual support and appreciation.

*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* represents a major departure from the other mother/daughter narratives in that it portrays a mother and daughter not permanently lost to each other (*Stella Dallas*, *Now*, *Voyager*, *Mildred Pierce*), but in a discourse that represents constancy and mutuality.<sup>72</sup> As new research on mother/daughter connection/empowerment emerges, it is important to recognize just how ground-breaking this discourse was in the early 1940s. Editors Andrea O'Reilly and Sharon Abbey, introducing a collection of academic articles published in 2000 that examine the specific ways in which mother/daughter relationships are both experienced and represented as a site of empowerment in women's lives and stories,

write that “recent feminist preoccupation with maternal narrative results from the presupposition among writers on girls’ empowerment that girls need to hear their mothers’ stories in order to forge a strong mother/daughter bond.”<sup>73</sup> In summarizing the book *Mother Daughter Revolution* (1994) the editors suggest that:

The loss of female selfhood may be resisted, or at the very least negotiated, when the mother connects with the daughter through story. The mother, in recalling and sharing with her daughter her own narrative of adolescence, gives to her daughter strategies of struggle and hence constructs an alternative script of coming into womanhood.<sup>74</sup>

While I discuss new areas of maternal scholarship that focus on mother/daughter connection/empowerment/transformation later, I want to identify and stress the visionary quality that *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* foregrounds. While the maternal melodrama emphasizes mother/daughter differences, often singling out the daughters’ “popularity” in opposition to their mothers’ less fashionable status, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* underscores the sharing of differences.<sup>75</sup> Its strength and intensity lies in the telling of actual lived experiences of both mother and daughter.

Gender Definition and Family Structure: *Peyton Place* (1957) and

*Imitation of Life* (1934, 1959)

Two of the most enduring, and persistently telecast melodramas of the 1950s, *Peyton Place* (1957) and *Imitation of Life* (1959) highlight the stories of two mother/daughter couples, both different in class and character, and in the case of *Imitation of Life*, race. *Peyton Place* is set in a small New Hampshire town, complete with white steeple churches and picturesque New England houses. The film, adapted from the best-selling novel by Grace Metallius that was publicized as “scandalous but frank in its revelations about small town life,” tells the story of Constance MacKenzie, her daughter Alison, and Mrs. Mackenzie’s maid, Nellie and her daughter Salina.<sup>76</sup> Constance, played by Lana Turner, who like Joan Crawford had well-publicized problems with her daughter, is presented as the unloving, high strung, career mom whose daughter is lacking in attention and affection. Alison’s father is supposedly dead (a war hero), but as later revealed, was a married man with whom Constance had an affair. Alison adores the father she never knew, and the film makes clear the lack of a male presence, as well as her mother’s fear and denial of her own sexuality, are the cause of Alison’s sexual repression, rebelliousness and desire for freedom. When Alison finally learns of her illegitimacy (her mother confesses), she leaves Peyton Place and moves to “The City.”<sup>77</sup>

Selina has more serious problems than Alison, living in a shabby shack on the other side of town with an absent mother and an incestuous, alcoholic stepfather. As in the novel, the film

delves into sexual and social taboos, and Selina's rape by her stepfather, and his accidental murder by Selina brings the town together (as well as Alison and her mother) in a dramatic courtroom trial. While the film wraps up all the tidy edges, reuniting Alison and Constance, chastising and redeeming the town's inhabitants for their vicious, gossipy ways, Selina and her mother are not afforded any reconciliation. Upon hearing of her daughter's rape by her husband, Nellie commits suicide, hanging herself at Constance's house. It is a tragic incident never subsequently addressed in the film. In fact, for all the film's hype in addressing controversial issues - sex outside of marriage, illegitimacy, rape, murder, suicide - none are effectively discussed or resolved. The conclusion then becomes something of a "reconstruction of the harmonious (patriarchal) nuclear family," requiring "outrageous plot manipulation."<sup>78</sup> Constance, learning to accept her disreputable past, is now free to be a sexual woman and begin a relationship with the new school principal. Alison, having confronted her mother can now commit herself to her writing career. Selina is acquitted at the trial and regains a respectable position in Peyton Place.

Although, as Walters notes, conflict and struggle remain central to the mother/daughter narratives in the postwar years, these representations secure resolutions that "everything can be worked out."<sup>79</sup> Moving away from issues of class (*Stella Dallas*) or psychological turmoil (*Now, Voyager, Mildred Pierce*), mother/daughter representations of the fifties offer "a psychology now searching for continuity and conformity, resolution and adjustment."<sup>80</sup>

*Imitation of Life* (1934, 1959) is also a story about two mother/daughter couples, one black and one white. Although the two film versions maintain the same basic plot structure, the 1959 version is much more a story about failed motherhood.<sup>81</sup> In examining the extensive analysis of these two films, particularly the 1959 version directed by one of the great melodrama *auteurs*, Douglas Sirk, and again starring Lana Turner, it seems almost mandatory that the two films be critiqued together. Grounded in the same popular novel by Fannie Hurst, the two films use “images and settings to convey *two* totally opposite meanings.”<sup>82</sup>

One way to understand the differences is to look at the films’ opening and ending scenes (which most critics have singled out as “key” to understanding their overt differences). The 1934 version, set in a depression-era economy, begins with an honest portrayal of motherhood. The mother, a young widow named Bea, is seen trying to juggle all the morning activities: preparing breakfast, bathing and dressing her small daughter, getting herself ready for work. While she is trying to comfort her daughter about the day nursery she hates, but must attend so she can go to work, both the telephone and doorbell ring. It is an effective scene which represents a woman “trying to juggle two roles, that of the woman (mother and housekeeper) and the man (career).”<sup>83</sup> A solution is soon presented when Bea meets a generous, loving African-American woman named Delilah also trying to raise a daughter alone, and together they form a partnership in business, as well as in the home.

In stark contrast, the 1959 version begins with a mother, renamed Lora, searching frantically for her small daughter at a crowded Coney Island, whom she has apparently let

wander off. Although she is sidetracked by a handsome photographer, Steve Archer, who will later become her boyfriend, she finds her daughter Susie (also renamed) in the safe hands of Annie (again renamed), an African-American woman who exudes motherly warmth and nurturance. The contrast - good mother/bad mother - couldn't be more explicit. No matter how loving and concerned Lora might be about "losing" her daughter, she is presented as a neglectful, self-absorbed mother.<sup>84</sup> Thereafter, Lora's ambition to achieve stardom and wealth is supported by the nurturing Annie, who comes to live with "Miss Lora," and ends up taking care of everyone.

The physical contrast between the two mothers (black and white) is even more dissimilar in the updated film. Annie, a conservatively dressed large woman is portrayed as an "asexual but powerfully maternal image."<sup>85</sup> Lora, on the other hand, is overtly sexual, lacking in almost any maternal qualities. Yet again, Lora represents the mother/woman dichotomy so persistent in maternal representations, as "sexuality and motherhood are defined as mutually exclusive."<sup>86</sup> But Annie can only be represented as the sacrificial, nurturing mother. Walters points out that "although white motherhood becomes problematized with the onslaught of popular psychology and the postwar rush to domesticity, black motherhood remains completely "natural" and assumed to be inevitably beneficent."<sup>87</sup>

The contrast between the two mothers is also replicated by the two very different daughter representations. Lora's selfishness and desire for material gain is reproduced in Sara Jane (Annie's daughter), who rebels against *her* mother, rejecting not only her blackness, but

“also hearth, home, and submission to constricting notions of propriety.”<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, Annie’s sacrificial mothering and devotion to her daughter is admired and valued by Susie (Lora’s daughter), who views *her* mother as neglectful; a mom, she laments, who “gave me everything, but herself.”

What is clearly conveyed in these dual/contrasting daughter roles is instructive: It is easier to understand someone else’s mother than it is to understand your own. Byars, in drawing on Nancy Chodorow’s important work in *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978, 1999) writes that although “women’s mothering includes the capacities for its own reproduction,” neither daughter seems capable of understanding their *own* mothers. At stake, then, is the “the very possibility of reproducing mothers and mothering.”<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, both daughters fall into the trap of blaming mother, striving desperately not to become “just like mom.”

While several discourses interweave throughout the film narrative, one of the most obvious concerns race. The racial theme is important, not only for what it sustains - racial inequity, but for what it doesn’t do - represent any *real* depiction of black women.<sup>90</sup> Rather, it stereotypes the large, asexual, sacrificial mother as the “mammy image,” and the sexual, predatory daughter as “the tragic mulatto,” who refuses to accept her racial identity.

The difference between the two films can also be understood in examining the relation of mothering to women’s work outside of the home. The question, not only of the type of work, but the necessity of it, becomes a divided split between what constitutes a good versus bad

mother.<sup>91</sup> In the 1934 version, Bea's work, pursuing her late husband's position as a maple-syrup salesperson, reinforces the notion that her work is necessitated by the sudden death of her husband and her responsibility to her daughter. Bea doesn't actively seek success, but when Delilah's pancake recipe becomes profitable, she seizes the opportunity to turn her small business into a large scale enterprise.

Lora, however, exhibits her personal ambition from the start of the film. During a luncheon date with Steve she expresses her overwhelming desire to become an actress: "I've never wanted anything else," and then adds almost halfheartedly, "except Susie, of course." Later on when Lora's prospects for work become scarce, and Steve finds success as a photographer with an ad agency, he proposes the "logical" solution, asking Lora to marry him. She declines, asserting she wants "something more . . . to *achieve* something." Clearly, marriage and motherhood are seen as an intrusion upon Lora's ambition. Her work is seen as narcissistic, and her artistic ability as selfish vanity.<sup>92</sup> She is a woman who does not live a "real" life, but rather "imitates" life, hence the title of the film.

What makes women's work outside the home a central issue in the film, now becomes problematic when race is introduced. As Byars points out, "white women are, like males generally, privileged, whereas the African American women, like females, occupy a lesser position." While work remains a problem, "a matter of weighing crucial alternatives" for white, middle class Lora, for black women like Annie and her daughter, Sara Jane, it is "a natural signifier of their assumed status in white society."<sup>93</sup>



The two endings of the films are also different. After the death of Annie, the 1959 version ends with the likelihood of a reconstructed nuclear family; Lora will finally settle down with Steve, and given their collective grief for Annie, mother, daughter and surrogate daughter, Sara Jane will bond. The 1934 film, however, continues past the moment when Delilah dies, and Bea is seen temporarily giving up her lover. She remains bonded to her daughter, and Deliah's daughter, Peola (Sara Jane in the second version), returns to the "female family," reenrolling in a black college.<sup>94</sup>

Byars argues that the 1959 narrative closure reinforces dominant ideology on many fronts: "encouraging belief in the power of the individual, while ignoring social change; reinforcing the notions that women who pursue careers neglect their children; that mothering is the only appropriate activity for women; and that deviation from this norm will result in unhappiness for all involved."<sup>95</sup> However, beyond the seemingly "tidy" resolution, there is struggle, and its importance does not obliterate alternatives. Byars writes that in *Imitation of Life*, "those generic elements that support dominant ideology and those that - intentionally or unintentionally - subvert or challenge it interact to produce a message as inherently contradictory as the ideological process it participates in."<sup>96</sup>

In summary, while melodrama of the thirties emphasized issues of social class, the forties saw a shift from a "more benign view" of mother/daughter relationships to one "steeped in psychological condemnations."<sup>97</sup> With the onset of Wylie's "momism," motherhood became a

site of profound manipulation. Hysteria about mother as overprotective, neglectful, even malevolent continued into the fifties, although with less hostility and intensity.<sup>98</sup>

One of the significant differences between the films of the 30s and 40s and the films of the fifties, is the departure of the *inevitable* separation theme. Walters argues that while a film like *Mildred Pierce* implied serious trouble on the domestic front, thereby mandating a separation, “the vision of familial harmony produced by the culture industry and supported by government policies [in the fifties] simply could not tolerate so drastic a rift in the domestic landscape.”<sup>99</sup>

Still, representations of motherhood remain immersed in multiple contradictions. As Byars notes, “a contradictory combination of female independence (the willingness to confront social norms) and dependence (the need for male companionship) provides a common thread throughout these films.”<sup>100</sup> But as these films tell multiple stories they also raise many questions. Byars, like feminist critics Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, emphasizes the need to look at melodramas’ internal contradictions and “for the (potential) presence of strong feminine voices that resist patriarchal dominance.” For *maternal* melodramas, in particular, she argues, have “strong reading positions inscribed into their texts that demand a female competence;” a competence, she adds, that is “derived from the social fact of female mothering.”<sup>101</sup> Concluding, Byars contends that in understanding the role of film texts in a hegemonic ideological process, it is important to recognize the *struggle*, to see resistance (where it exists) as well as dominance, and recognize the exceptional.<sup>102</sup>

Television Mothers and Daughters: “That Damn Donna Reed” (1958-1966),

“And Then Comes Maude” (1972-1974)

Questions of mother/daughter representational change begin to shift from Hollywood films to television, as the new medium came into its own, “somewhat displacing film as the dominant media form.”<sup>103</sup> Fifties television sitcoms like “Father Knows Best” (1954-1962) and “The Donna Reed Show” (1958-1966) all capitalized on the new familialism of the postwar years. As many feminist historians have documented, the war brought women into the workforce in unprecedented numbers with an enormous governmental campaign to contribute to the war effort; the postwar period (actually beginning midwar) attempted to put them back into the domestic familial world.<sup>104</sup> But this resurgence of family was not just a return to the “traditional” family structure. As Walters points out, it was a “fundamentally new phenomenon.” She writes: “The legendary family of the 1950s . . . represented something new. It was not, as common wisdom tells us, the last gasp of ‘traditional’ family life with roots deep in the past. Rather, it was the first wholehearted effort to create a home that would fulfill virtually all its members’ personal needs through an energized and expressive personal life.”<sup>105</sup>

This philosophy also coincided with a number of changes that were occurring in women’s magazines. Walker, in talking about the top women’s magazines (*McCalls*, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *Companion*) competing for subscribers, writes that *McCalls* underwent

dramatic changes in 1954, the first of which was declaring that the magazine no longer was solely intended for women, but for the whole family. This “togetherness” theme directed attention to the family as a “totality” - “a family’s living not as isolated members but as a unit sharing experiences.” Interestingly, this campaign overlapped with the television debut of a number of family-oriented shows - “Lassie,” “Father Knows Best,” “Walt Disney” - all of which, Walkers points out, “glorified the family unit.”<sup>106</sup>

The images of the characters themselves, of the ever cheerful, consumer housewife, the nine to five working dad, and the 2.4 kids living in a suburban tract home, were crucial to familiarizing both women and men with “the new social and sexual order, which was organized to a great extent around the new consumerism born of the postwar economic boom.”<sup>107</sup>

However, these characterizations, and their happy-go-lucky, “all’s well that ends well” situations defied what many mothers and daughters were experiencing at home. Susan Douglas, writing in her book *Where the Girls Are* (1995) remembers the inconsistencies surrounding her “real” experience as a daughter with a working mom, and the images of mothers on shows like “Leave It to Beaver.”

My confusion about what I would be when I grew up stemmed from the disparity between glowing media images of happy, fulfilled moms and my mother’s daily indications that her life was one no sane girl would ever want to aspire to. We got it, even as kids, that there was a big difference between June Cleaver’s attitude toward life and Mom’s.<sup>108</sup>

While writing this chapter, I asked my twenty-three year old daughter, Katie, if she had seen any of the episodes of “Father Knows Best,” “The Donna Reed Show,” or “Leave It to Beaver.” Surprised at my lack of recall, she said, “Don’t you remember Mom, we use to watch ‘Father Knows Best’ at lunchtime together? You thought it was better than watching soap operas!” In fact, I do now remember thinking it was better to watch a sappy, predictable (father always saves the day) sitcom, than having to explain to her all the sexually explicit story lines depicted in many of the “soaps.” Her reaction, similar to my own childhood experience watching these sitcoms, was one of confusion (can you really clean a house in high heels?) and disconnect. What we both saw on the screen bore little resemblance to what we were encountering in our daily lives and in our home.

Ultimately, the tensions and resentments working *and* stay-at-home mothers shared with these media images of their roles would eventually become their daughters’ crusade. While I discuss Warner Brothers’ (WB) television show “Gilmore Girls” (premiered Fall, 2000) in more depth in Chapter 2, it is significant to note that one of the show’s early episodes featured a “mocked” version of “The Donna Reed Show,” entitled “That Damn Donna Reed.” Briefly, the episode begins with Lorelai (young, hip, rebellious unwed “mom”), and her daughter Rory (pensive, Harvard-bound high-schooler), watching a rerun of “The Donna Reed Show,” while simultaneously ridiculing and rewriting the script. Dean, Rory’s boyfriend, enters the mother/daughter camaraderie without a clue as to what the pair are watching, let alone why they are having so much fun mocking the show’s characters and situations. Lorelai explains to Dean

that Donna Reed is “the quintessential 50’s mom with the perfect 50’s family.” Dean, still unclear, questions, “so . . . it’s a show?” to which both daughter and mother reply in rapid-fire succession, “It’s a lifestyle.” “It’s a religion.”

As the storyline continues to question the validity of the “happy housewife,” and mother/daughter mutuality (Lorelai quips, “mother/daughter window washing - we should try that!”) Rory, now in a heated debate with Dean about a woman’s “choice” to be a homemaker, invites him over for a “Donna Reed Night.” Donned in fifties costume, complete with high heels and pearls, Rory prepares the ultimate Donna Reed dinner. But while Dean admits to enjoying the evening, telling Rory he really doesn’t really want her to be Donna Reed - he likes her just the way she is - Rory, via the Internet, discovers the truth behind the perfect television mom. Donna Reed was, in real life, *not* the “quintessential fifties mom,” but an uncredited director/producer of the show, and one of television’s first female executives. Clearly, what this episode instructs the “next” generation of daughters is important: challenge the authenticity of these past representations, and “rewrite” the script.

Unfailingly, as “That Damn Donna Reed” humorously confirms, the nostalgic representations in sitcoms like “Father Knows Best” and “The Donna Reed Show” posit mothers and daughters “united in their domestic orientation,” ever after content to find fulfillment in clean laundry, new appliances, sparkling floors, meat loaf, and life as a supporting character. Daughters too were seen as extensions of their mothers, trainees-in-waiting to take on the domestic tasks for the next generation.<sup>109</sup> Ironically, Douglas points out this “media containment

was achieved at the very moment that more and more real-life moms were leaving the domestic sphere and going back to work.”<sup>110</sup>

The fifties agenda for mothers and daughters in film, television and print narratives continued the process of constructing mother/daughter relationships in a series of contradictions, holding mothers to be endlessly available and responsive to the needs of their teenage daughters, while simultaneously condemning them for *not* being attentive and diligent enough when their children deviated from the norm. In a no-win, damned if you do, damned if you don't situation, Walters points out mothers continued to be “held responsible for their daughters’ psyches and personalities,” yet were “given little narrative power to make that responsibility meaningful.” The connection and closeness between the fifties mothers and daughters was not one built on a richness of shared experiences, but on “a cloying attachment firmly anchored to the patriarchal constraints of female domesticity.”<sup>111</sup>

In 1972, during the height of second wave feminism, a sitcom portraying an adult mother and daughter living together debuted on prime time television.<sup>112</sup> “Maude” (1972-1974), a spin-off of Norma Lear’s “social issue” sitcom “All in the Family,” featured a “blended family” living together under one roof: Maude, a “fiftyish” four times divorced mother; her current husband, Walter, an appliance salesman; Carol, Maude’s twenty-seven year old divorced daughter; and Carol’s eight-year old son. While television representations of “blended” families were still considered atypical, the characters of Maude and Carol - mother and daughter - were representative of what television *and* film had been ignoring; two “liberated

women” interacting, neither dominating the other, but rather sharing in each other’s collective histories.

Interestingly, like “Gilmore Girls,” “Maude” also takes on the established narratives about mothers and daughters, poking fun at their authority. Walters, in her enthusiastic and comprehensive study of the show, writes that Maude acknowledges the traditional scripts (as when Maude sarcastically tells Carol, “Children resent and mothers interfere . . .that comes with the territory”), while “implicitly challenging their authenticity.” She writes: “Maude” takes on June and Margaret and Donna and, in doing so, challenges not only the mythology of the perfect mother (who knows that father really *does* know best), but the mythology of the demon mother, too. Maude insists on being involved in her daughter’s life, and her daughter insists on being involved in Maude’s life.”<sup>13</sup>

However, while most women enjoyed the show, Douglas points out many men hated it. Maude, played by Bea Arthur, was the antithesis of the fifties, demure moms. “Outspoken, sharp-tongued, and sarcastic, eager to take on any man in a debate about politics and especially about the status of women,” Maude was a commanding presence. At five feet eleven inches tall and “big boned,” she was taller and bigger than most men. Imposing in voice as well as stature, a *Time* magazine review (“Big Bea,” October 1, 1973), referred to Maude as having “the voice of a diesel truck in second gear.”<sup>14</sup> So although Maude presented a refreshing alternative to the fifties mom caricature, Douglas argues she also reinforced the stereotype of the feminist as “a strident, loud unfeminine bruiser.”<sup>15</sup>



Additionally, unlike other sitcoms portraying single and/or divorced women with feminist leanings - “Mary Tyler Moore”(1970-77), “One Day at a Time” (1975-84) - Bonnie Dow, in her book *Prime Time Feminism* (1996) suggests Maude’s feminist standings was not a “lifestyle” feminism, referring to the fact that Maude did not work outside the home and had a live-in housekeeper. Rather Dow argues it was feminism “represented by large doses of explicit feminist rhetoric emanating from both Maude and her daughter, Carol.”<sup>116</sup> Additionally, Maude’s “privileged and protected” status, while permitting mother and daughter to “idealize” feminist ideas, did not address many of the more pragmatic aspects of feminism.<sup>117</sup> One of the show’s most controversial episodes involving Maude’s decision to have an abortion at age forty-seven is a case in point. Although there is some enlightening dialogue between mother and daughter as Carol supports her mother’s decision to choose (“We finally have the right to decide what we can do with our own bodies”), Dow points out that it fails to address primary issues for many women, issues such as accessibility or affordability. But however limited, Maude *did* initiate many feminist concerns - abortion, menopause and sexual harassment - that had been labeled for years as “television taboos.”<sup>118</sup>

For mothers and daughters in the early sixties and seventies, substantial visual representations, either in film or television were few. As noted by many media critics, what is remarkable about this period (roughly 1963-73) is the lack of roles and prominence accorded women, as popular films focused on themes of war (*Dr. Zhivago*, 1965), male bonding, (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, 1969), rebellious (male) alienation, (*Five Easy Pieces*, 1970)

and the male antihero (*Easy Rider*, 1969).<sup>119</sup> In *From Reverence to Rape* (1987 3rd ed.)

Molly Haskell writes that “the growing strength and demands of women in real life, spearheaded by women’s liberation, obviously provoked a backlash in commercial film.”<sup>120</sup> Only as more feminist scholarship emerges, affirming, among other positive advances, the exceptional importance of rethinking mother/daughter relationships, do additional representations and feminist images of mothers and daughters take hold.

Documenting Mothers and Daughters: *Nana, Mom and Me* (1974),

*Grey Gardens* (1976) and *Daughter Rite* (1979)

Only a handful of American women worked in the field of documentary filmmaking prior to the 1970s, and of the few recognized, Joyce Chopra (*Happy Mother’s Day*, 1963), Shirley Clarke (*Portrait of Jason*, 1967), Charlotte Zwerin, (*Salesman*, 1969), most worked in conjunction with men already established in the field.<sup>121</sup> The turning point for feminist filmmakers came in the mid-1970s. Jan Rosenberg, writing about the feminist film movement in her book *Women’s Reflections* (1983) states that in 1972 there were not more than thirty to thirty-five feminist filmmakers; by mid-1976 the number had grown to over two hundred.<sup>122</sup>

Unquestionably, the women’s movement provided the impetus for many of these women to express their unique personal visions within the artistic medium of documentary filmmaking. They sought opportunities both from within and outside the field. Some women,

already working in the film industry, as artists or editors took advantage of further advances, while others, active in the women's movement, saw film as a tool for raising consciousness and implementing social change.<sup>123</sup> While feminist film developed as a cinematic genre alongside the women's movement, the advent and availability of lightweight, low-cost camera equipment and synchronized tape recorders - both of which did not exist prior to World War II - significantly contributed to women's participation in the field. Both technically and economically, these new advances allowed women to compete more equitably than would have been possible in Hollywood-style filmmaking.<sup>124</sup>

Amalie R. Rothschild was one of the new wave of feminist documentary filmmakers who sought to explore feminist topics like abortion, sex-role socialization, and the broader issue of a "woman's place."<sup>125</sup> Her third film, the autobiographical *Nana, Mom and Me* (1974) examines her interest in family, and the prospect of role changes and life cycle transitions that she was anticipating at the time of the film's production. Although begun as a tribute to and record of her grandmother's life, gradually, and partly because of Nana's reluctance to be filmed, the film shifts to involve the relationships between the filmmaker, her grandmother, and more conclusively, her mother.<sup>126</sup>

The film begins with a full shot of Rothschild, both filmmaker and film subject, speaking directly to the audience:

When you start thinking of yourself as a mother, you have to stop thinking of yourself as a child. I see my parents in a new way. I've begun to feel the continuity between generations as well as the change.

This “realist” approach, using a simple format to present the everyday details of women’s lives and thoughts, is underscored by the fact that the central characters speak directly to the camera. Julia Lesage, in her article “Political Aesthetics of the Feminist Documentary Film” (1984) explains that feminist filmmakers were attracted to this form of documentary precisely because it imitated “the structure of the consciousness raising group and of openness and trust among women.” As Lesage explains:

The sound track of the feminist documentary film often consists almost entirely of women’s self-conscious, heightened, intellectual discussion of role and sexual politics. The film gives voice to that which had in the media been spoken for women by patriarchy. Received notions about women give way to an outpouring of real desires, contradictions, decisions, and social analyses.<sup>127</sup>

Similarly, Rosenberg writes that many of the early films that women documentary filmmakers made approached the experiences of life, work, politics, sexuality, and the events of everyday life from a social structural perspective. Their intention was to educate audiences to a higher level of awareness by sharing their own lives, and the institutions within which their lives had been structured. Additionally, they intended to stimulate consciousness-raising discussions, and to prod viewers toward feminist political action.<sup>128</sup> With *Nana, Mom and Me*, Rothschild is searching *with* the audience to understand the complexities of her own life while seeking out an understanding of her maternal past.

In an interview about the film, Rothschild says she began to discover her mother as a daughter for the first time only after Nana refused to cooperate:

I also began to understand that the film I had all along really wanted to make was more about *my mother* who has been *the* pivotal influence in my life. For years I hadn't really known how to get close to her and how to approach her. Now something was happening, and the film really began to grow and take off at that point. It suddenly became clear to me what I was really after.<sup>129</sup>

What becomes astoundingly clear as the film progresses is Rothschild's growing understanding of her mother's dilemma, struggling to balance her professional life as an artist with her role as mother. Of making the film, Rothschild says her mother was afraid she would not be presented as a professional person, but rather only as the daughter of Nana, the mother of Amalie. For Rothschild, who greatly admired her mother's role as an artist, this was a revelation. It was seeing and knowing her mother as a professional, Rothschild says, "that had been such an important force in my life."<sup>130</sup>

Another mother/daughter dynamic in the film centers around mother/daughter rivalry. While the theme of mother/daughter rivalry has been a staple of popular culture, often resorting to the tawdry aspect of sexual competition for a particular male, Rothschild's handling of the tensions she and her mother share are both sensitive and insightful. Admittedly, Rothschild says she tried to deal with the issue in the film directly, but her mother was resistant. Only after discussing the fact that they both share the same name - Amalie - does either explore the emotional terrain more directly.<sup>131</sup> What then becomes evident is the realization that both

mother and daughter draw strength from their own, as well as each other's artistic expression.

Again, it is through understanding, of coming together through personal history, that mother and daughter are able to come to terms with their own and each others' conflicting expectations.

Perceptively, this film situates mother/daughter connection and disconnection in intimate settings - mother cutting daughter's hair in the bathroom, mother and daughter reminiscing through old photographs and film footage, and daughter visiting her mother's studio. The film's style, reinforcing continuities between past and present by incorporating old photographs, film footage and verbal reminiscences, supports a positive, even nostalgic view of the past while at the same time questioning the conflicts of women's experience. In fact, it is this quality of being able to represent the negotiations of everyday life that allows the documentary to go beyond fiction. Rosenberg argues that autobiographical films and portrait films about women's personal lives and interpersonal relationships "depict women whose lives are seen as 'representative,' not 'exemplary' . . . they reveal and illustrate more universal problems which women face."<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, Lesage sees these films - specifically autobiography and biography - providing an essential tool for looking in a self-conscious way at women's subculture. It becomes, both back and forth, past and present, a way of "naming and describing what woman really is, in that political and artistic act that Adrienne Rich calls 'diving into the wreck.'"<sup>133</sup>

Certainly, the mantra - the personal is political - at the heart of the women's movement was something most feminist filmmakers strived to convey. Rosenberg writes that in "highlighting the ways in which individual women reveal significant features of all women's

experience, portrait and autobiographical films “resolve some tensions between individualism and collectivism . . . they transcend the false dichotomy between the personal is political, the social and the psychological.”<sup>134</sup>

While *Nana, Mom, and Me* utilizes a realist approach to document the relationship between a mother/daughter/grandmother, admittedly for the purpose of conveying a new and heightened sense of women’s identity, *Grey Gardens* (1976), directed by brothers Albert and David Maysles, moves to the genre of cinema verite to document a mother and daughter living together in a decaying, twenty-eight room Long Island mansion. Cinema verite, or direct cinema as it is often referred to in America, evolved in the early sixties in response to the heavily narrated documentaries which imposed a preconceived point of view.<sup>135</sup> In theory, cinema verite represents an overt “realist” approach and aesthetic in which the events are allowed to unfold before the camera. There is no script and no preconceptions on the part of the filmmaker.<sup>136</sup>

The film itself details the daily lives of two women, eighty-year old Edith Beale (Big Edie) and her fifty-nine year old daughter, Edie (Little Edie), but reveals only a glimpse of their past. Notably, it is their living conditions - the house in a deteriorating state, with cat litter boxes and rotting food cans everywhere - that takes center stage along with the two women’s mental state. Both disturbing and compelling, the signifying focus of the film becomes the condition of the women’s individual and collective mental stability, and their questionable ability to deal with reality.

Big and Little Edie's days are spent in idle leisure - sunning on the deck or beach, feeding their menagerie of cats and raccoons - except when they are "performing." Both women are theatrical; Big Edie, a former singer, periodically launches into song throughout the film, and Edie, elaborately costumed, dances as a drum majorette. Film critic Marjorie Rosen writes that "mother and daughter perform before the camera as though they've been waiting in the wings for twenty-five years. This is their moment before the kleig lights."<sup>137</sup>

In true cinema verite style, the film displays no prescribed scenarios, reenacted vignettes, voice-over narration or theme music, except for a brief newspaper montage at the beginning of the film when local newspapers reported the Beale home condemned by the Board of Health. Traditional "interview formats" are replaced by extended monologues of Big or Little Edie speaking directly or indirectly to the camera in protracted long takes.<sup>138</sup>

As previously mentioned, there is very little information given about the Beales' past. The camera, however, does periodically focus on an oil painting of Mrs. Beale when she was young and beautiful, and Little Edie is viewed leafing through an old photograph album. The photographs, of mother and daughter in their younger days, provides one of the more profound "contrasts" in the film. As once great beauties with money and connections (the Beales are aunt and cousin to Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis) now living a life of decay and "psychological paralysis," Rosen suggest that one of the film's major questions becomes "What went wrong?"<sup>139</sup> However, Fischer speculates whether the Maysles might not have found the women's lives so tragic had they never been beautiful.<sup>140</sup>



The film also incorporates a process that calls attention to the *process* of filming. Known as reflexivity, this mode of representation gives emphasis to the encounter between filmmaker and viewer rather than filmmaker and subject.<sup>141</sup> Essentially, a “reflexive” technique not only makes the audience aware of the relationships between the producer, the process of making and the product, but also makes them realize the necessity of that knowledge.<sup>142</sup> While neither director is explicitly depicted in the film, from the beginning their presence is assumed by the audience; their voices are often heard in the background and in one scene, a mirror reflects the image of cameraman and camera. Additionally, several times throughout the film Little Edie addresses one of the Maysles by name or asks them questions: “David, do you think I should have gotten into nightclub work?” And later chides, “You’re wasting your film on this!”<sup>143</sup>

However, there is a significant amount of dispute among documentary critics as to the purpose and intentional use of reflexivity in this film. In “The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film” (1988), Jay Ruby claims that the reflexive elements in *Grey Gardens* are “accidents of the moment,” or an unexpected turn of events during the shooting rather than the result of deliberate pre-production planning. He argues that its use was primarily a professional need for a “finished product,” and even suggests that the Maysles might have decided to use reflexivity even though it generated a different “look” from their other films (*Salesman*, 1969 and *Gimme Shelter*, 1970) because Big and Little Edie would not ignore the presence of the camera and crew, and not behave as “proper” subjects for a documentary film.<sup>144</sup>

But by accident or not, Bill Nichols in his book *Representing Reality* (1991) states that reflexivity does challenge epistemological doubt by “stressing the deformative intervention of the cinematic apparatus in the process of representations.”<sup>145</sup> As a result, its presence in the film exposes the interaction between the Maysles and the Beales - Little Edie’s flirtations with the directors and Big Edie’s attention getting scenes. Additionally, because the audience is aware of the process and production, the “surreal” storyline seems less strange and more “real” - we see the camera and know the Maysles are participating in the drama with us. In fact, reflexivity *is* significantly effective in questioning a certain amount of knowledge about this particular mother/daughter relationship. Precisely because we have this perspective and can witness the interaction between directors/subjects, we are challenged to ask the questions: “Why did these women allow the Maysles to come into their home?” and “Why did they reveal themselves so completely?”

Beyond the film’s documentary style, however, there are questions as to its ideological agenda. Although the directors acknowledge they were “possessed” by the Beales, co-director and editor, Ellen Hovde, in an interview about the making of the film reports that “[t]hey really had no idea why they were interested in these people.”<sup>146</sup> Lucy Fischer, however, in a thorough analysis of the film in her book *Cinematernity* (1996) claims that by analyzing the *making* of the film, the ideological positions become clear. She argues that while the male directors tracked “their artistic obsession, without a clue as to the nature of their preoccupation,” co-directors and editors, Hovde and Muffie Meyer strived to place the women in a historical/cultural context.

Fischer further states that with no *social* perspective brought to the Beales' story, there is no sense of the *gendered* world which these women inhabit and how it may have facilitated their mother/daughter entrapment.<sup>147</sup>

Significantly, Fischer points out that while the Maysles saw the film in terms of plot and climax (Would Little Edie leave or not?), the editors saw the issue, not as "novelistic resolution, but psychological enigma" (Why were mother and daughter together?). Whereas the directors seemed to remove themselves from the Beales, showing more interest in "observing" them as psychological subjects, the co-directors/editors struggled with ethical issues - "exploitation and disturbing the Beales' uneasy peace."<sup>148</sup>

Although the audience is never to understand "went went wrong" for the Beales, whether they were indeed mentally challenged, or simply just two lonely, isolated women trying their best to live together, the mother/daughter psychological framework of the film remains powerful. Rightfully, Fischer points out that the Beales' plight "reinforces cultural fears about the mother/daughter bond - a liaison that has been seen as dangerously symbiotic."<sup>149</sup> With such a limited scope, the *psychological* description becomes the *totality* of the Beales' relationship, and the potential for greater mother/daughter understanding is left unfinished.

Breaking away from a realist and cinema verite style, filmmaker Michelle Citron uses an experimental approach to explore mother/daughter relationships in her film *Daughter Rite* (1978). The director's use of experimental techniques are purposefully assembled to question the expectations of documentary formats - realism, cinema verite -to challenge its limitations of

identification and “its false and easy notions of unity and truth.”<sup>150</sup> In “The Right of Re-Vision” (1981) Linda Williams and B. Ruby Rich write that the filmmaker’s central problem was how to make a film “about relations of women within the family without producing either a first-person confessional film or a fictional portrait of a representative family.”<sup>151</sup> With that directive, Citron employs no “real” or “single” daughter or mother in the text, but rather draws a composite picture of the mother/daughter bond from numerous interviews she conducted.<sup>152</sup>

According to Jane Feuer in her article “Daughter Rite: Living with Our Pain and Love” (1980), Citron utilizes three separate “channels” of filmmaking: fiction, documentary, and experimental. Interwoven throughout the film, they consist of voice-over narration in the first person (associated with both fiction and documentary), an image track consisting of optically distorted home movies (experimental), and documentary footage of two sisters/daughters talking about their mother.<sup>153</sup> Confusing as it is to correlate any connection between the narrative voice and the experimental “home-movie” images, Feuer argues that it is both “natural and tempting” to interpret the narration as dominant (and as the voice of the author), “due to a longstanding convention of ‘voice of God’ narration in documentary film.”<sup>154</sup>

However, it is this very confusion (ambiguity of voice and image), of trying to “unify,” and in some cases “make sense” of the various channels of discussion that the film exploits to question the meaning of terms such as “truth,” “fiction,” and “documentary.” Williams and Rich claim that in presenting these mixed modes, the film profoundly criticizes the very forms (realist/cinema verite) in use. They argue that “[w]hat seemed at the film’s start to be a one-

dimensional documentary truth has become, by its end, a more complex rendering of truths through these shifts to a more obviously manipulated, fictional style of representation.’<sup>155</sup> But what are these “truths” if they are both manipulated and one-sided?

I, like many audience members and film critics who reviewed the film, felt violated when the end credits rolled and discovered that the supposed verite sections were staged performances. (Some critics profess that the camera work, anticipating certain actions by the sisters/daughters, was a clear “give-away” that the scenes were staged. I, however, was completely deceived.)

Additionally, I longed for the voice, the absent mother portrayed only in the exaggerated images, to speak, to be recognized, to engage herself in the mother/daughter bond. Disbelieving that the mother was once again repressed, I, like Walters in her review of daughters writing their mother’s memoirs, question the ability (and credibility) of daughters writing/filming the story of their mothers’ lives. Walters asks: “Can she [daughter] in narrating the elusive experiences of past events, do justice to the felt realities of her mother’s existence? Or does the mother’s story as told by the daughter become merely a vehicle for detailing the daughter’s life or a lengthy compendium of a mother’s mismothering?”<sup>156</sup>

Kaplan surmises that the problem with “mother,” silent/repressed (within patriarchy) and omitted in feminist filmmaking, has been compounded by the fact that, paradoxically, the very attractiveness of feminism was that it provided “an arena for separation from oppressive

closeness with the mother; feminism was in part a reaction against our mothers, who had tried to inculcate the patriarchal 'feminine' in us." She states that:

Feminism was an opportunity to find out whom we were and what we wanted. Regardless of whether or not we were mothers in actuality, we came to feminism as daughters, and we spoke from that position. It is thus not surprising that we have taken so long to arrive at a position where we can identify with the mother and begin to look from her position.<sup>157</sup>

But how can there be identification when the mother is allowed no voice?

On the other hand, Kaplan argues that the spectator, in viewing the mother as absent, silent, not allowed to speak for herself, is made to *experience* the repression of the mother that patriarchal culture insists on. Additionally, she does not think the film itself takes the position of the critical daughters (as many feminists underscore), but in experiencing what patriarchy has done to her, the spectator takes her side.<sup>158</sup>

There is, of course, anger and impatience directed at the mother(s) by the daughter(s) for nearly everything she does, or does not do, along with occasional bouts of sympathy, and there is a strong dose of matrophobia - the fear of becoming one's mother. The monotone voice (daughter) tells us that she fears getting fat and depressed like her mother: "I hate my weaknesses that are those of my mother; but in hating her, I hate myself."<sup>159</sup>

The film paradoxically opens with a sequence of jerky (some critics have used the term "flickering") blown-up (distorted) home-movie footage (8mm), slowed down to expose images of a little girl and her mother running to each other, but somehow missing each other's embrace

until the mother finally grabs the daughter. The daughter's voice, dull, emotionless, tells us she is working out her conflicting feelings toward her mother, "a woman whom I am very much like and not like at all."

These distorted, contradictory images and voice-overs are juxtaposed with the sisters/daughters verite sequences: sitting together on a sofa talking about their love/hate relationships with their mother; in the kitchen making a fruit salad neither one feels satisfied with; sitting on the floor examining their mothers' photograph records, snooping through their mother's make-up table where they find prescription pills, racy novels and hidden money; and finally, one sister recounting her rape by her stepfather, a rape that her mother did not acknowledge or do anything about.

O'Reilly and Abbey write that given the patriarchal sanction against mother/daughter connection and feminist mothering, mothers able to model to their daughters "firsthand resistance and relationality" may be difficult to "convey or decode."<sup>160</sup> Their plea, like Rich's voiced back in 1976, is for mothers' narratives that can *become* "models to live by." They encourage the spoken, written, and I might add, *visual* maternal narratives that can model resistance and relationality that may not be readily apparent or available in their lived lives: "Through narration mothers may name, claim, and transform their lived realities; and bequeath to daughters - and other mothers - a vision of emancipatory connectedness and care."<sup>161</sup>

While I mourn the repression of the lost/silenced voice of the mother in this film (and maybe that is exactly what Citron is affecting), I support its efficiency in opening a

mother/daughter dialogue. The film ends with the voice (presumably the mother) saying “Why do we have to say all this?” It is precisely this concluding question that validates the need for what feminist author Sara Ruddick calls the “realistic language in which to capture the ordinary/extraordinary pleasures and pains of maternal work.” O’Reilly and Abbey write of narration as a “transgressive act;” speaking, as Ruddick explains, changes the speaker.<sup>162</sup>

In the same way that mother/daughter dialogue has the capacity to challenge societal views of mothers and daughters, so too does an understanding of the socialization that creates or intensifies problems between mothers and daughters. Paula Caplan in her popular books *Don’t Blame Mother: Mending the Mother-Daughter Relationship* (1989) and the reprinted version, *The New Don’t Blame Mother* (2000) examines a number of “bad-mother myths” that are used against mothers. Rather than asking what cultural factors might be responsible for severing the mother/daughter relationship, the foremost question in our culture so often asks “how is mother at fault?”<sup>163</sup> Additionally, she adds there are “good mother myths” that set impossible standards for mothers to live up to.

Admittedly, as the mother of two daughters, (and complicated by the fact that I am presently working on a thesis about mother/daughter relationships), I am at times anxious about what my daughters say about me. As mother/daughter writers, Christina Looper Baker and Christina Baker Kline write in their introduction to *The Conversation Begins: Mothers and Daughters Talk About Living Feminism* (1996), daughters have enormous power in the relationship - the power of judging.<sup>164</sup> However, throughout this research I have come to realize



that “reflections” and insights surrounding mother/daughter relationships continually evolve and shift. As our individual life-stages change with age, interpersonal relationships and work, so too does our identification and relationality as mothers and daughters. As I examine more recent mother/daughter representations, this evolving perspective gradually emerges, although typically not from mainstream narratives.

## CHAPTER 2:

### NEW PARADIGMS OF MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

#### Dismantling Melodrama: From *Terms of Endearment* to “Gilmore Girls”

While the 1970s saw attempts from feminist filmmakers to reconsider mothers and daughters, the backlash of the 80s, documented by Susan Fauldi in her book *Backlash* (1991), shaped much of Hollywood’s portrayal of women in the next two decades. Writing about Hollywood antifeminism in the 80s in his article “Images and Women” (1985) Robin Wood states that the precariousness of what was achieved in the 70s, in films such as *Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore* (1975), and *An Unmarried Woman* (1978), can be gauged from the ease with which it has been overthrown in the 80s.<sup>165</sup> Fauldi notes that “portrayals of strong or complex women that went against the media-trend grain were few and far between.”<sup>166</sup> She goes on to specifically narrow down the antifeminist themes: “women set against women; women’s anger at their social circumstance displayed as personal depression; and women’s lives “framed as morality tales in which the ‘good mother’ wins and the independent woman gets punished.” According to Fauldi, Hollywood’s overall message in the 1980s was that women were miserable and “unhappy because they were too free” and their “liberation had denied them

marriage and motherhood.”<sup>167</sup> Unfortunately, these antifeminist themes in the 80s still permeate much of mainstream cinema today.

For mothers and daughters in this decade after the women’s movement, film, print and television representations nearly exclusively inscribed mother/daughter separation, and the daughter’s need to separate from the mother in order to enter the world of adulthood, and more importantly, male identification.<sup>168</sup> However, this discourse of separation from mother becomes much more pronounced in the 80s (and continues to this day) largely due to the popularity of Nancy Friday’s book *My Mother/My Self* (1977) and her tirade against mothers as “malicious and repressed impediments to their daughters’ adult (hetero)sexuality.”<sup>169</sup> Similarly, the contradictory discourses of “loving and hating” and “loving and letting go” become intensified in films such as *Terms of Endearment* (1983), and later on, in *Mermaids* (1990), *One True Thing* (1998) and *Anywhere But Here* (1999). The mothers and daughters in these films (reminiscent of the films of the 30s and 40s) seem forever “lost” to each other either through the “push and pull” struggle of separation, conflict, or more permanently, through death.<sup>170</sup>

The eighties also saw a reemergence of the evil mother (e.g. mother blame in its most elemental form). The 1981 film *Mommie Dearest* details a chilling picture of movie star/mother Joan Crawford as the evil mother incarnate. Crawford, who in real life played one of the most famous fictional mothers, Mildred in *Mildred Pierce*, is shown to punish her adopted daughter Christina with neurotic vengeance. While the film psychologically rationalizes her neurosis - she didn’t have a father, her mother was bad, the family was poor - it most effectively links her

neurosis with her work in a move similar to *Mildred Pierce*, and her compulsion to have everything in her life, including her daughter, in order.

In popular culture of the nineties there were similar tactics of anxiety and blame. Feminism, “a positive and constructive theory and political practice,” now becomes a discourse which affirms that “too much has ruined American women and deprived them of the joys of family and motherhood.”<sup>171</sup> This tactical warning also coincides with the “you can’t have it all” theme made popular after women had made significant strides in the workplace and in their social and personal lives.<sup>172</sup>

While past mother/daughter narratives hinted at maternal narcissism and mother/daughter sexual rivalry (*Mildred Pierce*, 1945, *Imitation of Life*, 1959), these dynamics become more evident in the mother/daughter films made in the 1990s. Particularly, *Postcards From the Edge* (1990) an updated version of the stock narrative of the bad Hollywood mother and the victimized daughter (loosely based on author Carrie Fisher’s relationship with her actress mom, Debbie Reynolds). Here, the eccentric/sexual/narcissistic mother, Doris Mann, embarrasses and intimidates her would-be actress daughter, Suzanne. Annoyed at her mother’s constant need for attention, Suzanne asks the pivotal question: “Why do you have to completely overshadow me?”

Faludi argues that during similar backlash periods (the 30s and the backlash formation of the Production Code of Ethics in 1934, and after World War II when working women were told to quit work and get back in the kitchen) strong, independent women either became quite

literally silenced by debilitating illnesses - brain tumor, spinal paralysis, mental illness - or were replaced by “good girls” that personified a girl next door image. For Hollywood “star moms” like Joan Crawford and Debbie Reynolds, displacing their independent and envied celebratory status with one of “mother gone bad” scenario served to be yet another backlash warning of “the incompatibility of career and personal happiness.”<sup>173</sup>

Increasingly, as these recent film narratives move away from the “asexual” mother, exploring issues of maternal sexuality as well as the daughter’s own budding sexual experiences, they also portray yet another repressive paradigm of “unacceptable” mothers, whose eccentricities are considered to be unhealthy (both physically and mentally) to themselves and their daughters. Unlike Stella Dallas, whose obvious class constraints made her an unacceptable mother, these “eccentric” mother representations cross economic and social barriers. For the most part, the ideological assumption in these discourses is that the mothers, representing a style of mothering that is unconventional, are unsuitable as they are and must be “fixed,” often by a male character in the narrative.<sup>174</sup>

While these representations clearly challenge the gains women/mothers attained from the feminist movement, a further dimension of eccentric mothering is broadened to incorporate “eccentric mothering/responsible daughtering” - a discourse represented in films such as *Mermaids, Anywhere But Here* and *Tumbleweeds* made in the 1990s. “Responsible daughtering” (“daughtering” being an almost nonexistent term in our culture) in this sense represents the excessive burden placed on the daughter for the “appropriate” mothering in the

relationship. This “uneven” construction, elevating the daughter to “sacrificial victim” (after all, she has to put up with and take care of her mother) condemns the mother, who, as the sole contributor in the relationship, is almost certainly positioned to fail.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, Walters sees this new strain of mother-blame, “concerned not with simple neglect or with elementary over-involvement, but with a sort of malicious narcissism born of a too independent mother and an overshadowed daughter.”<sup>176</sup> In other words, eccentric, out of control mothers have gone too far, and their daughters are having to pay the price. Overwhelmingly, these recent shifts perpetuate the inevitable “double bind” representations and psychological framing - love/hate, separation/autonomy - so inherently embodied in mother/daughter relationships within patriarchal culture, as well as incorporating ideas about feminism within the predictable (and antifeminist) theme of conflict and struggle.

Conditional Love: *Terms of Endearment* (1983)

*Terms of Endearment* (1983), acclaimed as “the timeless tale of the enduring and loving bond between mother and daughter,” has held a unique position in popular culture for almost twenty years as the quintessential mother/daughter film.<sup>177</sup> The film, directed by James Brooks (most notably known for his television work in “The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” “Rhoda,” “Lou Grant” and “Taxi”), was in many ways considered a “breakthrough” film about mothers and daughters. Walters claims this was largely due to the fact that the film positions the

character of Aurora Greenway, played by Shirley McLaine, as not only an older, upper class, widowed *and* attractive woman, but a mother who is sexually active.<sup>178</sup> In fact, in presenting Aurora as first, a mother who demands a close relationship with her daughter, Emma (even after she is married and living in another state), and second, a woman/mother who is sexually awakened by her neighbor, astronaut Garrett Breedlove (played by Jack Nicholson), the film subsequently succeeds in challenging conventional notions as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior for a mother.

Certainly, I view the opening scenes (while the credits are presented) of Aurora's need to get close to her baby (she tries to climb into the crib with her daughter and winds up pinching her until she cries to confirm she is still alive), and then later crawling into bed with her daughter after the death of her husband as acceptable portrayals of mother/daughter love, while at the same time I realize both scenes have undertones of Wylie's "momism." There is an uneasy feeling about Aurora's neediness for her daughter's affection and support. Emma is often "parentified," even as a young child, and while she doesn't actively participate in the recuperation of her mother as a delinquent sexual woman, she does celebrate her mother's sexual liberation - even as she is shocked by it - in an intimate "girl talk" bedroom scene.

The multiple bed settings are instructive here, as mother and daughter frequently comfort each other, or share personal conversation in bed together. Like the train scene in *Stella Dallas*, when Laura and Stella "cuddle" together in the lower berth, there is a sense that such

intense mother/daughter intimacy is uncomfortable to watch, and as a result, requires a separation.

Perhaps it is the “mature” child and mother attachment and closeness that most offend appropriate mothering sensibilities, although popular child care experts have traditionally frowned on bringing even babies and small children into what is now affectionately termed as the “family bed.” A quick browse through the Internet on child care sleeping problems/habits exposes controversy over whether or not to bring babies or children into the parents’ bed when they are having difficulty sleeping alone. Dr. Richard Ferber’s method of letting the baby/child cry for a set period of time after he/she is put to bed is distinctly challenged by Dr. William Sears’s method of shared family sleeping arrangements.<sup>179</sup> Both Feber and Sears have popular child care books detailing their expert infant/child sleeping advice, and have been the focus of media attention in such popular forums as *People* magazine and *The Today Show*. This, of course, brings into question the real transgression of “eccentric” mothering - mothers’ disregard for the “correct” mothering by the experts (male interests and medical establishment) versus their own *experience* of mothering. As a result, Aurora and Emma’s intimacy and attachment are framed within the confines of “momism,” and the suffocating mothering that is considered debilitating and essentially unhealthy.

Central to the film, however, and balancing out the threat of mother/daughter overcloseness is the perpetual theme of “loving and letting go.” The narrative explicitly implies that a separation is required for both mother and daughter. A pivotal scene in the middle of the



film clearly identifies that their connection has gone too far. Locked in a goodbye embrace with her mother before she moves to Iowa, Emma tells her: “That’s the first time I stopped hugging first . . . I like that.” The discourse now becomes one of mandatory separation; mother/daughter connection and intimacy has far more potential for harm than their conflict and struggle. The scene ends with Flap, Emma’s husband, hitting the gas pedal full throttle to quickly pull away from the scenario of mother/daughter entrapment.

In writing about the perpetual “loving and letting go” motif in mother/daughter literature in the 1980s, and specifically Evelyn Bassoff’s work *Mothers and Daughters: Loving and Letting Go* (1988) Walters states the powerful theme in both feminist and nonfeminist writing asserts that “the mother must be understood as inherently reluctant to “let go” . . . she naturally yearns to keep the daughter her ‘little girl’.” The overall message is that “[m]others strive for fusion, while their offspring seek disengagement.”<sup>180</sup>

Because “eccentric” mothers in films such as *Terms of Endearment* are the “problem,” and the cause of their daughters’ angst and/or delinquency, resolution entails severing the relationship, often permanently. Williams and Rich claim that while many “woman’s films” (within the form of the Hollywood melodrama) focus on the complexity of emotions contained in the mother/daughter bond, they also “pretend to sanctify the institution of motherhood and more often than not, exalt its ideal while punishing and humiliating the individual women who participate in it.” This effect, they argue, “centered upon the contradiction of an idealized

mother love which, when actually made into a component of an ongoing relationship, turns into a smothering influence which the daughter seeks to escape.”<sup>181</sup>

Additionally, the “mandate” of daughter to separate from mother is not represented as a natural process of growth and maturation, but as a “wrenching experience that must be endured in order to reach the ‘other side’ of men and marriage.”<sup>182</sup> Certainly, this was Friday’s message when she wrote *My Mother/My Self* extolling the virtues of separation from mother lest they “retard, distort and inhibit the full realization of male-centered femininity.”<sup>183</sup> Byars reiterates this persistent theme while examining the films *Picnic* (1956) and *Peyton Place* (1958) stating that when problems surmount, the daughter typically responds by breaking away from the mother; the result is a “rupture” rather than a more normal continuity in the mother/daughter relationship.<sup>184</sup>

While most narratives emphasize this struggle for separation, Nancy Chodorow’s significant work in *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) argues that the experience of being mothered has different psychological consequences for boys and girls. She also emphasizes the depth and range of gender inequality. For girls (different than boys who differentiate a gender identity that is not female) gender identity is built on unity and continuity. In other words, a girl’s identity is formed not in opposition to her first object love (mother), but in continuity with it. Additionally, because of this continuity with the mother, Chodorow sees women’s psychology as more relational and having less firm ego boundaries.<sup>185</sup> Several feminists have argued this can delay the process of women seeking autonomy and differentiation. But in a culture so infused

by separation and independence - “highly valued characteristics of a capitalist society” - this “delay” can only suggest negative undertones.<sup>186</sup>

What is missing from these representations is that “letting go” or “giving them wings” does not necessitate forfeiting a relationship that has been nurtured through infancy and adolescence. The dichotomous framing of “loving” and “letting go” as what Walters refers to as “two sides of the coin of adult development” deserves a more thorough examination, and mother/daughter representations deserve to be moved beyond this limited framework.<sup>187</sup>

Maternal Mobility: *Mermaids* (1990)

Working mother Rachel Flax (Cher) in the 1990 film *Mermaids* represents yet another “eccentric” mothering pattern, the mother who refuses to stay “in place” (a pattern that is repeated in the 1999 mother/daughter films, *Tumbleweeds* and *Anywhere But Here*). Rachel’s refusal to stay “in place” is further identified with Cher’s “unruly” and flamboyant star persona. Diane Negra, in her book *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (2001) writes that through the 1990s, “dominant institutions of cinema, television and popular music [have] struggled to accommodate Cher’s impossible (which is to say troublesome, contentious and excessive) body.”<sup>188</sup> Conclusively, Negra points out that “Cher’s authorship of her own body clearly works to disturb mainstream cultural forums, to

threaten cherished patterns of patriarchal ownership, and to de-stabilize some of the more conservative meanings of glamour and stardom.”<sup>189</sup>

In *Mermaids*, Cher’s eccentric star persona and the character of Rachel she portrays share similar qualities. Her constant migration with her two daughters, Charlotte and Katie, becomes one of the film’s central themes and comes to signify the more underlying problem of Rachel’s refusal to grow up and assume “adult” responsibilities.<sup>190</sup> As teenage Charlotte perceptively narrates to the audience, “mom moves on when the going gets tough.” This constant movement theme is further reinforced by Rachel’s failure to provide her children with “balanced,” sit-down meals. “Fun finger foods is her main sourcebook and that’s all the woman cooks,” Charlotte explains. “Anything more is too big a commitment.”

It is important to note that the film’s point of view is most expressively narrated by Charlotte, who bitterly resents her mother’s constant need for movement and freedom. In addition, Walters argues that this “adolescent alienation of mother from daughter is [further] highlighted by the daughter’s persistent reference to her as “Mrs. Flax.”<sup>191</sup> Clearly, as my examination of *Daughter Rite* suggests, I have a significant problem with daughters’ judgments of their mothers’ lives, often generalizing their mothers’ behavior within a framework void of historic and social content. Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards in their book *ManifestA: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000) also see this issue as a feminist challenge: “to understand the choices our mothers made, knowing they were made in a context we [daughters] will never experience. For mothers, the challenge is to realize that their daughters

came of age in an entirely different era, one that makes their lives fundamentally different.”<sup>192</sup>

However, this prominent theme of daughter rebelling or suffering against mother as the “sacrificial victim” often assumes a daughter’s position of superiority when it comes to reflecting on her mother’s life.

To further separate mother and daughter, Rachel and Charlotte are portrayed as complete opposites, in both their physical appearance and outlook on life. Rachel’s attire is sexy and flamboyant, while Charlotte dresses in loose, black clothes; Rachel is upbeat and sunny, while Charlotte is moody and pessimistic. The discourse of mother/daughter as opposites is not new; in fact the opposition of mother trapped in “old” ways and the “new” modern daughter is a recurring theme in mother/daughter film narratives, (*Now, Voyager*, 1942), *Peyton Place*, 1957), and the more recent *One True Thing* made in 1998). However, this new discourse structures the opposition in terms of the mother being “new” and “liberated” and the daughter being “old” (beyond her years) and “traditionalist.” This “role reversal” paradigm - mother as child, daughter as adult - is most evident in a scene when Charlotte covers her mother after she has fallen asleep on the couch. In voice-over, she exposes the film’s mother/daughter crisis: “Sometimes I feel like you’re the child, and I’m the grownup. I can’t ever imagine being inside you. I can’t imagine being anywhere you’d let me hang around for nine straight months. The film’s intense mobility theme, highlighting a lack of maternal commitment, overshadows the fact that as a single working mother, with no help from either father, Rachel has provided more than adequate food, care and shelter for both her daughters.

While *Mermaids* and other films such as *Terms of Endearment*, *Tumbleweeds* and *Anywhere But Here*, progressively explore “mother” as sexual, they also clearly set boundaries. As a result, a sexual mother can be labeled “eccentric” by either being too sexual (in appearance or through sexual assertiveness) or by being sexually repressed (the “problem” with Aurora at the beginning of *Terms of Endearment*). Rachel’s sexuality, expressed not only in provocative dress, but in her status as a free and sexually active “woman,” identifies her as an unfit mother who drives her daughter Charlotte to have fantasies about becoming a nun. In the end, Charlotte’s sexual experimentation, presented as a near deadly consequence when she fails to keep track of her intoxicated little sister, is acutely linked to the mother’s insensitivity at recognizing her daughter’s angst and not modifying her eccentric/sexual behavior.

Although a mother’s sexuality is generally viewed in negative terms by the daughter, it is, however, curiously met with acceptance, even envy, by other girls/daughters in these film narratives. At a PTA meeting, one of Charlotte’s classmates explains that when she grows up she wants to be just like Charlotte’s mom. In contrast, the classmate’s mother is depicted as overweight and dowdy.

Unfortunately, popular culture’s insistence on the mother/woman dichotomy and the daughter’s aversion/identification to mother as “sexual” places her in a precarious position. Ideas about a daughter’s journey to maturity and adulthood suggest that “the more extensively a woman reflects her mother, the less likely it is that she possesses an authentic self.” And yet, as Walters points out, “Western culture has so incorporated the dichotomization of ‘mother’ and

'woman' that identification with mother will always imply for the daughter a denial of her own sexuality."<sup>193</sup>

Rich writes that matrophobia - the fear of becoming one's mother - can be "seen as a womanly splitting of the self, in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mother's bondage, to become individuated and free. The mother stands for the victim in ourselves, the unfree woman, the martyr."<sup>194</sup> But what does this say about sexual, free mothers who refuse to play the martyr? And how do daughters reconcile the woman versus mother dichotomy? Although we cannot overlook the fact that recent mother/daughter narratives have broken through the barrier of "asexual mothers," and even addressed issues surrounding a daughter's budding sexuality, it is, nevertheless a regression to see representations of sexual moms as needing (and often it is the daughter's responsibility) to "normalize" their eccentric/sexual behavior.

Ultimately, the perception of mother as sexual arrives only after the daughter/mother has found her own sexuality, and thus becomes the catalyst for many mother/daughter reunions. Rachel and Charlotte finally have their "heart to heart" mother/daughter talk after Charlotte's fling with boyfriend Joe. In *Terms of Endearment*, it is only after Aurora's affair with her neighbor that she becomes "cured" of her overmothering and is able to connect with her daughter Emma.<sup>195</sup> Conclusively, these narratives reproduce the idea that mothers and daughters require relationships with men in order to understand and connect with each other.

At the same time, in having the mother assume the role of “eccentric” and tagging the daughter as “responsible,” both are again positioned to experience conflict and struggle.

Empathetic Connection: *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter* (1994)

Documentaries about mothers and daughters have been few and moreover, limited in their scope and distribution. However, *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter*, made in 1994 and nominated for an Academy Award for best documentary, presents a much more comprehensive look into a mother/daughter relationship, while addressing the same subject matter as *Grey Gardens* (1976) - an aging/ailing mother and the “daughter as caretaker.” Produced, directed and co-edited by Deborah Hoffman, this compassionate documentary sensitively chronicles a daughter’s growing understanding of her mother’s struggle with Alzheimer’s disease and reflects on their transforming journey from living in the past to living in the moment.

Deborah’s story begins when her seventy-eight year old mother decides to move to California where she and her partner Frances live and work. At first, Deborah thinks her mother’s problems with memory are just part of getting older. She rationalizes that even though her mother can be profoundly confused on some levels, she can also “function amazingly well.” But as her mother’s memory loss progresses, and the diagnosis is confirmed to be Alzheimer’s disease, Deborah is faced with the burden of care and making long term decisions on her mother’s behalf.



Deborah's account of her mother's illness is both funny and sad. With candor and humor she details a few of her mother's bizarre obsessive stages: the dentist period, the podiatrist period, the Lorna Doone period, the Social Security period, the banana period. This style, using "surreal humor to explore what would otherwise be a crushingly sad situation," marks what documentary filmmaker and writer Michael Rabiger categorizes as an "absurdist documentary."<sup>196</sup>

But while much of the film deals with the behavior associated with Alzheimer's and Deborah's struggle understanding the disease, on another level, the film addresses the changing dynamics of their relationship. In a revealing scene about her mother's past and present attitudes, Deborah talks candidly about her gay lifestyle. She recalls her mother's difficulty in accepting her choice, telling the audience this was something that was upsetting to her mother, something she was not comfortable with. But as the daughter reflects, she realizes her mother's disease has brought issues "down to basics." And the basics became "I had a friend, Frances [her partner] . . . this person was very nice to me . . . [and] this person was very nice to her [and] made her happy. That was a good thing."

Throughout the film Deborah speaks directly to the camera and provides personal feelings about a difficult period in her life. In style, apart from being autobiographical, *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter* is a "journey" film, with a beginning, middle and end, leading the viewer through the development, diagnosis and resolution of Alzheimer's. Although the film's "point of view" is one-sided - Deborah does not seek other professional viewpoints -

the audience understands her relationship with the subject and her partiality. This view may limit the film's scope, permitting the audience to know only what the daughter knows or understands, but it also privileges the audience by allowing the viewer to identify with her as she embarks on a "journey of discovery" about her mother's illness.

Clearly, one of the handicaps Deborah faced throughout the making of the film was projecting her mother's views. There are a few casual interviews interspersed throughout the film with Deborah and her mother sitting side by side. One such interview opens the film and is effective in showing both the heartbreak and compassion each woman feels in relation to the other. Deborah, discussing who she was closer with growing up, her father or her mother, asks her mother, "And you know who my mother was? . . . [pause] . . . you!" Her mother responds with a surprised look and asks, "I was your mother?" In disbelief she asks Deborah if she can really be her mother, or if something went wrong. Deborah, now accustomed to her mother's memory loss, understatedly tells her, "Well, I think something went right . . . that's how it worked out."

In coming to terms with her mother's advancing disease, Deborah reexamines her relationship with her mother and gains a deeper understanding of what is really important. Her resolution comes mid-way in the film. Again, talking directly to the camera, she recalls a conversation she had with her mother, who asked if she had seen any of the sorority girls lately. Instead of going through a litany of clarifying explanations, Deborah simply tells her, "No, I haven't seen anybody from AE Phi, have you?" She remembers what a liberating feeling it was

to let the details of life just go, and how light and fun it was being in the moment. “The moment,” she says, was that they were just two old friends trying to reminisce, and the content didn’t matter. It was the feeling that was important.

*Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter* significantly moves the mother/daughter narrative outside of psychological description, and details a relationship between adult women characterized by warmth, companionship and compassion, even in the midst of a debilitating illness. Unlike *Grey Gardens*, which lacks the cultural insights that might have made the Beales more sympathetic and their difficulty less pathological, *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter* brings the audience full circle, examining and valuing past mother/daughter connection, while recognizing and appreciating its constantly changing dynamics.

Eccentric Mothering/Responsible Daughtering: *Anywhere But Here* (1999), and

*Tumbleweeds* (1999)

The subject of “mobile moms” and “uprooting” daughters is such an important catalyst for mother/daughter conflict that it is repeated in two of the most recent films about mothers and daughters, *Anywhere But Here* and *Tumbleweeds*, both released in 1999. In *Anywhere But Here*, working mother Adele August (Susan Sarandon) who is stifled by small-town life in Bay City, Wisconsin, drives cross-country to Beverly Hills, California in a used Mercedes with her “not so happy with Mom’s decision” daughter, Ann.<sup>197</sup> While Adele is wildly optimistic about

finding a better, more exciting life for herself, she is, more significantly, determined her daughter will not become “a nothing girl in a nothing factory in a nothing town,” referring, of course, to Bay City. Ann, however, does not share her mother’s enthusiasm for improving her life or seeking adventure. Longing for home and family, Ann is the “realist,” seeing things for what they are, while her mother, the “dreamer,” always wants more.

Similarly, Mary Jo Walker in the film *Tumbleweeds* hits the road with her daughter, Ava, after going through several husbands, and even more abusive boyfriends. Leaving West Virginia for “anywhere better,” they end up in the ocean-side community of Starlight Beach, just outside San Diego. Ava, like most of the daughter representations in these films, is portrayed as wise beyond her years, and she quickly recognizes the signs when her “relationship challenged” mother will be moving on.

For mobile moms, the ultimate confrontation between mother and daughter arrives when the mother decides it is time to move. When Mary Jo wises up to her domineering boyfriend (“I know where this is going”), and decides to move on, Ava refuses to hit the road one more time. Her dialogue, reminiscent of Charlotte’s rebellious speech toward the end of *Mermaids* when her mother tells her to start packing, is telling:

*Mary Jo:* “Ava. Ava Mary Walker, I’ve had it with you. Now you get in this car right now!”

*Ava:* “No, I’m not! You are going to meet up with some other asshole and you’re going to say it’ll last for a long time and it’s not. And we’re going to end up just like we are now, okay, and I’m sick of it, and I’m sick of chasing after losers with you, and I’m sick of going everywhere with you, and I’m sick of you.”

What is particularly bothersome about these narratives in which the mother’s movement becomes the paramount issue is the “double standard” they represent. Generally, for mothers, and not fathers, this freedom of being mobile is perceived to be “disruptive to a developing child’s sense of identity and continuity.”<sup>198</sup> While a mother moving her child/children for a better way of life is met with criticism, a father’s mobility for a better job, a better way of life is likely to be regarded as a benefit to the family’s welfare.<sup>199</sup>

Obviously, mothers who pursue autonomy and freedom, mothers who are too sexual, or sexually repressed, mothers who wish to retain a close relationship with their daughters need to be “fixed.” As previously mentioned, correction is often undertaken by a male character in the film. In *Mermaids*, it is Rachel’s boyfriend Lou, who points out her failures and even suggests it is her fault that Charlotte runs away: “And you wonder why she runs away from problems. Will you listen to yourself!” For Adele (*Anywhere But Here*) a Los Angeles policeman dispenses the wisdom, telling her “you know what to do,” which is to sell her Mercedes and “let go” so her daughter can attend Brown University and successfully separate from her.

But ultimately, it is the daughters in these film narratives who take on the greater part of the responsibility of curbing mothers' eccentricities. Adele's impulsive suggestion to go to a French restaurant (it's just what we need") after a frustrating day is met by Ann's responsible reasoning: "What we need is a bed for me. What we need is a desk. What we need is sheets and towels. We don't need a French restaurant."

Additionally, Ann (*Anywhere But Here*) delivers a passionate speech when she has had enough: "You can't understand. I want to go away to college. I want to be on my own and you on your own. And I know you're scared to be without me, but I can't help that. And I feel bad about that, but I don't want that job anymore. Let me live my own life. Let me go."

Again, mother/daughter struggle and conflict is coupled with the "developmental result" - separation.<sup>200</sup>

While both films critique the paradigm of eccentric mothering/responsible daughtering, they have very different endings. *Anywhere But Here* concludes with Ann finally separating from her mother, and traveling to Providence, Rhode Island to attend Brown University. Her final voice-over narration (again as problematic as Charlotte's voice-over narration in *Mermaids*) is part condescension, part appreciation: "Even if you can't stand her, even if you hate her, even if she's ruining your life, there's something about my mother. Some romance. Some power. And when she dies, the world will be flat, too simple, too fair, too reasonable." Her speech (again reminiscent of Charlotte's closing assessment of her mother's faults and

eccentricities) is a trivial and demeaning “tribute” to a mother who has tried to understand and form a lasting relationship with her daughter.

On the other hand, Mary Jo and Ava in *Tumbleweeds* are seen experiencing a renewed connection, laughing and playing with sanitary napkins after Ava has started her menstrual cycle, and walking along the beach talking about their future plans together. This bonding scene is further enhanced by the camera’s slow pan to a photograph taken of them at the beach by one of Mary Jo’s former male colleagues. He is an outsider, looking in on the mother/daughter camaraderie. The concluding scene speaks volumes about the necessity and importance this mother/daughter relationship holds.

#### Television: Melodrama, Character and Lifestyle Genres

As a film and television genre, melodrama primarily speaks about gender identity and family structure. Like talk shows and soap operas (modern counterpoints to melodrama within the television genre) they “play upon the fear of loss and the triumph of the return of the nuclear family.”<sup>201</sup> Although, as Byars effectively points out, melodrama provides the “locus and strategy for negotiation, “it thrives on and exploits “*excessive* uses of representational conventions to express that which cannot (yet) be said, that which language alone is incapable of expressing.”<sup>202</sup> Further, it claims that “irrational forces exist in the world and our representational systems are incapable of adequately and directly representing them.”<sup>203</sup>

Realist texts, on the other hand, rooted in the realistic dramas that became popular in the 1900s, assume that the social world *can* be adequately explained (through social-scientific methods) and that adequate representation is possible.<sup>204</sup> Although realism and melodrama have similarities - they root themselves in the everyday and focus on individuals - they each retain a different purpose and strategy, method of address, and form of engagement and identification.<sup>205</sup>

Television genres, however, have a greater tendency to recombine across genre lines.<sup>206</sup> In “Genre Study and Television,” Jane Feuer’s examination of television genres suggests that television functions as a type of “cultural forum.”<sup>207</sup> Recognizing that many ideological critics acknowledge the “constant conflict and contradiction in the reproduction of ideology allowing for multiple meanings by the viewer,” (already discussed within melodrama), Feuer points out that recent approaches to genre have attempted to combine the insights of several approaches. Therefore, drawing from theorists Horace Newcomb and Paul Hirsch, who refer to television as a “cultural forum,” Feuer states that television might be approached as a “negotiation of shared beliefs and values” which helps “maintain and rejuvenate the social order as well as assisting it in adapting to change.”<sup>208</sup>

While the idea of television as a cultural forum also implies that there is a hegemonic function to it, the structure of television, often stressing character over narrative, also implies the possibility of “structural change and substantive transformation.”<sup>209</sup> Similarly, Dow sees television entertainment as serving a function of “interpreting social change and managing cultural



beliefs.”<sup>210</sup> A good example of this is the MTM (Mary Tyler Moore) sitcoms of the 1970s and specifically, the character of Mary Richards on “The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” and later Rhoda Morgenstern on “Rhoda.” These 1970s situation comedies introduced a new concept - character development, - to what had previously been a rather static form - and represented a new type of woman: single, working, independent. Feuer writes that “as television characters, the MTM women appeared to possess a complexity previously unknown to the genre.”<sup>211</sup> The characters were less stereotyped, allowed to change and grow throughout the run of the show, and the episodes focused on “lifestyle” rather than singularly focusing on issues surrounding the nuclear family.

Feuer points out that the shift from a “one dramatic conflict series” focused around the nuclear family to a model of “lifestyle,” a blending of home/office environment that would characterize the MTM sitcoms of the 1970s, was evident in earlier programs such as “The Dick van Dyke Show” (1961-66). But in the MTM “lifestyle” variety, characters like Mary Richards and Rhoda, representing traditional women caught in a network of social change, were given much more “character development.” Feuer argues that “if previous characters in domestic comedy learned a little from experience, Mary learned a lot.”<sup>212</sup> Additionally, Dow writes that although the show’s creators consistently claimed that “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” was “about character, not politics,” writer-producer Brooks observed that “we sought to show someone from Mary Richards’ background being in a world where women’s rights were being talked about and it was having an impact.”<sup>213</sup>

In this sub-chapter, I will argue that “Gilmore Girls,” a new television series about mothers and daughters on the Warner Brothers network, is rooted in the same premise, challenging mother/daughter conventions by representing a powerful mother/daughter duo that exists somewhat outside the boundaries of patriarchal thought and culture. It also dismantles a number of melodrama’s narrative ploys: the yearning for social ascendancy, the use of long silences between characters, and the “incompleteness” of families outside a nuclear format. My analysis of the show - its storyline, authorship, audience, ratings and marketing - as opposed to other film, television and print narratives I selected for critique, is more detailed and specific. This is due to the fact that, like many of the sitcoms of the 1970s, 80s and 90s such as “Mary Tyler Moore” (1970-77), “One Day at a Time” (1975-84), “Designing Women” (1986-93) and “Murphy Brown” (1988-1992), one of the opportunities “Gilmore Girls” provides its audience is the ability to produce a vision of feminism and girlculture - within mother/daughter relationships - that “is a selection, deflection, and reflection of various available discourses.”<sup>214</sup> While not a radical feminist treatise, “Gilmore Girls” does, however, emphasize a “lifestyle” choice of “post feminism“ by representing a single (by choice), working mother, and the significance of a new and active girlculture.

Mother/Daughter Power: “Gilmore Girls” (2000 - Present)

Warner Brother’s series “Gilmore Girls” is a byproduct of the Family Friendly Programming Forum (FFPF), an initiative between big advertisers like General Motors, Johnson & Johnson, IBM and Procter & Gamble to support wholesome programming that parents and kids can watch together.<sup>215</sup> “Family,” within this friendly viewing forum, is generously defined, because “Gilmore Girls” does not depict a stereotypical American TV family, and creator-writer Amy Sherman-Palladino, former writer for “Roseanne” (1988-1997) admits the Family Friendly Forum name made her nervous: “I would be more comfortable if it were called the Dysfunction Family Friendly Forum.”<sup>216</sup>

What *is* the definition of “family” is certainly a question members of the Family Friendly Programming Forum grappled with, as well as their mission statement to “recast one of the most fundamental tenets of television - that families typically don’t watch a show together.”<sup>217</sup> In *Entertainment Weekly* (March 22, 2002) corporate vice-president of advertising for Johnson & Johnson and Forum co-chair Andrea Alstrup says that the Forum was looking for “programming that wasn’t what people typically thought of as family friendly . . . we needed to break that mold, to attract the broadest range of audience.”<sup>218</sup> As far as a “definition” of what constitutes a family, WB Entertainment president Jordan Levin explains that the “single-parent households represent half the household in this country.” He goes on to say that “Gilmore Girls”

is just as much an American nuclear family as the one portrayed in WB's other top-rated series, "7th Heaven," which features a large, "intact" nuclear family.<sup>219</sup>

However, it wasn't that long ago that a television show about an unwed mother created quite a stir in media and political circles. Murphy's decision on the popular television show "Murphy Brown" (1988-1992) to have a child out of wedlock was so controversial that during the 1992 presidential campaign, Vice President Dan Quayle attacked Murphy's "lifestyle choice," stating she was undermining family values.<sup>220</sup> Now, "Gilmore Girls," a show about a free-spirited thirty-two year old single mother who got pregnant at sixteen and is raising her studious, Harvard-bound sixteen year old daughter *alone* is one of WB's top-rated shows, up fifty percent in total viewership in its second season (2002), making it "the fastest-growing show on television." During February 2002 sweeps, "Gilmore Girls" drew 5.5 million viewers - a million more than WB's former hit show "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," and was the most watched show in its heavily marketed 12-to-34-year old female audience.<sup>221</sup>

The show's main characters are thirty-two year old Lorelai Gilmore and her sixteen year-old daughter Rory (full name, Lorelai, named after her mother) both navigating the world of adulthood as an accomplished pair. Lorelai was Rory's age when she became pregnant and decided to raise her baby daughter alone. Estranged from her controlling, upper-class parents, Lorelai's mission in life has been to create a loving home environment for her daughter while building a successful career as the manager of a quaint and historic country inn. They live in the small town of Stars Hollow, Connecticut, complete with eccentric characters and quirky charm.

Often mistaken for sisters, Lorelai and Rory claim each other as their “best friend;” they wear each other’s clothes and listen to each other’s CDs.

This discourse of mother/daughter friendship - as “best friends” - has been a prominent feature in the media analysis of the show. Walters argues that the theme of mothers and daughters as friends is “mobilized precisely because we have so much difficulty conceptualizing mother/daughter mutuality and reciprocity within the terms of their own relationship, within the terms of familial relating.”<sup>222</sup>

In the May, 2002 issue of *Seventeen* magazine (touted as “The All-American Magazine” on its cover), Lauren Graham (the actress who plays Lorelai) and Alexis Bledel (the actress who plays Rory) are featured on the cover, along with a selection of related articles on mothers and daughters. Inside, a mom and daughter quiz is included to determine if mother and daughter are indeed “perfect strangers,” “friends *and* family” or “more like sisters.” Interestingly, this “quiz” is preceded by another article that positions “mom” in the “no win” category. Entitled “mom blunders: whether she’s your best friend or archrival, your mom will always humiliate you!”<sup>223</sup> Decidedly, what these articles stress is that the more “alike” mother and daughter are, the more “supertight” they can be categorized.

Difference, however, is what separates *and* binds Lorelai and Rory. Their temperaments are contradictory - Lorelai is impulsive and quick witted, Rory is pensive and even-tempered. They do share a number of “likes” - all-girl rock bands, trendy clothes, coffee - but it is their interdependency and affection for each other that makes them unique and unites

them in a “you and me against the world” alliance. This mother/daughter confidence, is in turn, reinforced and supported by the small town persona of Stars Hollow. Lorelai has left Hartford, Connecticut (representing “Big City” corruption and her upper class parents’ lifestyle) to pursue small town values and community. In his book, *Small-Town America in Film* (1991) Emanuel Levy argues that small town heroines have become icons of popular culture because they embody uniquely American values, and exhibit a number of the same cultural qualities: individualism, common sense, pragmatism, resourcefulness, self-assurance, determination, control and optimism.<sup>224</sup> Engaging in charm and eccentricity, this small town setting is instructive as it upholds some of Lorelia’s main characteristics, and affords her the opportunity to “play out” her non-conformity - often during town meetings and in other public spaces - in a safe and secure environment.

But this mother/daughter self-reliance and confidence upsets a number of dominant ideologies, namely the prevalence of the nuclear family based on the heterosexual married couple, and the dependent unwed mother or “Scarlet Woman” prototype. The storyline of the show, depicting a woman’s “problem” within the existing structure of society is typical fare for melodrama. In fact, according to Byars, melodrama’s primary drive is the identification of moral polarities - of good and evil, desirable and taboo.<sup>225</sup> Jane Shattuc, in her book *The Talking Cure: TV Talk Shows and Women* (1997) also argues that the melodramatic form is most associated with the suffering of women and “their emotional and moral strength to bear it.”<sup>226</sup> But “Gilmore Girls” works outside of these boundaries; Lorelai neither suffers, nor shows

much remorse for her out-of-wedlock experience. She decides to raise her daughter on her own, without the help of her wealthy parents, and proudly admits that “Rory is my life. She’s my pal. She’s my everything.”

The fact that Lorelai, pregnant at sixteen and raising a child alone, doesn’t “go straight to hell” is a major departure from the ideology that a woman must be punished for her indiscretions or “mistakes” in life. Actually, Lorelai is quick to dismiss anyone who even suggests having Rory was a mistake. Admitting that she didn’t always make the right choices, she nevertheless asserts that having Rory was the best thing that ever happened to her. Likewise, Rory is quick to go to bat for her mother. When Rory and her prep-school classmates get together for a study session, they grill her about her nontraditional relationship with her mother, not quite believing they could be best friends. After figuring out that Lorelai must have been their age when she got pregnant, the girls immediately assess the “tragedy” of the situation. Rory defends her mother by acknowledging that she didn’t “plan” for the situation, but happily, everything turned out okay in the end.

Undoubtedly, Lorelai and Rory defy stereotypical mother/daughter roles. Breaking away from the demonized and desexualized mother representations of the past, Lorelai is a sexy and self-confident single mother. Her perky attitude and “hip” attire fascinate Rory’s classmates, who are not accustomed to mothers who show interest in teenage fashion or their contemporary ideas. While many film narratives such as *Mermaids*, *One True Thing*, and *Anywhere But Here*, depict daughters “cringing” or becoming embarrassed at the idea of their

friends liking or admiring their mothers, Rory is pleased and proud of her mother's accomplishments and qualities.

On the other hand, Rory is not the "typical" teenager. She is neither sullen nor openly hostile toward authority, but rather an idealistic, straight-A student who attends the exclusive prep school Chilton with ambitions to go to Harvard and make a positive difference in the world. She carries a book in her purse at all times - "light" reading material such as *Madame Bovary* or *The Portable Dorothy Parker* - and thanks people when they tell her she is "odd."

Together, mother and daughter are content with their "untraditional" roles. Lorelai delights in sarcasm, and enjoys mocking the traditional mother stereotype, as evidenced in my analysis of "That Damn Donna Reed" episode in my subchapter "Television Mothers and Daughters." But although the emphasis of the show is on Lorelai and Rory's relationship, the other end of the mother/daughter spectrum - mother and daughter trapped in a continual state of conflict - is represented through Lorelai and her mother, Emily Gilmore.

Lorelai's fierce independent streak and defiant move to raise her daughter alone has caused an irreparable rift with her old-fashioned, old-money parents. In the pilot episode, Rory has just been accepted to Chilton, which significantly heightens the likelihood of later admission to Harvard, her life-long dream. However, Lorelai cannot afford the pricey enrollment fee in addition to the first semester's tuition. She is left with no alternative other than to swallow her pride and ask her wealthy parents for the money. Her parents agree, but on one condition; Emily demands that since she is providing financial support, she should also be actively involved



in her granddaughter's life. That means that once a week, every Friday night, Lorelai and Rory must come to their house for dinner. This contrived "set-up" allows the show to explore Lorelai's strained relationship with her parents, specifically her mother, and to focus on the difference of the two mother/daughter representations - Lorelai/Rory and Emily/Lorelai.

Emily makes no secret of her disappointment with her daughter, and at the family dinner nights, Lorelai often looks the part of the "wounded child" or the "defiant teenager." However, she never lets Emily take charge of her mothering job. When Emily shows up at the headmaster's office on Rory's first day at Chilton, Lorelai is furious. Later on when Emily starts planning Rory's social life, Lorelai storms in to the beauty salon where her mother is sitting under the hair dryer (a nod to the "old-fashioned" approach to hair styling), and in no uncertain terms tells her, "she is my daughter and I decide how we live, not you." This take charge "daughter against controlling mother attitude" is a departure from other representations (*Now, Voyager* comes to mind) that have daughters cowering in the corner after a confrontation with domineering "Mother." Lorelai is willing to make compromises, but she is not going to take any mothering interference from Emily.

While the Friday night gatherings are full of verbal jabs between "old mother/new daughter" - Emily and Lorelai - what differentiates these mother/daughter spats from other representations are the way in which Lorelai "decodes" them. She compares the sparring matches she has with her mother to a spirited debate tournament and assesses their outcome

with both candor and humor. After a particularly fiery fight with Emily in the kitchen, Lorelai says to Rory afterward, “Do I look shorter? Because I feel shorter.”

Admittedly, even as Lorelai and Rory’s relationship offers understanding and mutual connectiveness, Emily and Lorelai’s relationship’s underscores inevitable mother/daughter disconnection, between the “outdated” mother whose life has been unfulfilled, and the “new” modern daughter, whose life has been liberated.<sup>227</sup> Absent is a connection or understanding affected by a realistic appraisal of each other’s life and choices. Striving to change her life so as not to resemble her mother, Lorelai never recognizes or acknowledges what her mother has accomplished or what she has lived through. Likewise, Emily fails to acknowledge Lorelai’s choices and accomplishments, and even goes out of her way to negatively critique her “bohemian” lifestyle.

Furthermore, the mother/daughter differences between Emily and Lorelai are enhanced by a sub-plot of class division. Class struggles are not new to mother/daughter representations. Film narratives like *Stella Dallas* (1937) portraying a mother sacrificing her daughter in order to give her an upper class lifestyle, *Mildred Pierce* (1945) presenting an overindulgent mother giving her greedy daughter all the material gain she lacked, or *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) depicting a daughter’s selfish disapproval of her mother’s relationship with a man of lower class status, all give emphasis to the compulsive need for a woman to advance to a higher class. Of course, the implication in these narratives is that a woman can only achieve status if she is born into it or marries a man of considerable wealth and power. But “Gilmore Girls” reverses the

emphasis on the coveted “country club set,” highlighting the shallowness of upper class society, and stressing middle class values, where love and relationships are considered more important than money and meeting the “right” people. Paradoxically, while it challenges the narrative of social ascendancy, it also fuels material for mother/daughter differentiation and conflict by pitting Emily and Lorelai at odds with each other’s lifestyle.

Again, in contrast to Lorelai and Emily, Lorelai and Rory’s resolution to disagreement and conflict emphasizes the hard work involved in communicating and working through problems. While melodramatic narratives employ the use of long silences between characters, or “missed” opportunities that would convey important facts and feelings, Lorelai and Rory stress the importance of talking through feelings and emotions. When Rory oversleeps and misses a big test, she uncharacteristically launches into a tirade against the classmates that have been harassing her. Lorelai knows this is not her daughter’s typical behavior and during a long “walk and talk” session, encourages Rory to reassess her situation at Chilton.

In summary, I would argue that “Gilmore Girls” utilizes the use of excessive representational conventions exemplified in Lorelai and Emily to strengthen the new progressive and productive relationship examined in Lorelai and Rory. Typically the “feminine” in past mother/daughter relationships has been stereotypically passive and reactive. In “Gilmore Girls” Lorelai is portrayed as the ideal “take-charge” postfeminist *single* mother - successful and confident - and Rory, the new “girlculture” daughter - intelligent and ambitious.

However, while the series does introduce a significant concept of character development, and reflects on the various strands of “postfeminist lifestyle” choices, both constructs are severely limited. Depicting mother and daughter in a specific, “chosen” lifestyle does implicitly carry with it obvious class implications. Lorelai is able to choose this lifestyle - single, working mother with a successful career - in part because she is an educated, middle class, heterosexual, white woman. She is the kind of woman who has benefited the most from liberal feminism, and is in the best position to practice a “feminist lifestyle.” Although balancing work and the domestic sphere has historically been the conflict of white womanhood - women of lower classes have rarely been able to afford this incompatibility<sup>228</sup> - for white mothers, the conflict of combining work and parenting still remains a contentious debate in American popular culture.<sup>229</sup> So while Lorelai’s stereotype as a “feminist heroine” is limited, the vision of a single (by choice), working mother parenting an accomplished and confident daughter within themes that focus on their affectionate and relational understanding of each other *is* a progressive and hopeful one.

For both mothers and daughters, “Gilmore Girls” offers a rare portrait of mother/daughter connectiveness and mutuality, and validates portrayals of single mothering and daughtering that highlight the relationship’s “completeness.” It deserves acknowledgement for the challenges it poses to mother/daughter separation and struggle, and popular culture’s negative and often deviant depictions of single motherhood. While I recognize its limitations, optimistically, I hope that “Gilmore Girls” success at “reconsidering” mother/daughter

relationships will pave the way for more diverse and complex representations of mothers and daughters in the future.

### Authorship, Audience and Marketing

In examining changes in the television “sitcom,” Feuer states that in the early seventies, independent production companies, like MTM Enterprises and Norman Lear’s Tandem Productions, “encouraged the development of the writer/producer as a crucial creative component in the development of the new form of domestic comedy.”<sup>230</sup> Despite the fact that television writers have traditionally been obscured by the actors and actresses who “act out” their creations, an interesting question would be: How are television creators/writers/producers/directors situated in the inter-textual discourse surrounding their shows? Of course, this line of questioning, linking creators/writers/producers/ directors to their body of work, incorporates theories of auteurism and the rationale that if a film [television show] has a message, there must be a source transmitting that message.<sup>231</sup> Janet Staiger’s work, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (1992), draws compelling conclusions about how “spectators use authorship to make the experience coherent.”<sup>232</sup> While Lorelai Gilmore is the character audiences identify with, in “Gilmore Girls,” her creator, Amy Sherman-Palladino, makes her presence known to critics, reporters and fans, and takes her due credit for the show’s success.

Most reviews have singled out the “witty dialogue” and intelligent humor of the show, and from copious amounts of online publicity and literature, it is evident Sherman-Palladino enjoys talking about the show’s early development and where she gets her ideas. In *Los Angeles Times* interview Sherman-Palladino said the idea for “Gilmore Girls” came from a throwaway line at the end of a pitch meeting with WB when she said, “And there’s a mother and daughter who are really close in age.”<sup>233</sup> Surprised at what caught the network’s interest, she claims she “wanted to get her own voice on television and in Lauren Graham’s character, Lorelai Gilmore.”<sup>234</sup> Although Sherman-Palladino is neither a Mom, nor single in real life, she has fashioned the character of Lorelai with her own likes and interests. She says Lorelai’s “zippy repartee” was inspired by Katharine Hepburn-Spencer Tracy films, in which relationships are revealed through sparring dialogue rather than pages of tedious exposition. Sherman-Palladino explains:

Just by listening to Lorelai’s vocal patterns, it says volumes about this woman: First of all, that she’s bright enough to put that many words together that quickly . . . and it says a lot about her emotionally, that she’s got a deflection shield that’s sort of the way she gets through the world, which says survivor.<sup>235</sup>

Sherman-Palladino also boasts that, “it’s rare that there’s a character who has such a specific voice,” adding that in “so many dramas, people are distinguished by their actions or behaviors as opposed to how they speak.”<sup>236</sup>

Additionally, Sherman-Palladino’s propensity toward “acerbic bon mots,” a characteristic Lorelai is fond of using with her mother, comes from her obsession with New

York writer Dorothy Parker. Sherman-Palladino explains that “everything about her [Dorothy Parker] always made me laugh.”<sup>237</sup> Even the name of Sherman-Palladino’s production company - Dorothy Parker Drank Here - gives homage to her heroine, and connections between Lorelai’s lifestyle and Parker’s is evident in her “Gilmore” scripts. Sherman-Palladino is quoted as saying she loves Parker’s writing style and her persona as being sarcastic and witty, yet vulnerable.<sup>238</sup> Lorelai is also a woman who champions the world on her own, often defying convention, and is loved by the many eccentric inhabitants of Stars Hollow for her flaws and indiscretions.

In using such literary [Parker] and non-traditional [Hepburn] role models for her characters, it is tempting to pose the question: “Who is Sherman-Palladino writing for?” Clearly, she is not writing for the “mindless teen audience,” many of whom favored late 1970s sitcoms such as *Three’s Company*, *Happy Days* and *Laverne and Shirley*.<sup>239</sup> In fact, Sherman-Palladino says that she created the character of Rory to dispel the TV myth that all teens “dress like they’re 35 and on the cover of *Cosmo* and are having sex at 12.”<sup>240</sup> In an interview with the *Sacramento Bee*, Sherman-Palladino quips that “if you take a kid who’s already sleeping with somebody, who’s already dressing like Linda Evangelista, you’re missing all the good stories.” Her hope is that Rory fills TV’s teenage gap . . . “a teenage girl who’s very sharp, very bright, into her future and comfortable with who she is.”<sup>241</sup>

Reviews of the series have almost unanimously picked up on these “counter stereotypes” and applauded the merits of the show’s intelligent twist.<sup>242</sup> However, can the

“average” teen interpret the literary humor, the “high culture” dialogue that Sherman-Palladino writes in her scripts? “Gilmore Girls” target audience is between 12-34 years of age and it has been publicized as a show that might “bridge the generation gap,” and reach out to a more mature female audience, women that are “well past the ’N Sync phase.”<sup>243</sup> But what type of audience would appreciate Sherman-Palladino’s particular strain of sarcasm and wit?

This line of inquiry, probing audience and interpretive meaning, points to the work of David Morley, specifically his article “Cultural Transformation: The Politics of Resistance ” (2000) Utilizing only demographic and sociological factors such as age, sex, race or class position as “objective correlates or determinants of differential decoding positions,” fails to specify “*how* they intervene in the process of communication.”<sup>244</sup> Utilizing my own historical/cultural decoding and that of my daughters suggests that Sherman-Palladino’s intended audience - one capable of capturing those witty literary zingers - would be the more “mature” female, and possibly a new group of resilient and progressive girls identified in recent media coverage as the “Gamma Girls” or “Floaters.”

Amid the “fantasies of mother/daughter” bonding depicted in “Gilmore Girls” and mother/daughter celebrity GAP advertising (which I will discuss later), there has been a flurry of attention on several best-selling books, specifically *Queen Bees & Wannabes* by Rosalind Wiseman and *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* by Rachel Simmons, that have documented the almost epidemic wave of bullying among girls in junior high and high school.<sup>245</sup> In a June, 2002 *Newsweek* cover article entitled “In Defense of Teen



Girls,” Queen Bees and Wannabes are recognized as the “alphas” and “betas” respectively. But according to *The Washington Post* journalist Laura Sessions Stepp, what these books fail to take into account is a lesser recognized group of girls known as the “Gammas” that are “emotionally healthy, socially secure, independent-minded and just plain nice” - a lot like the character of Rory Gilmore.<sup>246</sup> Wiseman refers to these girls in her book as the “Floaters” - girls who are natural leaders, “generous and altruistic.”<sup>247</sup> Like Floaters, Gamma Girls might not be the most “popular” girls, but they aren’t “losers” either. The article purports that these girls don’t worry about not being invited to the “right” parties; they are too busy writing editorials for the school newspaper. The subtitle of the article is revealing:

They’re not mean. They like their parents. They’re smart, confident and think popularity is overrated. What makes these teens tick?.<sup>248</sup>

Part of what makes these teenage girls “tick” is an increase in extracurricular activities and opportunities offered to many young girls today. The article points out two key ingredients: the boom period of the 90s, and Title IX, which banned sex discrimination in school sports. (The number of high school girls playing sports has risen from 300,000 in 1972 to 2.5 million today.)<sup>249</sup>

However, critics of this media frenzy argue that this “ever-expanding new genre” of books and media attention on girls should not overlook the fact that they are relying on anecdotal evidence rather than new social science to prove their point.<sup>250</sup> The accompanying article to *Newsweek*’s cover story, “Selling Advice - As Well as Anxiety: The ‘Queen Bee’

Best Sellers are Stories, Not Science,” stresses that gender is simply one component in determining how a person turns out; just as important are factors such as sexual orientation, religion, social class, ethnicity and even the type of community where a teen lives.<sup>251</sup>

Clearly, as Ashley Smith points out in her thesis *Girlpower: Feminism, Girlculture and the Popular Media* (1999), there is a specific trend taking place that recognizes these groups of young women and market's them for media and consumer commodities. She writes that “girlculture is at best equal parts niche marketing phenomenon and grassroots sentiment.” She goes on to say that girlculture gains its strength from women consumers that react to and create new images for themselves and the corporations “in place to sell them the accouterments of a newfound sense of powerful identity.<sup>252</sup> While it is evident that “Gilmore Girls” explores new representations of girlhood, a tenet of feminist theory that challenges the “roles and representations of women in the production, distribution and consumption of cultural texts,” the show’s character and “lifestyle” focus in television genre also positions Lorelai Gilmore as the ideal “post-feminist” Mom - single, sexy, and “pals” with her sixteen year old daughter.<sup>253</sup>

Feuer defines a targeted reception of “character comedies” as an “upscale audience which tends to have a more literary standard of value.”<sup>254</sup> While she qualifies this statement, arguing that favoring “character comedy” over other comic techniques is to take up an ideological position,” she bases her conceptualization of “audience” on Marxist and Brechtian positions, which claim character complexity and development are a “representation of bourgeois values.” Feuer’s “character comedy” genre theory positions “Gilmore Girls’ in that category for two reasons: 1)

Advertisers during the show seek out female/teen consumerism; “Gilmore Girls” ranks as the 97th most expensive show for advertising, with a cost of \$50,000 for each commercial which beats out fellow WB shows like “Charmed,” “Popular” and “Roswell”; and 2) Creator/writer Amy Sherman-Palladino’s style of writing, laced with clever pop culture and literary references.<sup>255</sup>

Throughout the series’ duration, WB has worked hard, and I might add, creatively, to broaden and gain viewership. Without question, the toughest time slot on television for the last several years has been Thursday nights at 7 p.m. (CST) opposite hits “Friends,” and in January, 2001, “Survivor II.” Producers, writers, actors, as well critics and fans all referred to this time period as “that pesky time slot,” and it remained a predominant concern in “Gilmore’s” publicity during its first season. To counter this dilemma, in November, 2000, WB started inviting viewers to “switch over” to “Gilmore Girls” by providing a brief plot synopsis at 7:30 p.m. (CST) recounting what they missed during the first half hour. Hoping to make it easier for “Friends” viewers to join “Gilmore Girls,” WB executives reasoned this approach underscored shifting television patterns in which viewers (with remotes in hand) increasingly “flit” from one show to another instead of staying fixed on one particular channel. Results from the “recap” were immediate; “Gilmore Girls” ratings jumped almost 30 percent after “Friends.”<sup>256</sup>

In addition to the Thursday mid-show recaps, WB began airing repeats of “Gilmore Girls” in February on Monday nights at 8 p.m. (CST) following “7<sup>th</sup> Heaven,” WB’s top-rated series. WB felt this provided an opportunity to expose “Gilmore Girls” to a wider audience.

Even fans spoke out in favor of the “pairing” of “7<sup>th</sup> Heaven” and “Gilmore Girls,” claiming that “Gilmore Girls” makes more sense following “7<sup>th</sup> Heaven” than the science-fiction series “Roswell.”<sup>257</sup> It stands to repeat that “7<sup>th</sup> Heaven,” with “family” focused themes, at this time was one of WB’s most popular series, and also targeted a similar demographic. Results from these promotional repeats were again immediate. Monday’s bonus achieved a year-to-year time period growth among adults 18-34.<sup>258</sup>

During February, 2002 Sweeps Week, WB again created another marketing strategy to keep “Gilmore Girls” afloat. Up against “Survivor II,” which premiered January, 2001 after the Super Bowl, and “Friends,” trying to keep their gain on the Thursday night time slot by adding fifteen minutes to each episode, WB ran reruns of “Gilmore Girls,” wanting to preserve original episodes for times when they would most likely be seen. Again, this strategy was successful; as the novelty of “Survivor II” wore off, “Gilmore Girls” ratings increased.<sup>259</sup> By the end of March, 2001, WB announced that “Gilmore Girls” would be renewed for its next season.

Meanwhile, mid-season 2002 saw WB re-releasing “Gilmore Girls” first season’s episodes. These repeat shows, entitled “Beginnings,” continue to air on Sunday nights at 6 p.m. (CST). This marketing strategy has given later fans of the series an opportunity to see early episodes and also develop a new audience of viewers just getting to know the Gilmores. Moreover, the network’s investment in re-running these shows demonstrates a serious commitment to the series’ success and future potential.

A further sign of support for the series appeared in June, 2002 as *TV Guide* announced on their cover that “Gilmore Girls” was the “Best Show You Aren’t Watching.” Inside stories highlighted the series’ sharp, witty dialogue and talented cast. Increasingly, the series has maintained a loyal following and gained critical recognition. Actress Lauren Graham (Lorelai) received a 2002 Golden Globe Best Actress nomination (she lost to Jennifer Garner of *Alias*), and the show itself has received four Viewers for Quality Television awards and been renewed for a third season.<sup>260</sup>

With the tremendous attention “Gilmore Girls” has received from critics and fans, along with the creative marketing techniques employed by WB, the series has proven to be a profitable enterprise for both network and advertisers hoping to capture a coveted audience of women between the ages of twelve to thirty-four. But aside from the series’ success at targeting a desirable audience or selling products, I believe “Gilmore Girls” most profound influence lies within its representational alternative to destructive mother/daughter representations that stress the inevitable dichotomies (love/hate, proximity/distance, autonomy/dependence). As I write this, there are no other series or sitcoms on television that focus on mother/daughter relationships as intensely as “Gilmore Girls.” And while I caution the series’ ability to advance feminism, I feel strongly that its representation of mother/daughter solidarity celebrates a supportive female community that is both important and necessary to feminist work.

## Consuming Mothers and Daughters: GAP Advertising

In 2000, GAP, Inc. launched a campaign of broadcast and print advertisements that focused on celebrity moms and their daughters. Highly visible during the 2000 holiday season when “Gilmore Girls” was beginning to receive attention from media critics, GAP ran a television commercial that significantly challenged the traditional mother/daughter prototype. Featuring singer/songwriter Carole King and her grown daughter, Louise Goffin (also a singer), the commercial creates a nostalgic setting with mother at the piano singing alongside her daughter. The song “So Far Away,” is one of King’s classic hits from her 1971 *Tapestry* album. After mother and daughter sing together, Goffin gradually moves away from the piano, takes center stage and professes to the audience, “My first love, my Mom.”

Admittedly, the first time I saw this commercial, I was struck speechless by its impact. Goffin’s statement - short and to the point - carries both a commanding and emotional punch. In one small, but revealing glimpse, mother and daughter are seen together, side by side, interacting and recognizing each other’s worth. Seeing this commercial at the early stages of my research not only persuaded me to further pursue this topic, but convinced me that new ideas about mothers and daughters were beginning to emerge in American popular culture.

Following this commercial, GAP featured a print advertisement with actress Glen Close and her teenage daughter Annie Starke. The ad features Close, with her arms around her daughter, sporting GAP’s “Mac” trench coat. Both mother and daughter are barefoot, in

keeping with GAP's earthy, "down to basics" image. The small, but compelling print, neatly tucked in the upper left hand corner of the copy reads: "At last, a trench coat that flatters. Fresh colors. Modern lines and like all true classics, versatile and built to last." Undoubtedly, advertisers are referring both to the trench coat and the construction of mother/daughter relationships.

It is no secret that advertisers look to current cultural trends to capture an audience's attention, as well as play a significant role in creating them. Both Dow and Kaplan note that "television's reliance on constructing numbers of viewers as commodities involves reproducing female images that accommodate prevailing (and dominant) conceptions of 'women,' particularly as these satisfy certain economic needs."<sup>261</sup> However, paradoxically, Dow points out that the majority of television advertising "still relies on appeals to women's senses of their traditional roles within the family . . . while also incorporating feminist rhetoric into advertising strategies that clearly attempt to appeal to, or to construct, a new feminist consumer."<sup>262</sup>

Obviously, in using both celebrity mothers *and* their daughters, GAP is targeting not only two demographic age groups, but using the clout of mothers (prime consumer group) to influence their daughters (consumers in training) to increase their product consumption. In the past, this mother/daughter association would have "backfired" – most daughters would not want to shop where their mothers buy clothes. Likewise, most mothers would not find where their daughters shop to be appealing. But with the popularity of "Gilmore Girls," and the proliferation of books

and magazine articles on mother/daughter “togetherness,” this “dual” selling approach creates an incentive for both mothers and daughters to shop at the same location.

While this “togetherness” theme is encouraging, advertising’s goal of selling goods, as well as lifestyles, attitudes, and identities to women is almost exclusively represented by white, middle and upper class, heterosexual women. Welfare mothers and daughters, black and/or ethnic mothers and daughters, and “plus sized” mothers and daughters are rarely featured in print or broadcast advertisements. Like television programming, advertising draws from and adds to a racially, sexually, and economically privileged version of mothers and daughters. The absence of these “unrepresentable” mothers and daughters not only devalues their different experiences, but projects the message that “attractiveness” and “happiness” (both of which can be obtained by buying their products) are available to only white, educated, heterosexual, slim, middle and upper class women.

Overwhelmingly, the “attractiveness” of celebrity moms and their daughters played a significant role in GAP’s campaign strategy. Making mother/daughter connectedness appealing has also been evidenced by the proliferation of celebrity mother/daughter books available. Specifically, *Mothers and Daughters* (1997), a sentimental pictorial book by Carol Saline and Sharon J. Wohlmuth which has been stocked at book seller franchises such as Barnes and Noble and Borders for five years. This oversized “coffee table” book features well-known personalities such as mother/daughter actresses Janet Leigh and Jamie Lee Curtis and Olympic



mentalist Bonnie Blair and her mother Eleanor Blair, as well as a diverse (racially and ethnically) sampling of less celebrated mothers and daughters.

Expanding on the mother/daughter celebrity attention, the 2002 Academy Awards drew attention to best actress winner Halle Berry's relationship with her mother, Judith Berry, whom she identified at the podium as her chief supporter and confidant. Her acceptance speech for best actresses, making her the first African-American woman to be honored in that category, praised her mother: "I want to thank my Mom who's given me the strength to fight every single day to be who I want to be and given me the courage to dream that this dream might be happening and possible."<sup>263</sup> Judith Berry was her daughter's escort for the gala event.

But amid all the celebratory mother/daughter media and GAP advertising promoting mother/daughter "togetherness," traditional advertising continues to stress mother/daughter differences, if not antagonism. A Bulova watch advertisement, circulated in magazines in late 2001, attracts mother/daughter familiarity with the perennial title - "Like Mother, Like Daughter" - then zeroes in on their generational differences (except when it comes to buying a watch). A photo of the mother has underwritten, "*Foaming Cleanser, Handwritten Letters, String Quartets, Bulova,*" while a photo of the daughter displays the captions, "*Kiwi Mudmask, E-mail, String Bikinis, Bulova.*" While this type of generational advertising appears "cute," the underlying message is still one of contradiction and separation. Simultaneously, it not only commodifies mothers and daughters (as the mother/daughter "togetherness" advertisements do), but compromises the mother/daughter relationship as well.

While magazines attempt to sustain a certain audience for its advertisers, the high cost of television commercial advertising implies that television's economic stake in representing women is high. As Dow notes: "The overall purpose of television as a commercial system is to deliver an audience for the messages of advertisers."<sup>264</sup> To that end, "Gilmore Girls," along with other successful WB series such as "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" (now on the UPN network), "7<sup>th</sup> Heaven," "Felicity" and "Dawson's Creek" motivated by economic goals, promotes a reasonable amount of cultural awareness and sensitivity to prevailing trends.

On the whole, I think we need to applaud the new images of mothers and daughters in advertising that represent connection and mutuality, while at the same time, maintain a sense of limitation on their objectives. With a discriminating eye, mothers and daughters need to see past the "attractiveness" of these ads, which almost exclusively represent privileged, well-educated, white, "beautiful" women, to recognize that the message of connecting as diverse and multitalented women and can be a radical, if not powerful act of transformation.

## CHAPTER 3:

### ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF CREATIVE GOALS AND FINDINGS OF THE DOCUMENTARY

Production and Theory:

*Side by Side: Reinventing Mother/Daughter Relationships*

Like melodrama, documentary as a genre encompasses a wide range of potential possibilities. From the “factual” documentary of the 1930s that emphasized “informative,” if not propagandist agendas, to the independent documentary cinema of today that tends to challenge dominant political and social systems and put forth alternative and oppositional views, practice and theory in documentary filmmaking often revolve around the question of realism - ways in which relations to the real are posed in documentary discourse.<sup>265</sup> While I do not wish to debate definitions of realism and documentary filmmaking in this chapter, I do, however, see the need to examine practices of critical analysis and history within fiction and documentary filmmaking, and practices of interactive cinema and reflexivity. I employ these practices in my own 40 minute documentary, *Side by Side: Reinventing Mother/Daughter Relationships*,

copyrighted 2003, to expose the multiple and often contradictory ways in which mothers and daughters have been represented in fiction films, as well as “alternative” ways of seeing these relationships.

First and foremost, the purpose of this effort, both written and visual, was to examine predominant themes in popular culture and “truths” about mothers and daughters, and place them under serious questioning. The second goal was to reveal, in part, many of the ideological agendas inscribed within these representations to help better understand the forces that have and continue to mediate our views. Third, I sought to present “alternative” ways of seeing mothers and daughters using an interactive approach (interaction between filmmaker and subjects), reflexivity (allowing the audience to know the process of making the video), along with personal (my point of view) reflections.

Pre-Production plans for the video encompassed mammoth goals. Wanting very much to see mothers and daughters represented and analyzed in different ways led me in the direction of multiple interviews with various professionals. I also aimed to document several diverse mother and daughter pairs. At this point, I did not wish to involve myself or my relationship with my daughters in the visual (or even the written product), but rather felt I needed to take an “objective” view. However, throughout the long course of research and pre-production plans, it became clear that a personal element would be necessary, not only to tie the video together as a “journey” experience, but also to give it authority. This strategy comes, of course, from the insignia of the women’s movement: the personal is political. Yes, I had to say to myself a

number of times, the personal *does* matter. Taking direction from documentary critic and writer Bill Nichols, I rationalized my own narrative and visual involvement through the fact that while the voice is a key effect of documentary rhetoric, “what is being said is at least as important as who is saying it.”<sup>266</sup>

Presenting only one mother/daughter couple in my documentary (and my own relationship with my two daughters on a peripheral level) was a limitation due more to time constraints than purpose. My intention from the start of this project was to feature several “diverse” mother/daughter subjects, to fill the gap of mother/daughter representations that have been and continue to be less visible, including mothers and daughters of different races, ethnicities, classes, sexualities, religions and nationalities. However, interviewing, documenting and forming a strong personal and working relationship with multiple subjects all required an extensive amount of time, financial commitment, and ongoing production logistics that I carefully concluded outweighed, at best, variable results. Quite frankly, I severely underestimated the magnitude of the task. After extensive research and several interviews with other mother/daughter couples, I decided to concentrate on the one mother/daughter couple I already had a connection with, and that I felt best challenged ideas about how our culture defines mother/daughter relationships. Without projecting this mother/daughter representation (or my own for that matter) as the *only* voice, I stress at the end of the documentary that the subject of mothers and daughters within diverse frameworks is an ongoing exploration. While I understand this limitation - presenting only one mother/daughter couple - substantially narrows

the documentary's audience and distribution (representing multiple/diverse mother/daughter couples would target a wider range of demographic groups), ultimately, even multiple images of mothers and daughters, whether fictional or real, will not reflect *all* the realities and experiences of these relationships. What additional representations will do, however, is promote questions, challenge conventional thought and form the basis for further debate.

#### Critical Analysis/Commentary/Narration

What ultimately energized the visual component of this thesis was a good critical analysis of the subject matter. It was my good fortune to have Dr. Suzanna Danuta Walters, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Director of the Women's Studies Program at Georgetown University, agree to an interview. Her knowledge and effective, casual conversation provided the necessary information needed for this purpose. Although her seminal book on mothers and daughters, *Lives Together, Worlds Apart* was written ten years ago, her commitment to "rethinking" mother/daughter relationships is still strong. Like her book, her conversational insights placed mother/daughter representations within an understandable historical and social context.

While I interviewed several professionals connected in some way to mother/daughter analysis, and even attended and videotaped interviews at a conference in May, 2002 sponsored by the Association for Research on Mothering (ARM) in Toronto, Canada, I eventually chose

to focus on Walters' interview and analysis.<sup>267</sup> Similar to my intention of utilizing multiple and diverse mother/daughter couples, this decision was related more to time constraints, and the necessity of editing a video within a reasonable time frame than to artistic or instructive factors. Essentially, while most interviews were informative and insightful on this subject matter, Walters' interview provided the necessary information needed to initiate and evaluate mother/daughter representations.

In his book, *Writing, Directing and Producing Documentary Films and Videos* (1990, 1996) Alan Rosenthal writes that utilizing commentary demands that "a tremendous amount of detail has to be left out."<sup>268</sup> Nothing said about the use of commentary could have been truer for this project. Editing the interview with Walters, and integrating her commentary with the appropriate film segments, proved to be one of the most tedious tasks of the documentary. However, use of personal narration, as Rosenthal suggests, created an effective, if not crucial tool for "filling in the gaps."

Principally, the structure of the documentary points to connections between past and present, how we have seen mothers and daughters represented in media, to seeing new components for the present and future. The challenge for this undertaking was how to critique and deconstruct past representations while simultaneously imagining and constructing future representations. This approach, of course, is parallel to feminist film theory tenets, encouraging a "sharp-eye" and "theorized attention to women's filmic representations."<sup>269</sup> Books like Marjorie Rosen's *Popcorn Venus* (1973) and Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape*

(1973) set the standard for the “descriptive, emotional ‘historiography’” of Hollywood cinema by showing how women’s roles as mothers, girls next door, and single women “had little representational bite on women’s real identities and experiences.”<sup>270</sup> After an enormous amount of research and thought, I chose to incorporate a wide variety of fiction film excerpts and integrate them into the context of my own personal journey in understanding their larger, cultural impact and role in forming perceptions of mothers and daughters. In terms of copyright clearance, I inserted these clips under the auspices of the Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia (see Appendix C for complete document). In summary, these guidelines place an “exemption” under the Copyright Act of 1976, limiting exclusive rights “to promote free speech, learning, scholarly research and open discussion.” Accordingly, under the Act, “educators may use portions of copyrighted material if the purpose and character of the use is educational in nature, previously published, not a substantial part of the entire work and if the marketability of the work is not impaired by the use.”<sup>271</sup>

Essentially, this background information - the history of mother/daughter representations in media - and commentary provide a foundation from which I build my argument. As Paula Rabinowitz tells us in her book *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (1994), “the historical documentary not only tells us something of our past, but calls on us to do something about it as well.”<sup>272</sup> The function, therefore, of “looking back” and recounting where mothers and daughters have been representationally is not only a historical rendering, but is also



an emotional appeal - to see these very nostalgic, strongly influential film representations in a new way, while simultaneously evoking an appeal for change.

I chose to incorporate dominant, mainstream fiction film narratives (i.e. Hollywood productions which have been produced by large studios with sizeable budgets, been directed by male directors, and mass distributed) in the documentary primarily because these representations have been more widely viewed (and therefore attained more influence) than documentaries and independent films. The four documentaries about mothers and daughters I analyze in my written thesis - *Nana, Mom and Me* (1974), *Grey Gardens* (1976), *Daughter Rite* (1979) and *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter* (1994) - have experienced a somewhat limited distribution, although admittedly these films can now be purchased through the Internet and are frequently found in college/university media libraries. As a “history” of mother/daughter representations, I *do* feel these documentary representations are important and deserve a place in the overall analysis of “seeing” mothers and daughters. However, for purposes of recognition and understanding, utilizing mainstream images of mothers and daughters provided the best opportunity for reaching a larger audience.

#### Reflexivity/Interactive Cinema

Almost more than fiction, where acting performances take center stage, I embrace the idea that documentary is “performative.” In theory, the performative documentary emphasizes

“the often hidden aspect of performance,” - filmmakers or subjects - in documentaries. Writing about the modern performative documentary, Stella Bruzzi in her book *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* (2000) explains that the ethos behind this form presents subjects in such a way “to accentuate the fact that the camera and crew are an inevitable intrusion that alter any situation they enter.” The author states that performative documentaries utilize a reflexive approach; challenging “the notion of the film’s ‘transparency,’” while emphasizing issues of authorship and construction.<sup>273</sup>

Essentially, the use of voice-over/narration and personal appearance on camera lays the groundwork for this inherent performativity in my own documentary production. By doing so, I provide factual, accurate information, but place less emphasis on the video’s “believability” by displaying what Bruzzi terms “the mechanisms of performance.”<sup>274</sup> Framing the documentary - beginning and end - with my own inquiries into the subject of mother/daughter representations, while at the same time *showing* the audience my relationship with my own two daughters and the mother/daughter couple I document, brings together significant elements of this thesis work - examining past and present representations of mothers and daughters, and an independent view of mothering and daughtering from a lived perspective. In her book *Maternal Thinking* (1989), Sara Ruddick writes that it is hard “to speak precisely about mothering.” Maternal voices, she explains:

. . . have been drowned by professional theory, ideologies of motherhood, sexist arrogance, and childhood fantasy. Voices that have been distorted and censored can

only be developing voices. Alternatively silenced and edging toward speech, mothers' voices are not voices of mothers as they are, but as they are becoming.<sup>275</sup>

As examined earlier, weaving my voice into the fabric of the documentary became a necessary and vital task. I chose to begin the documentary with a montage of mother/daughter "voices" heard in media, specifically from stylized fictional narratives such as *Postcards From the Edge*, *Mermaids*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Now, Voyager*, and *Anywhere But Here*. I then switch to my own voice and that of my daughters as we interact, negotiating which video to watch. Creating a "different" script, I consider the implications and outcomes of what we typically see and hear about mothers and daughters within the context of searching for "real" mother/daughter experiences. This introductory "set up," of watching "ourselves" in fiction representations, highlights the premise of my thesis; mother/daughter relationships are formed, to a large extent, "through the cultural images that give it meaning."<sup>276</sup> Again, at the end of the documentary, in yet another "arranged" scene, I plead for a new look, a "rethinking" as Walters writes, of this all-important relationship. My voice now becomes the voice of my research, my journey through feminist scholarship, cultural studies, documentary theory and filmmaking, and my own lived perspective.

Integrating "real" mother/daughter relationships within the context of a critical analysis/historical piece was a challenging assignment. Drawing from some of the early feminist documentaries that explored individual women's lives, Amalie Rothschild's *Nana, Mom and Me* (1974) and Joyce Chopra's *Joyce at 34* (1972), I utilized a personal (although admittedly

“set-up”) style to frame the documentary, bringing partial, autobiographical accounts to the visual analysis. In some respect, I felt this personal presentation, framing the larger context of the piece, would provide a more “authoritative” understanding of the subject matter. In persuading the audience to rethink mother/daughter relationships, this “dual” approach - rational (critical analysis) of mother/daughter representations, and emotional (personal stories) of real mothers and daughters - placed a greater emphasis on that need.

It is interesting as well as significant that Nichols, writing about reflexivity in his chapter “Documentary Modes of Representation” (1991), argues that “the tools that documentary discourse lacked [presumably before the women’s movement], feminism provided.”<sup>277</sup> Essentially he contends that feminism instigated “a radical reconceptualization of subjectivity and politics that achieved through the programmatic of consciousness-raising an effect comparable to that of reflexivity. The viewer, especially the female viewer, encountered an experience that reexamined and recontextualized the ground of experience itself.”<sup>278</sup> Reflexivity and consciousness-raising, he writes, are compatible because “it is through an awareness of form and structure and its determining effects that new forms and structures can be brought into being, not only in theory, or aesthetically, but in practice, socially.”<sup>279</sup>

As my goal was to challenge prevailing assumptions about mothers and daughters, this personal approach, to include myself and my two daughters, and an interactive approach, to document another mother/daughter couple, proved to be not only aesthetically important, but fundamentally necessary to activate change. Rosenthal explores this “challenge” of social

change and writes that he is now more inclined to see the “involved filmmaker” as “one who bears witness.” This “bearing of witness” he explains, on a “modest level” means “the filmmaker is interested in telling us a certain truth - not the only truth or the eternal message but rather a very personal statement that says, ‘This film arises out of my background, feelings and integrity, and on the basis of what I show and how I show it, you can take it or leave it.’”<sup>280</sup> My “bearing witness” of what I know to be central in my life (the connection I have with my two daughters) and what I document in the mother/daughter couple (continuity and relationality) *is* the “message,” the “truth” I bring to this documentary. In juxtaposing past/present media representations of mothers and daughters and “real” mother/daughter relationships, my optimistic goal for this thesis is to encourage a “reconsideration” of these relationships, and provide an open forum for change.

For many documentary theorists, there is a philosophic division of documentary modes when it comes to direct cinema and cinema verite<sup>281</sup> (other variations known as observation/intercession, intercessional/nonintercessional or observational/interactive). Nichols argues that for some practitioners and critics, the terms direct cinema and cinema verite are “interchangeable” and “for others they refer to distinct modes.”<sup>282</sup> Nichols’ sidesteps these terms in favor of “observational and interactive” modes of documentary representation. In definition, he contends observational cinema stresses “the nonintervention of the filmmaker,” and “conveys the sense of unmediated and unfettered access.” Comparatively, the interactive mode “introduces a sense of partialness, of situated presence and local knowledge that derives from

the actual encounter of filmmaker and other.’<sup>283</sup> He goes on to say that interactive also stresses images of testimony (interviews or oral history) and images of demonstration, “images that demonstrate the validity, or possibly, the doubtfulness, of what witnesses state.’<sup>284</sup> I have chosen to define my documentary approaches as interactive *and* reflexive. Unlike interactive or reflexive approaches, observational films tend to mask the work of production. Instead, I seek to expose those elements, in part to connect with the filmmaking process itself. By placing an emphasis on *how* we talk to the historical world - through this powerful process of filmed images - I am reinforcing media’s widespread influence as a means to both reflect and produce the ideas and perceptions we have about mothers and daughters.

Effectively, the conditions needed to create “alternative” ways of seeing mothers and daughters was made possible by the fact that I had a strong, personal connection with a mother/daughter couple whom I felt challenged ideas about how mothers and daughters have been, and still are perceived. Keil Hackley (the mother) and I went to high school together; I was “maid of honor” at her wedding, and she was “matron of honor” at my wedding. Her willingness to express feelings and emotions about her relationship with her daughter, Summer, was in large part due to our long history and friendship together.

By their own admission, Keil and Summer consider themselves to be “best friends.” They work together as attorneys in Keil’s immigration law practice. This element of mentorship - mothers mentoring daughters into their professional career - challenged a practice long associated with fathers and sons, but is relatively new for mothers and daughters. Additionally,

Summer's choice to have her mother be the "best woman" at her wedding in November, 2001, also challenged traditional notions of mother/daughter roles in our society.

Keil's and Summer's willingness to participate in this project, as well as their comfort and ease in front of a camera, were assets that allowed me to capture their daily routines and personalities in a very real and direct way. Illisa Barbash and Lucien Taylor, in their book *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos* (1997), state that often reflexive films "accentuate the interactive qualities of verite."<sup>285</sup> They use Ross McElwee's documentary *Sherman's March* (1985) as an example, stating that the film "seems to be fashioned as filmic analogies to a diary, conveying a similar feel for the contingent, personal, and meditative qualities of our emotional lives."

By employing an interactive style of documentary filmmaking in this segment, I am attempting to capture crucial elements and scenes - often found within very mundane activities - that would support my thesis and allow the audience to make their own discoveries about Kei's and Summer's relationship. This method of capturing the "essence" of characters or their situations is one of the main objectives these documentary modes - direct, verite, observational, interactive - emphasizes. It is also, as Paula Rabinowitz reveals in her book *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (1994) a very emotional discourse. In examining cinema verite, she states that "if emotions are real - more real than the structural formations in which they occur - than filmmakers must 'move in' with their subjects, must see them every day at home to know them."<sup>286</sup> This is exactly what PBS did in 1973 with its ground-breaking

series *An American Family*, what the Maysles brothers did in presenting *Grey Gardens* in 1976, and in part, how the new “reality” shows like MTV’s “The Osbournes” are constructed.<sup>287</sup>

The element of “connection” between producer/director and subjects is, in my view, critical in determining the success or failure of a project’s outcome. The subjects require a substantial amount of trust and confidence in the producer/director in order to reveal intimate feelings and emotions. But issues of realism and objectivity often challenge these approaches, particularly in the editing process. A filmmaker’s use of editing or “signifying practices” - structuring images in time and space in a series of patterns arranged according to the filmmaker’s view - is undoubtedly a significant component to the film’s final product.<sup>288</sup> As Ellen Hovde, co-editor of *Grey Gardens* explains, “editing takes on the same importance as the camerawork - and the camerawork and editing combined *are* directing, in *cinema verite*.”<sup>289</sup>

Essentially, my finished product supports this view. In attempting to redefine mother/daughter relationships through “real” experiences, I am employing a strategy to best effect change. I have a purpose and agenda. Like other feminist films, my personal involvement with the production (as subject, camera-operator, editor) indicates to the audience that I have a certain reason to be making this video, a certain relation to the subject matter, and a certain purpose in its function.<sup>290</sup> In her article “Feminist Documentary: Aesthetics and Politics” Julia Lesage points out that the early feminist biographical documentaries serve as “a critique of and



antidote to past cinematic depictions of women's lives and women's space.'<sup>291</sup> I would also argue that many of the autobiographical pieces maintain that same objective.

## Distribution

Throughout the course of pre-production, the concept of utilizing copyrighted material (film/television clips) appeared to be a major obstacle. Research into copyright laws (specifically the Copyright Act of 1976) and the Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia (September 27, 1996) outlined that "there is no simple test to determine what is fair use." However, "caution" appeared to be the word of choice. (I took particular note of the phrase in the guidelines that stressed "uses that exceed these guidelines may or may not be fair use.")

Clearly, this thesis - in both its written and visual components - fits the category for "nonprofit educational purposes;" I am working within an educational institution (University of North Texas) and am using the work for educational use (a Masters of Science degree in Radio, Television and Film). The guidelines state that "students may incorporate portions of lawfully acquired copyrighted works when producing their own educational multimedia projects for a specific course."<sup>292</sup> Restrictions under "Motion Media" require that up to 10 percent or three minutes (which ever is less in the aggregate of the work) can be incorporated as part of a multimedia project. Yet despite this availability, the guidelines severely restrict distribution. Only a limited number of copies are allowed to be made, and they include specific guidelines for

preservation purposes and use by educators/students (see Appendix C under “Copying and Distribution Limitations”). Moreover, most film and video festivals require that all copyrighted work have written permission (licenses).

In order to distribute the documentary beyond the guidelines’ limitations, I would need to seek individual permission for all used copyrighted works (e.g. each film/television clip and commercial). This process would require a tremendous amount of time, work and expense, not to mention a certain amount of influence in the film/television community that would penetrate the amount of “red tape” involved in seeking permission from big Hollywood and television studios.

In discussing the “challenge” of distribution beyond fair use with educators, media personnel and lawyers, I concluded that the process of seeking individual permission would best be done by a company/corporation that would have the authority and expertise to handle the networking and legal issues necessary to obtain copyright licenses. I examined other documentaries that sought permission for film segments, most notably *The Celluloid Closet* (1995). This documentary utilizes clips from over one hundred movies to tell the story of how Hollywood both reflected and defined homosexuality. Conceived from the book *The Celluloid Closet* (1981) by Vito Russo, the documentary, a Home Box Office and Telling Pictures production, was ten years in the making. Produced and directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, the project was stalled for years because of funding and licensing issues.<sup>293</sup> Only after executive producer Howard Roseman, actress Lily Tomlin, and HBO Vice President of

Documentary Programming Shelia Nevins dedicated their resources to the project did the documentary gain momentum.

Ideally, I would like to see *Side by Side* distributed beyond the scope of an educational forum. I believe its topic and message are both timely and important. Although the video's primary audience points to women, this research should also be of importance to men. Understanding how mother/daughter relationships have been and continue to be represented, and the cultural forces, both past and present, that have shaped them, will provoke both women and men to look at this relationship in a new way. Additionally, this video will be of value to professionals, particularly sociologists, psychologist and media analysts who study relationship changes and cultural influences. Plans to "package" the written and visual thesis to media outlets such as Oxygen Media, Lifetime Network for Women and The Learning Channel (all on satellite and cable) are in progress. My expectations are to bring this "scholarship" to an entertainment level, seeking out ways to analyze past stories and representations of mothers and daughters with new and optimistically progressive narratives.

#### A Very Personal Production: Special Reflections

Some of my daughters' earliest memories of me surround my pursuit of an education, begun when my younger daughter Blythe entered first grade. At that time, neither Blythe, nor my older daughter, Katie, recognized the balancing act it took to juggle parenting - and all the

agendas that role entails - as well as attending classes and studying. I, like Jocalyn P. Clark who wrote in her article “Studying and Sharing: Mother and Daughter Learn Academia” (1999) grew up with few examples of women academics, and fewer that combined motherhood with higher education.<sup>294</sup> But I decided early on in my motherhood journey that I wanted to be a role model to my daughters in this respect.

This essential aspect of self-identity played a significant part in not only the subject matter of this thesis, but in its outcome. It was a “tricky” path to take. I was not only examining my relationship with my two daughters (and peripherally, their relationship with me) under a microscope, but taking the very personal to a public level. At times, this “dual” burden - writing/producing a thesis about mothers and daughters and analyzing my own relationship with my daughters - seemed beyond the call of duty, even for thesis work. But the rewarding results came in the form of including both daughters in the pre-and-post production process, a decision that not only called upon their physical aid (lugging camera equipment), and heightened “only a teenager can figure out how this works” computer skills (editing), but gave all three of us the chance to experience the “thrill of victory and agony of defeat” emotions of working together on a project.

When I made the decision to include my own story in the visual, I knew I could not complete the process alone. Incorporating my daughters in the pre-and-post production stages seemed a logical choice. How better to convey mother/daughter mutuality than to include my own daughters in the development of the documentary. Both of them were agreeable to this

proposal, although neither enjoyed being in front of the camera. This, however, would later become problematic, as despite my efforts to include their “voice” in the documentary (giving both mothers and daughters a “voice” is a critical point I argue in this thesis), they both balked at the suggestion to talk in front of a camera. Given the fact that I was already calling upon them to give up their time and energy on the production and post-production end, I relinquished attempts to place them in front of a camera. Essentially, in our typical mother/daughter compromise mode, we came to realize each of us “gave a little,” “took a little” out of each experience the project required.

Katie and I traveled to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in Spring, 2002 for my third and final visit to videotape Keil and Summer, and to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. to interview Dr. Walters. Katie, always excited about travel and meeting new people, embraced the experiences with her usual enthusiasm and energy. She was my ally, critic and friend all rolled up in one. We now have valued memories of these experiences:

- Sleeping in a full bed together (we are both tall people) at Keil’s house
- Talking about mother/daughter issues with Keil until three o’clock in the morning and then getting up at seven to catch a flight
- Being selected for a manual search, post 9-11, at Ft. Lauderdale airport with camera equipment and precious, already shot digital tapes in hand
- Getting upgraded to first class from coach on the way to Washington, D.C.

- Meeting David Gergen, PBS (Public Broadcasting Station) commentator, presidential adviser, and editor-at-large of *U.S. News and World Report* at a restaurant (Katie knew him from his many engagements at Southern Methodist University, her alma mater), and telling him about “our” mother/daughter project. Added reward: Katie was impressed with her Mom’s ability to converse about authors associated with this scholarship with whom Mr. Gergen was familiar.
- Katie’s slip and fall (it was a drizzly day) down the steps of Georgetown University, which has endured as a nagging, persistent “pain in the back” every now and then in cold and damp weather

I am sure to have left out other, equally outstanding experiences. However, I take comfort in the fact that together, Katie and I have affectionately filed these joys and tribulations in our individual memories.

July and August 2002 saw my younger daughter Blythe and me editing material from twenty-five plus digital video tapes. Always a quick study with computer technology, Blythe adopted the role of assistant editor with ease and a built-in degree of talent for the process. As a frequent viewer of MTV and reality based shows like “The Real World,” she possessed a discerning eye for a quick and evocative editing style.

Generally, the MTV style is as Ken Dancyger writes in his book *The Technique of Film and Vide Editing: Theory and Practice* (1997), a multilayered approach. Unlike the traditional set of narrative goals, which include a linear narrative which typically focuses on a

story and character(s), Dancyger states that the primary layer in an MTV approach evokes “a place, feeling or mood.”<sup>295</sup> While I profess to being of the “old school style,” aiming for the more traditional “linear” focus surrounding story and character, our “genre mix” proved to be a good combination. Blythe excelled in layering images. I worked with story continuity and structure.

However, the most dramatic benefit our mother/daughter editing partnership brought was in the form of understanding. Blythe had never seen the old fiction films I was analyzing, or realized the mother/daughter themes of separation and struggle that persist today. She knew Keil and Summer, but since we live a distance apart, had never observed their interactions. As most editors will acknowledge, the images, voices and scenes they are editing - over and over again - become relentless companions, so much so, that at times they grow to be strange, if not peculiar, “bed fellows.” For Blythe and me, cutting, pasting and cross-dissolving this intricate analysis and story began to take on a life of its own. It also became a personal and authentic appeal to see not only our own relationship, but other mother/daughter relationships in a different way.

## CONCLUSION

Although we are at different life stages and share different interests, my daughters and I are now sharing similar journeys through education and work. It is at this interval - with many more to follow - that the mothers and daughters in “us” come together and connect, sharing what television entrepreneur Oprah Winfrey likes to express as “what we know to be true.” Like Keil and Summer, who shared similar educational experiences, my daughters and I see ourselves as role models to each other, valuing our mentorship and encouragement.

But as optimistically as I see our own relationships flourishing, mother/daughter intimacy and shared camaraderie reflect something very different from what is typically seen or written about in our culture. The melodramas examined in this thesis, *Stella Dallas* (1937), *Now, Voyager* (1942), *Mildred Pierce* (1945) *Peyton Place* (1957) and *Imitation of Life* (1959) continue to be rerun on cable and satellite networks, as do the more recent film narratives, *Terms of Endearment* (1983), *Mermaids* (1990), *Anyway But Here* (1999) and *Tumbleweeds* (1999). Their influence and authority in defining mother/daughter relationships continues to remain “unchecked.” Subsequently, even new film releases such as *Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood* (2002) (which, due to time limitations I did not analyze in this thesis)



market their mother/daughter film narrative as “Mothers and Daughters: The Neverending Story of Good vs. Evil.” Once again, these mother/daughter representations are defined within rigid psychological dichotomies - in “Ya-Ya’s” case, the ultimate polarity: Good vs. Evil.

Because these mother/daughter representations are perpetually framed within psychoanalytic thought, a mother’s/daughter’s self-discovery is seen less through a relational perspective - a “self-in-relation” model - that would emphasize attachment and connection, and more through a process of separation and difference. What I try to convey in both the written and visual thesis, is that there can be “loving in difference.” As Clark argues in her article, “differentiation” can be “a dynamic process of growth within the relationship, rather than the more psychoanalytic perspective of separation - individuation which implies separation.”<sup>296</sup>

But in order to progressively move these relationships out of the established path of psychological dichotomies - love/hate, proximity/distance, autonomy/dependence - we need to reconsider mothers and daughters by doing what Walters suggests, “recovering, rewriting, rethinking our history as women.”<sup>297</sup> Examining themes and “truths” about ourselves as women in our culture, and giving serious attention to the stories, along with their ideological agendas that are handed to us, *can* help us “reinvent” ourselves, and see ourselves in different ways. By restructuring our acceptance of certain mother/daughter concepts and paradigms, which are often destructive to these relationships, we can reconstruct the possibility of mother/daughter intimacy and continuity.

While Walters argues there is “no single narrative, no unified discourse that can represent all the complexities and contradictions in mother/daughter relationships,” as feminists, we must strive to understand these most important relationships - mothers-to-daughters, daughters-to-mothers - because they exist as “a central nexus, between women.”<sup>298</sup> Likewise, in their book, *ManifestA: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000) Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards argue that “the relationship between mothers and daughters is one of the most basic to feminism, mainly because in dealing with our own mothers, many of us could be confronting our own misogyny - our dislike for the way women’s power is forced to play out in a sexist society.”<sup>299</sup>

This was one of Rich’s most passionate pleas, for understanding the difference between the two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other: “the potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and the children; and the institution, which aims at ensuring that that potential - and all women - shall remain under male control.”<sup>300</sup> Underscoring this sentiment, Bamgardner and Richards write: “politicizing our understanding of our own mothers helps us to understand and sympathize with them, and form an alliance against sexism. We actually can imagine changing the world to be more respectful to women who are mothers, rather than just changing our lives so as not resemble theirs.”<sup>301</sup>

A crucial element in this change, however, *has* to come from media representations, which as already argued, are central in elaborating the social construction of these relationships; to see mothers and daughters accessing a new and deeper connection with each other, a

connection affected by a realistic appraisal of each other's life and choices. Our culture makes it clear, Rich writes, that "women are made taboo to women - not just sexually, but as comrades, co creators, conspirators. In breaking this taboo, we are reuniting with our mothers; in reuniting with our mothers, we are breaking this taboo."<sup>302</sup> Representing a long line of mother/daughter mutuality, connection, and acceptance is an important step toward breaking this taboo and transforming these relationships.

APPENDIX A

BUDGET

**BUDGET**

	CASH	IN-KIND		TOTAL
<b>Pre-production</b>				
Researcher/Writer		\$250 flat	\$	250
Office Supplies	\$250			250
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 500</b>
<b>Production</b>				
Producer/Director		\$50 x 30 days	\$	1,500
Production Assistant		\$25 x 30 days		750
Audio		\$25 x 30 days		750
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 3,000</b>
<b>Production Supplies</b>				
Digital Video Camera		\$250 x 30 days	\$	7,500
Digital Video Tapes	\$10 x 30 tapes			300
Sound Equipment		\$100 x 30 days		3,000
Travel:				
Airfare				
DFW/FL	\$300 x 3 trips			900
FL/DC/DFW	\$300 flat			300
Rental Car/Gas (FL)	\$250			250
Hotel (FL/DC)	\$250 x 7days			1,750
Per-Diem	\$50 x 7days			350
Miscellaneous	\$200			200
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 14,550</b>

**BUDGET (Cont.)**

	<b>CASH</b>	<b>IN-KIND</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Post Production</b>			
Editor		\$50 x 30 days	\$ 1,500
Assistant Editor		\$25 x 30 days	750
Video Off-Line Edit		\$30 x 10 days	300
Video-to-Digital Transfer		\$100 flat	100
Music		\$250 flat	250
Sound Mix		\$25 x 10 days	250
On-Line Edit		\$50 x 20days	1,000
Tape Logging		\$25 x 15days	375
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 4,525</b>
<b>Distribution</b>			
Digital-to-Video		\$100 flat	\$ 100
Video Packaging	\$250 flat		250
Postage/FAX/Phone	\$100 flat		100
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 450</b>
<b>Other</b>			
Legal		\$500 flat	\$ 500
Insurance	\$50 flat		50
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 550</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,700.00</b>	<b>\$ 18,875.00</b>	<b>\$ 23,575.00</b>
Contingency (10%)	\$ 2,357.50		\$ 2,357.50
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>REQUIRED</b>	<b>IN-KIND</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>\$ 7,057.50</b>	<b>\$ 18,875.00</b>	<b>\$ 25,932.50</b>

APPENDIX B:  
EQUIPMENT

## EQUIPMENT

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### Video Equipment

SONY DCR VX2000  
SONY 16x lens  
SONY 3x wide-angle lens  
SONY, Panasonic, JVC: 60-minute digital videocassettes

### Audio Equipment

SONY on-camera omnidirectional microphone  
AZDEN WMS-Pro wireless microphone  
AZDEN ECZ-990 zoom microphone

### Non-Linear Editing Equipment

Dell Intel Pentium 4 - 1.7GHz - 255.0MB RAM with AGP Graphics Card  
Adobe Premiere 6.0 software  
Panasonic AG-DV1000 mini DV/VCR

### Miscellaneous

Vanguard VT-558 tripod  
Vanguard-MP15 monopod  
SONY ACC 12hr Battery

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APPENDIX C:

FAIR USE GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA (1996)

# FAIR USE GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA

Prefatory Nonlegislative Commentary | *Guidelines* Table of Contents & Text

## **NONLEGISLATIVE REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COURTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

This nonlegislative report was adopted by the Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property, Committee on the Judiciary, U. S. House of Representatives, on September 27, 1996, and related to Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia.

Under the Copyright Act of 1976, copyright owners have the exclusive right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute, perform, display, transfer ownership, rent or lend their creations. Under the same Act, the "fair use" exemption places a limit on these exclusive rights to promote free speech, learning, scholarly research and open discussion. Accordingly, under the Act, educators may use portions of copyrighted material if the purpose and character of the use is educational in nature, previously published, not a substantial part of the entire work and if the marketability of the work is not impaired by the use. These vague standards do not provide much specific guidance for educators, scholars and students, and are fairly subjective in their interpretation.

Because of the vague nature of the exemption, shortly after Congress passed the Copyright Act in 1976, a group of publishers, authors and educators gathered to agree on an interpretation of the fair use exemption which would in turn provide more specific guidelines that educators could follow and be reasonably sure that they would not be in violation of the copyright law. These guidelines were made part of the Congressional Record and became an unrelated part of a Judiciary Committee Report.

Many technological developments have occurred since 1976. The fair use exemption contained in the Copyright Act must again be interpreted by copyright owners and the educational community to allow educators to apply the Act in light of these new technologies. To that end, the Consortium of College and University Media Centers ("CCUMC") convened a diverse group of interested parties to draft

guidelines which would provide guidance on the application of the fair use exemption by educators, scholars and students in creating multimedia projects that include portions of copyrighted works, for their use in noncommercial educational activities, without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. These guidelines form the body of this nonlegislative report.

These guidelines do not represent a legal document, nor are they legally binding. They do represent an agreed upon interpretation of the fair use provisions of the Copyright Act by the overwhelming majority of institutions and organizations affected by educational multimedia. A list of those organizations who have supplied written endorsements for the guidelines appears at the end of the guidelines. While only the courts can decide whether a particular use of a copyrighted work falls within the fair use exemption, these guidelines represent the participants' consensus view of what constitutes the fair use of a portion of a work which is included in a multimedia educational project. The specific portion and time limitations will help educators, scholars and students more easily identify whether using a portion of a certain copyrighted work in their multimedia program constitutes a fair use of that work. They grant a relative degree of certainty that a use within the guidelines will not be perceived as an infringement of the Copyright Act by the endorsing copyright owners, and that permission for such use will not be required. The more one exceeds these guidelines, the greater the risk that the use of a work is not a fair use, and that permission must be sought.

Along with the Copyright Office and the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office, whose letters of endorsement for these guidelines are included in this report, the Subcommittee congratulates the CCUMC and the other drafting participants for their hard work and effort, which clearly advances the strength of the U. S. copyright system.

Sincerely,

**The Register of Copyrights  
of the  
United States of America**

September 4, 1996  
Library of Congress  
Department 17  
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Lisa and Ivan:

First, congratulations on completing a most difficult and important project - namely the creation of new fair use guidelines for the creation of multimedia projects by educators and students who use portions of lawfully acquired copyrighted works. The Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC) deserves a great deal of credit for its efforts in initiating as well as coordinating the process of lengthy negotiations that have led to the "Educational Multimedia Fair Use Guidelines."

I also congratulate the participating organizations and their representatives for their efforts and for the compromises they made. I include Mary Levering, Associate Register for National Copyright Programs, who served as a resource person in all the discussions and negotiations over the past two years. I know you found her contributions extremely helpful, and the Copyright Office was pleased to assist in this way.

I believe that experience has demonstrated that guidelines do assist organizations and individuals who wish to comply with the copyright law, and these new multimedia guidelines should be most helpful to educators and educational institutions as they use new technology for teaching and learning purposes.

As you know the Copyright Office is the office charged with the administration of the copyright law; to that end, we register claims to copyright and record documents as well as collect and distribute statutory license fees and oversee the copyright arbitration royalty panels. The Office also provides information services to the public and technical assistance to the Congress and the Executive Branch agencies. As such, we cannot formally endorse guidelines.

Nevertheless, I believe you know how we feel about them - we brought your efforts to the attention of Congressional leaders and urged inclusion of the adopted multimedia guidelines in a appropriate Judiciary Committee report. I wish you well in your continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Marybeth Peters Register of Copyrights

**United States Department of Commerce  
Patent and Trademark Office  
Assistant Secretary and Commissioner  
of Patents and Trademarks  
Washington, DC 20231**

August 21, 1996  
Ivan R. Bender, Esq.  
Attorney at Law  
3442 North Hoyne Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60618

Dear Mr. Bender:

Thank you for your letter dated July 23, 1996, and the Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia enclosed therein.

I am delighted that the hard work and diligence of the Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC) has produced widely adaptable voluntary guidelines. The drafting, and now the endorsement of such guidelines by major players in the user and content provider communities, are very major accomplishments and clearly represent a significant contribution to the overall effort of establishing voluntary guidelines for fair use of digital works in general. With such guidelines adopted by CCUMC, the goal of the Conference on Fair Use, of which CCUMC had been so supportive, has clearly been advanced.

I am encouraged by and supportive of your efforts to submit the guidelines to Congress for attachment to appropriate legislation. I will be encouraging CONFU to do likewise with the guidelines drafted and adopted through that process. I also appreciate your support for the National Information Infrastructure legislation and I look forward to its timely passage.

If I can be of any further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Lehman

Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

# **FAIR USE GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA\***

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1. Introduction
  2. Preparation of Educational Multimedia Projects Under These Guidelines
  3. Permitted Educational Uses for Multimedia Projects Under These Guidelines
  4. Limitations
  5. Examples of When Permission is Required
  6. Important Reminders
- Appendix A: Organizations Endorsing These Guidelines
- Appendix B: Organizations Participating in Development of These Guidelines

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Preamble**

Fair use is a legal principle that defines the limitations on the exclusive rights\*\* of copyright holders. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidance on the application of fair use principles by educators, scholars and students who develop multimedia projects using portions of copyrighted works under fair use rather than by seeking authorization for non-commercial educational uses. These guidelines apply only to fair use in the context of copyright and to no other rights.

There is no simple test to determine what is fair use. Section 107 of the Copyright Act\*\*\* sets forth the four fair use factors which should be considered in each instance, based on particular facts of a given case, to determine whether a use is a "fair use": (1) the purpose and character of use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

While only the courts can authoritatively determine whether a particular use is fair use, these guidelines represent the endorsers' consensus of conditions under which fair use should generally apply and examples of when permission is required.. Uses that exceed these guidelines may nor may not be fair use. The participants also agree that the more one exceeds these guidelines, the greater the risk that fair use does not apply.

The limitations and conditions set forth in these guidelines do not apply to works in the public domain--such as U.S. Government works or works on which copyright has expired for which there are no copyright restrictions--or to works for which the individual or institution has obtained permission for the

particular use. Also, license agreements may govern the uses of some works and users should refer to the applicable license terms for guidance. The participants who developed these guidelines met for an extended period of time and the result represents their collective understanding in this complex area. Because digital technology is in a dynamic phase, there may come a time when it is necessary to review the guidelines. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to apply to the fair use privilege in any context outside of educational and scholarly uses of educational multimedia projects. This Preamble is an integral part of these guidelines and should be included whenever the guidelines are reprinted or adopted by organizations and educational institutions. Users are encouraged to reproduce and distribute these guidelines freely without permission; no copyright protection of these guidelines is claimed by any person or entity.

\*These Guidelines shall not be read to supersede other preexisting education fair use guidelines that deal with the Copyright Act of 1976.

\*\*See Section 106 of the Copyright Act.

\*\*\*The Copyright Act of 1976, as amended, is codified at 17 U.S.C. Sec. 101 et seq. guidelines and clearly indicate the variety of interest groups involved, both from the standpoint of the users of copyrighted material and also from the standpoint of the copyright owners.

## **1.2 Background**

These guidelines clarify the application of fair use of copyrighted works as teaching methods are adapted to new learning environments. Educators have traditionally brought copyrighted books, videos, slides, sound recordings and other media into the classroom, along with accompanying projection and playback equipment. Multimedia creators integrated these individual instructional resources with their own original works in a meaningful way, providing compact educational tools that allow great flexibility in teaching and learning. Material is stored so that it may be retrieved in a nonlinear fashion, depending on the needs or interests of learners. Educators can use multimedia projects to respond spontaneously to students' questions by referring quickly to relevant portions. In addition, students can use multimedia projects to pursue independent study according to their needs or at a pace appropriate to their capabilities. Educators and students want guidance about the application of fair use principles when creating their own multimedia projects to meet specific instructional objectives.

## **1.3 Applicability of These Guidelines**

(Certain basic terms used throughout these guidelines are identified in bold and defined in this section.)

These guidelines apply to the use, without permission, of portions of lawfully acquired copyrighted works in educational multimedia projects which are

created by educators or students as part of a systematic learning activity by nonprofit educational institutions. **Educational multimedia projects** created under these guidelines incorporate students' or educators' original material, such as course notes or commentary, together with various copyrighted media formats including but not limited to, motion media, music, text material, graphics, illustrations, photographs and digital software which are combined into an integrated presentation. **Educational institutions** are defined as nonprofit organizations whose primary focus is supporting research and instructional activities of educators and students for noncommercial purposes.

For the purposes of the guidelines, **educators** include faculty, teachers, instructors, and others who engage in scholarly, research and instructional activities for educational institutions. The copyrighted works used under these guidelines are **lawfully acquired** if obtained by the institution or individual through lawful means such as purchase, gift or license agreement but not pirated copies. Educational multimedia projects which incorporate portions of copyrighted works under these guidelines may be used only for **educational purposes** in systematic learning activities including use in connection with non-commercial curriculum-based learning and teaching activities by educators to students enrolled in courses at nonprofit educational institutions or otherwise permitted under Section 3. While these guidelines refer to the creation and use of educational multimedia projects, readers are advised that in some instances other fair use guidelines such as those for off-air taping may be relevant.

## **2. PREPARATION OF EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS USING PORTIONS OF COPYRIGHTED WORKS**

These uses are subject to the Portion Limitations listed in Section 4. They should include proper attribution and citation as defined in Sections 6.2.

### **2.1 By students:**

Students may incorporate portions of lawfully acquired copyrighted works when producing their own educational multimedia projects for a specific course.

### **2.2 By Educators for Curriculum-Based Instruction:**

Educators may incorporate portions of lawfully acquired copyrighted works when producing their own educational multimedia programs for their own teaching tools in support of curriculum-based instructional activities at educational institutions.

## **3. PERMITTED USES OF EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA PROGRAMS CREATED UNDER THESE GUIDELINES**

Uses of educational multimedia projects created under these guidelines are subject to the Time, Portion, Copying and Distribution Limitations listed in Section 4.



### **3.1 Student Use:**

Students may perform and display their own educational multimedia projects created under Section 2 of these guidelines for educational uses in the course for which they were created and may use them in their own portfolios as examples of their academic work for later personal uses such as job and graduate school interviews

### **3.2 Educator Use for Curriculum-Based Instruction:**

Educators may perform and display their own educational multimedia projects created under Section 2 for curriculum-based instruction to students in the following situations:

**3.2.1** for face-to-face instruction,

**3.2.2** assigned to students for directed self-study,

**3.2.3** for remote instruction to students enrolled in curriculum-based courses and located at remote sites, provided over the educational institution's secure electronic network in real-time, or for after class review or directed self-study, provided there are technological limitations on access to the network and educational multimedia project (such as a password or PIN) and provided further that the technology prevents the making of copies of copyrighted material.

If the educational institution's network or technology used to access the educational multimedia project created under Section 2 of these guidelines cannot prevent duplication of copyrighted material, students or educators may use the multimedia educational projects over an otherwise secure network for a period of only 15 days after its initial real-time remote use in the course of instruction or 15 days after its assignment for directed self-study. After that period, one of the two use copies of the educational multimedia project may be placed on reserve in a learning resource center, library or similar facility for on-site use by students enrolled in the course. Students shall be advised that they are not permitted to make their own copies of the multimedia project.

### **3.3 Educator Use for Peer Conferences:**

Educators may perform or display their own multimedia projects created under Section 2 of these guidelines in presentations to their peers, for example, at workshops and conferences.

### **3.4 Educator Use for Professional Portfolio**

Educators may retain educational multimedia projects created under Section 2 of these guidelines in their personal portfolios for later personal uses such as tenure review or job interviews.

## **4. LIMITATIONS--TIME, PORTION, COPYING AND DISTRIBUTION**

The preparation of educational multimedia projects incorporating copyrighted works under Section 2, and the use of such projects under Section 3, are subject to the limitations noted below.

#### **4.1 Time Limitations**

Educators may use their educational multimedia projects created for educational purposes under Section 2 of these guidelines for teaching courses, for a period of up to two years after the first instructional use with a class. Use beyond that time period, even for educational purposes, requires permission for each copyrighted portion incorporated in the production. Students may use their educational multimedia projects as noted in Section 3.1.

#### **4.2 Portion Limitations**

Portion limitations mean the amount of a copyrighted work that can reasonably be used in educational multimedia projects under these guidelines regardless of the original medium from which the copyrighted works are taken. **In the aggregate** means the total amount of copyrighted material from a single copyrighted work that is permitted to be used in an educational multimedia project without permission under these guidelines. These limits apply cumulatively to each educator's or student's multimedia project(s) for the same academic semester, cycle or term. All students should be instructed about the reasons for copyright protection and the need to follow these guidelines. It is understood, however, that students in kindergarten through grade six may not be able to adhere rigidly to the portion limitations in this section in their independent development of educational multimedia projects. In any event, each such project retained under Sections 3.1 and 4.3 should comply with the portion limitations in this section.

##### **4.2.1 Motion Media**

Up to 10% or 3 minutes, whichever is less, in the aggregate of a copyrighted motion media work may be reproduced or otherwise incorporated as part of a multimedia project created under Section 2 of these guidelines.

##### **4.2.2 Text Material**

Up to 10% or 1000 words, whichever is less, in the aggregate of a copyrighted work consisting of text material may be reproduced or otherwise incorporated as part of a multimedia project created under Section 2 of these guidelines. An entire poem of less than 250 words may be used, but no more than three poems by one poet, or five poems by different poets from any anthology may be used. For poems of greater length, 250 words may be used but no more than three excerpts by a poet, or five excerpts by different poets from a single anthology may be used.

##### **4.2.3 Music, Lyrics, and Music Video**

Up to 10%, but in no event more than 30 seconds, of the music and lyrics from an individual musical work (or in the aggregate of extracts from an individual work), whether the musical work is embodied in copies, or audio or audiovisual works, may be reproduced or otherwise incorporated as a

part of a multimedia project created under Section 2. Any alterations to a musical work shall not change the basic melody or the fundamental character of the work.

#### **4.2.4 Illustrations and Photographs**

The reproduction or incorporation of photographs and illustrations is more difficult to define with regard to fair use because fair use usually precludes the use of an entire work. Under these guidelines a photograph or illustration may be used in its entirety but no more than 5 images by an artist or photographer may be reproduced or otherwise incorporated as part of an educational multimedia project created under Section 2. When using photographs and illustrations from a published collective work, not more than 10% or 15 images, whichever is less, may be reproduced or otherwise incorporated as part of an educational multimedia project created under Section 2.

#### **4.2.5 Numerical Data Sets**

Up to 10% or 2500 fields or cell entries, whichever is less, from a copyrighted database or data table may be reproduced or otherwise incorporated as part of a educational multimedia project created under Section 2 of these guidelines. A field entry is defined as a specific item of information, such as a name or Social Security number, in a record of a database file. A cell entry is defined as the intersection where a row and a column meet on a spreadsheet.

#### **4.3 Copying and Distribution Limitations**

Only a limited number of copies, including the original, may be made of an educator's educational multimedia project. For all of the uses permitted by Section 3, there may be no more than two use copies only one of which may be placed on reserve as described in Section 3.2.3.

An additional copy may be made for preservation purposes but may only be used or copied to replace a use copy that has been lost, stolen, or damaged. In the case of a jointly created educational multimedia project, each principal creator may retain one copy but only for the purposes described in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 for educators and Section 3.1 for students.

### **5. EXAMPLES OF WHEN PERMISSION IS REQUIRED**

#### **5.1 Using Multimedia Projects for Non-Educational or Commercial Purposes**

Educators and students must seek individual permissions (licenses) before using copyrighted works in educational multimedia projects for commercial reproduction and distribution.

## **5.2 Duplication of Multimedia Projects Beyond Limitations Listed in These Guidelines**

Even for educational uses, educators and students must seek individual permissions for all copyrighted works incorporated in their personally created educational multimedia projects before replicating or distributing beyond the limitations listed in Section 4.3.

## **5.3 Distribution of Multimedia Projects Beyond Limitations Listed in These Guidelines**

Educators and students may not use their personally created educational multimedia projects over electronic networks, except for uses as described in Section 3.2.3, without obtaining permissions for all copyrighted works incorporated in the program.

## **6. IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

### **6.1 Caution in Downloading Material from the Internet**

Educators and students are advised to exercise caution in using digital material downloaded from the Internet in producing their own educational multimedia projects, because there is a mix of works protected by copyright and works in the public domain on the network. Access to works on the Internet does not automatically mean that these can be reproduced and reused without permission or royalty payment and, furthermore, some copyrighted works may have been posted to the Internet without authorization of the copyright holder.

### **6.2 Attribution and Acknowledgement**

Educators and students are reminded to credit the sources and display the copyright notice © and copyright ownership information if this is shown in the original source, for all works incorporated as part of the educational multimedia projects prepared by educators and students, including those prepared under fair use. Crediting the source must adequately identify the source of the work, giving a full bibliographic description where available (including author, title, publisher, and place and date of publication). The copyright ownership information includes the copyright notice (©, year of first publication and name of the copyright holder).

The credit and copyright notice information may be combined and shown in a separate section of the educational multimedia project (e.g. credit section) except for images incorporated into the project for the uses described in Section 3.2.3. In such cases, the copyright notice and the name of the creator of the image must be incorporated into the image when, and to the extent, such information is reasonably available; credit and copyright notice information is considered "incorporated" if it is attached to the image file and appears on the screen when the image is viewed. In those cases when displaying source credits and copyright ownership information on the screen with the image would be mutually exclusive with an instructional objective

(e.g. during examinations in which the source credits and/or copyright information would be relevant to the examination questions), those images may be displayed without such information being simultaneously displayed on the screen. In such cases, this information should be linked to the image in a manner compatible with such instructional objectives.

### **6.3 Notice of Use Restrictions**

Educators and students are advised that they must include on the opening screen of their multimedia program and any accompanying print material a notice that certain materials are included under the fair use exemption of the U.S. Copyright Law and have been prepared according to the multimedia fair use guidelines and are restricted from further use.

### **6.4 Future Uses Beyond Fair Use**

Educators and students are advised to note that if there is a possibility that their own educational multimedia project incorporating copyrighted works under fair use could later result in broader dissemination, whether or not as commercial product, it is strongly recommended that they take steps to obtain permissions during the development process for all copyrighted portions rather than waiting until after completion of the project.

### **6.5 Integrity of Copyrighted Works: Alterations**

Educators and students may make alterations in the portions of the copyrighted works they incorporate as part of an educational multimedia project only if the alterations support specific instructional objectives. Educators and students are advised to note that alterations have been made.

### **6.6 Reproduction or Decompilation of Copyrighted Computer Programs**

Educators and students should be aware that reproduction or decompilation of copyrighted computer programs and portions thereof, for example the transfer of underlying code or control mechanisms, even for educational uses, are outside the scope of these guidelines.

### **6.7 Licenses and Contracts**

Educators and students should determine whether specific copyrighted works, or other data or information are subject to a license or contract. Fair use and these guidelines shall not preempt or supersede licenses and contractual obligations.

## **APPENDIX A:** (as of July 31, 1997)

### **1. ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE ENDORSED THESE GUIDELINES:**

Agency for Instructional Technology (AIT)

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

American Bar Association - Section on Intellectual Property

American Intellectual Property Law Association

American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA)  
 American Society of Media Photographers, Inc. (ASMP)  
 American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)  
 Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT)  
 Association for Information Media and Equipment (AIME)  
 Association of American Publishers (AAP)\*  
 Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)  
 Association of American University Presses, Inc. (AAUP)  
 Author Guild/Authors Registry  
 Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI)  
 Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC)  
 Creative Incentive Coalition (CIC)\*\*\*\*  
 DeKalb College/Clarkston, GA  
 Educational Technology Officers' Association of the State University  
 of New York (EdTOA/SUNY)  
 Educational Testing Service (ETS)  
 Iowa Association for Communications Technology (IACT)  
 Information Industry Association (IIA)\*\*  
 Instructional Telecommunications Council (ITC)  
 Maricopa Community Colleges/Phoenix  
 Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)  
 Music Publishers' Association of the United States (MPA)  
 National Association of Regional Media Centers (NARMC)  
 National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)  
 National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD)  
 National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)  
 National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST)  
 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)  
 Northern Illinois Learning Resources Consortium (NILRC)  
 Picture Agency Council of America  
 Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)  
 Software Publishers Association (SPA)\*\*\*  
 Special Libraries Association (SLA)  
 Tennessee Board of Regents Media Consortium  
**\*The Association of American Publishers (AAP) membership includes  
 over 300 publishers.**  
**\*\*The Information Industry Association (IIA) membership includes 550  
 companies involved in the creation, distribution and use of  
 information products, services and technologies.**  
**\*\*\*The Software Publishers Association (SPA) membership includes  
 1200 software publishers.**  
**\*\*\*\*The Creative Incentive Coalition membership includes the**

**following organizations:**

- Association of American Publishers
- Association of Independent Television Stations
- Association of Test Publishers
- Business Software Alliance
- General Instrument Corporation
- Information Industry Association
- Information Technology Industry Council
- Interactive Digital Software Association
- Magazine Publishers of America
- The McGraw-Hill Companies
- Microsoft Corporation
- Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.
- National Cable Television Association
- National Music Publisher's Association
- Newspaper Association of America
- Recording Industry Association of America
- Seagram/MCA, Inc.
- Software Publishers Association
- Time Warner, Inc.
- Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.
- West Publishing Company
- Viacom, Inc.

**2. INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES AND INSTITUTIONS ENDORSING THESE GUIDELINES:**

Houghton-Mifflin  
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.  
McGraw-Hill  
Time Warner, Inc.

**3. U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SUPPORTING THESE GUIDELINES:**

U.S. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)  
U.S. Copyright Office  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

**APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT: Being a participant does not necessarily mean that the organization has or will endorse these guidelines.**

Agency for Instructional Technology (AIT)  
American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)  
American Association of Higher Education (AAHE)  
American Library Association (ALA)

American Society of Journal Authors, Inc. (ASJA)  
American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP)  
Artists Rights Foundation  
Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)  
Association of American Publishers (AAP)  
--Harvard University Press  
--Houghton Mifflin  
--McGraw-Hill  
--Simon and Schuster  
--Worth Publishers  
Association of College Research Libraries (ACRL)  
Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT)  
Association for Information Media and Equipment (AIME)  
Association of Research Libraries (ARL)  
Authors Guild, Inc.  
Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI)  
Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC)  
Copyright Clearance Center (CCC)  
Creative Incentive Coalition (CIC)  
Directors Guild of America (DGA)  
European American Music Distributors Corp.  
Educational institution represented  
--American University  
--Carnegie Mellon University  
--City College/City University of New York  
--Kent State University  
--Maricopa Community Colleges/Phoenix  
--Penn State University  
--University of Delaware  
Information Industry Association (IIA)  
Instructional Telecommunications Council (ITC)  
International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers  
Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)  
Music Publishers Association (MPA)  
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges  
(NASULGC)  
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)  
National Educational Association (NEA)  
National Music Publishers Association (NMPA)  
National School Boards Association (NSBA)  
National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)  
National Video Resources (NVR)



Public Broadcasting System (PBS)  
Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)  
Software Publishers Association (SPA)  
Time-Warner, Inc.  
U.S. Copyright Office  
U.S. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)  
Viacom, Inc.  
Prepared by the Educational Multimedia Fair Use Guidelines Development  
Committee, July 17, 1996

## NOTES

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### NOTES ON INTRODUCTION

- <sup>1</sup> Adrienne Rich., *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton 1986), 225-226.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.
- <sup>3</sup> Andrea O'Reilly and Sharon Abbey, Eds. *Mothers and Daughters: Connection, Empowerment, Transformation* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 1.
- <sup>4</sup> Suzanna Danuta Walters, *Lives Together, Worlds Apart: Mothers and Daughters in Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 4. Walters points out that the mother/daughter nexus never quite achieves the status of the Oedipal spectacles and deMille extravaganzas of mother/son passion and torment.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Walters convincingly argues that to examine all the historical changes would entail a number of social phenomena, including the new consumerism of the 1920s, the popularization of Freudian psychology, and the growth of industrial capitalism, just to name a few. In looking at mother/daughter representations, I consider a number of these historical shifts as they pertain to the production of the narrative.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.
- <sup>7</sup> Paul Marris and Sue Thornham, Eds. *Media Studies: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 781.
- <sup>8</sup> Walters, 4.
- <sup>9</sup> Marris and Thornham, 27
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.
- <sup>11</sup> O'Reilly and Abbey, 10.
- <sup>12</sup> Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 210-212.
- <sup>13</sup> O'Reilly and Abbey, 10.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.
- <sup>15</sup> Bonnie Dow, *Prime Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement Since 1970* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 207.
- <sup>16</sup> O'Reilly and Abbey, 3.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>18</sup> Walters, 145.

### NOTES ON CHAPTER 1

- <sup>19</sup> Walters, 24.
- <sup>20</sup> Mary Ann Doane, "The Moving Image: Pathos and the Maternal," in Christine Gledhill, Ed., *Imitations of Life: A Reader on Film & Television Melodrama* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press) 285.
- <sup>21</sup> Pam Cook, "Melodrama and the Women's Picture," in Gledhill, *Imitations of Life*, 252. Cook summarizes Laura Mulvey's discussion of Douglas Sirk's melodramas, and writes that Mulvey finds the roots of melodrama in Greek drama, and distinguishes two traditions: "the tragic melodrama" in which the male point-of-view predominates, and "women's melodrama," in which events are seen from the female protagonists' point-of-view.
- <sup>22</sup> Doane, 285.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

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- 24 Walters, 40.
- 25 Ibid., 61.
- 26 Ibid., 24.
- 27 Ibid., 238n.
- 28 Ibid., 27.
- 29 Ibid., 27.
- 30 Ibid., 28.
- 31 E. Ann Kaplan, "Mothering, Feminism and Representation: The Maternal Melodrama and the Women's Film 1910-1940," in Christine Gledhill, Ed., *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Women's Film* (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 133.
- 32 Walters, 29.
- 33 Linda Williams, "Something Else Besides a Mother: *Stella Dallas* and the Maternal Melodrama," in Gledhill, *Imitations of Life*, 317. Williams goes into great detail concerning Stella's "excessive presence of body and dress." She writes, "the more ruffles, feathers, furs, and clanking jewelry that Stella dons, the more she emphasizes her pathetic inadequacy."
- 34 Ibid., 322. Much has been written about Stella's "style" - how fetishization functions and the "excess" of Stella's body and dress. Williams, drawing on Mary Ann Doane's essay, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," *Screen* 23, no.34 (Sept. - Oct. 1982) writes that Doane argues "one way out of the dilemma of female over-identification with the image on the screen is for this image to act out a masquerade of femininity that manufactures a distance between spectator and image to 'generate a problematic within which the image is manipulable, producible, and readable by women.'" Additionally, Walters, 29, recognizes that Stella's "dress reveals her to the rich patrons as 'other,' as lower class."
- 35 Kaplan, "Mothering, Feminism and Representation: The Maternal Melodrama and the Women's Film 1910-1940," 133.
- 36 Williams, 317. What is later discovered is that Laura "belongs" to this upper class society, while Stella continues to aspire.
- 37 Barbara Creed, "Kristeva, Femininity, Abjection," in Ken Gelder, Ed., *The Horror Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), 67.
- 38 Walters, 27.
- 39 Ibid., 28.
- 40 E. Ann Kaplan, *Motherhood and Representation: The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama* (London: Routledge 1992), 170.
- 41 Williams, 319.
- 42 Ibid., 325.
- 43 Ibid., 325.
- 44 Ibid., 325.
- 45 Ibid., 324.
- 46 Walters, 50.
- 47 Ibid., 40. "Omnipotent moms," Walters points out, is reference to Wylie's definition of "overprotective/domineering/smothering moms creating cowardly men that would be unable to fight bravely for their nation."
- 48 Kaplan, *Motherhood and Representation*, 116. Kaplan elaborates on Wylie's virulent attacks on "Mom" by examining how he uses animal and machine imagery to describe Mom's destructive career. This is followed by "his hysterical comparison of Mom to Hitler."
- 49 Walters, 40.

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- 50 Nancy A. Walker, *Shaping Our Mothers' World: American Women's Magazines* (Jackson: University  
Press of Mississippi, 2000), 171-172.
- 51 Walters, 81.
- 52 Ibid., 25.
- 53 Kaplan, *Motherhood and Representation*, 113.
- 54 Maria La Place, "Producing and Consuming the Woman's Film: Discursive Struggle in *Now, Voyager*,"  
in Gledhill, *Home Is Where the Heart Is*, 156.
- 55 Jeanine Basinger, *A Woman's View: How Hollywood Spoke to Women 1930-1960*, (Hanover:  
Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 444.
- 56 Walters, 232.
- 57 LaPlace, 161.
- 58 Ibid., 156
- 59 Walters, 48.
- 60 Ibid., 49.
- 61 Ibid., 48.
- 62 Basinger, 175.
- 63 Ibid., 175.
- 64 Walters, 50.
- 65 Kaplan, "Mothering, Feminism and Representation: The Maternal Melodrama and the Women's Film  
1901-1940," 134.
- 66 Walters 51. Walters writes that the head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover "gravely" informed the public  
that mothers were the "only hope in the battle against the decline of wholesome youth, a problem  
exacerbated by the absence of fathers during the war." From J. Edgar Hoover, "Mothers - Our Only  
Hope," *Woman's Home Companion*, January 1944, 20,21.
- 67 Paula J. Caplan, *The New Don't Blame Mother: Mending the Mother-Daughter Relationship*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
(New York: Routledge, 2000), 127.
- 68 Walters, 54.
- 69 Ibid., 65.
- 70 Ibid., 63.
- 71 Ibid., 65.
- 72 Ibid., 67, 68.
- 73 O'Reilly and Abbey, 5.
- 74 Ibid., 5.
- 75 Walters, 67. Walters identifies the daughters' popularity in *Stella Dallas*, *Mildred Pierce* and *Now,  
Voyager* as a sign of their "difference" from their mothers. "This issue of popularity, and the mother's  
ability to access it for the daughter or deprive her of it, not only persists in the film images of the period,  
but crops up continually in the women's magazines of the late thirties and forties.
- 76 Emanuel Levy, *Small-Town America in Film: The Decline and the Fall of Community* (New York:  
Continuum Publishing Company, 1991), 123.
- 77 Walters, 95, 97.
- 78 Walters, 99 and Jackie Byars, *All That Hollywood Allows: Rereading Gender in 1950s Melodrama*  
(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1991), 156.
- 79 Walters, 99.
- 80 Ibid., 99.
- 81 Basinger, 206.
- 82 Ibid., 205.
- 83 Ibid., 204.

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- <sup>84</sup> Ibid., 206.
- <sup>85</sup> Byars, 249.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid., 249.
- <sup>87</sup> Walters, 89.
- <sup>88</sup> Byars, 249. The daughters are also represented differently in the two versions. Sara Jane is much more sexual, pursuing romantic relationships (one with a white man), and takes a job as a “scantly clad singer or chorus girl.” Peola, on the other hand, takes a much more “respectable” job as a cashier and has no romantic relationships. Byars writes that “sexuality was not an issue for Peola, and neither was the ambition that characterizes Sara Jane’s rejection of blackness.”
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., 249.
- <sup>90</sup> Walters, 89.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid., 86.
- <sup>92</sup> Byars, 245, 247.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid., 240, 248.
- <sup>94</sup> Walters, 89.
- <sup>95</sup> Byars, 253.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., 258.
- <sup>97</sup> Walters, 39, 40.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., 81.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid., 97-98.
- <sup>100</sup> Byars, 149.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid., 20.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid., 158.
- <sup>103</sup> Walters, 18.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid., 70.
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid., 71.
- <sup>106</sup> Walker, 214-215.
- <sup>107</sup> Walters, 73.
- <sup>108</sup> Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1995), 45.
- <sup>109</sup> Walters, 77.
- <sup>110</sup> Douglas, 51.
- <sup>111</sup> Walters, 105.
- <sup>112</sup> Douglas, 202. Douglas notes that “Maude” was an instant hit, and became the fourth highest rated show of the 1972-73 season, broadcast on the CBS network.
- <sup>113</sup> Walters, 128.
- <sup>114</sup> Douglas, 202.
- <sup>115</sup> Ibid., 203.
- <sup>116</sup> Dow, 61.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid., 61.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid., 61.
- <sup>119</sup> Walters, 108.
- <sup>120</sup> Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*, 3rd. ed (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 323.
- <sup>121</sup> Patricia Erens, “Women’s Documentary Filmmaking: The Personal Is Political,” in Alan Rosenthal, Ed. *New Challenges for Documentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 554.
- <sup>122</sup> Jan Rosenberg, *Women’s Reflections: The Feminist Film Movement* (Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press,

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- 1983), 19.
- 123 Erens, 555.
- 124 Ibid., 555.
- 125 Rosenberg, 47.
- 126 Alan Rosenthal, *The Documentary Conscience* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980), 416.
- 127 Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 64.
- 128 Rosenberg, 59.
- 129 Rosenthal, 423.
- 130 Ibid., 424.
- 131 Ibid., 424.
- 132 Rosenberg, 63.
- 133 Julia Lesage, "Feminist Documentary: Aesthetics and Politics," in Thomas Waugh, Ed. *Show Us Life: Toward a History of the Committed Documentary*, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984), 235.
- 134 Rosenberg, 64.
- 135 Jane Feuer, "Daughter Rite: Living with Our Pain and Love," in Charlotte Brunson, Ed. *Films for Women* (London: British Film Institute Publishing, 1986), 27-28.
- 136 Ibid., 28.
- 137 Marjorie Rosen, "Grey Gardens: A Documentary about Dependency," *Ms*, January 1976, 28.
- 138 Lucy Fischer, *Cinematernity: Film, Motherhood, Genre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 181-182.
- 139 Rosen, 30.
- 140 Fischer, 184.
- 141 Nichols, 60.
- 142 Michael Rabiger, *Directing the Documentary*, 2nd ed. (Newton: Focal Press, 1992), 333, and Jay Ruby, "The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film," in Alan Rosenthal, Ed., *New Challenges for the Documentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 165.
- 143 Fischer, 182.
- 144 Ruby, 73.
- 145 Nichols, 6.
- 146 Rosenthal, 377.
- 147 Fischer, 186-187.
- 148 Ibid., 188.
- 149 Ibid., 184.
- 150 Linda Williams and B. Ruby Rich, "The Right of Re-Vision: Michelle Citron's *Daughter Rite*," *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1981, 19.
- 151 Ibid., 19.
- 152 Fischer, 189.
- 153 Feuer, 25.
- 154 Ibid., 25.
- 155 Williams, Rich, 20.
- 156 Walters, 167.
- 157 E. Ann Kaplan, *Women & Film* (New York: Methuen & Co., 1983), 172.
- 158 Ibid., 184, 188.
- 159 Ibid., 185.
- 160 O'Reilly, Abbey, 4.

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- <sup>161</sup> Ibid., 5.  
<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 5.  
<sup>163</sup> Caplan, xxv.  
<sup>164</sup> Christina Looper Baker and Christina Baker Kline, *The Conversation Begins: Mothers and Daughters Talk about Living Feminism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1996), xviii.

#### NOTES ON CHAPTER 2

- <sup>165</sup> Robin Wood, "Images and Women," in Patricia Erens, Ed., *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 339.  
<sup>166</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 113. Additionally, Faludi points out that the rising cost of Hollywood filmmaking, corporate takeovers, the threat of cable-television, and increase of home-VCRs fostered Hollywood's conformism and tentativeness to take risks.  
<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 113.  
<sup>168</sup> Walters, 193.  
<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 247n.  
<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 193.  
<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 200.  
<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 200.  
<sup>173</sup> Faludi, 115, 129.  
<sup>174</sup> Walters, 220, 223.  
<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 10.  
<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 211.  
<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 203.  
<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 203.  
<sup>179</sup> "The Ferber Method Demystified," Online. Internet. June, 2002. Available: [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com), and "Sleep Experts," Online. Internet. June, 2002. Available: [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com). Both authors/doctors have best selling books. Dr. Richard Ferber's book is entitled *Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems* (reprint ed. 1986). Dr. William Sears book is entitled *Nighttime Parenting* (revised ed. 1999). Both doctors have the distinction as "leading - and controversial - pediatric sleep experts."  
<sup>180</sup> Walters, 193.  
<sup>181</sup> Linda Williams and B. Ruby Rich, "The Right of Re-Vision: Michelle Citron's *Daughter Rite*," *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1981, 17.  
<sup>182</sup> Walters, 21.  
<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 194.  
<sup>184</sup> Byars, 153.  
<sup>185</sup> Nancy J. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 136.  
<sup>186</sup> Walters, 10.  
<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 163.  
<sup>188</sup> Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 173.  
<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 181.  
<sup>190</sup> Walters, 219.  
<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 219.

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- <sup>192</sup> Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, *ManifestA: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 214.
- <sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.
- <sup>194</sup> Rich, 236.
- <sup>195</sup> Walters, 204.
- <sup>196</sup> Rabiger, 337, 342.
- <sup>197</sup> Diane Negra, Note to author. Negra points out that Susan Sarandon is making a specialty of roles that involve some form of “eccentric mothering” as evidenced by her recent film, *The Banger Sisters* (2002).
- <sup>198</sup> Walters, 220.
- <sup>199</sup> Diane Negra, Note to author. An exception to this might be *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1945) when the family rebels against the father’s move to another city.
- <sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-193.
- <sup>201</sup> Byars, 8 and Jane M. Shattuc, *The Talking Cure: TV Talk Shows and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 45.
- <sup>202</sup> Byars, 11-13.
- <sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.
- <sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.
- <sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 17.
- <sup>206</sup> Jane Feuer, “Genre Study and Television,” *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism* in Robert Allen, Ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 158.
- <sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.
- <sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.
- <sup>209</sup> Walters, 18.
- <sup>210</sup> Dow, xv.
- <sup>211</sup> Feuer, 154.
- <sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 152-153.
- <sup>213</sup> Dow, 24.
- <sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.
- <sup>215</sup> Allison Hope Weiner, “Golden Girls,” in *Entertainment Weekly*, March 22, 2002, 66.
- <sup>216</sup> Bruce Fretts, “Gilmore Girls,” in *Entertainment Weekly*. Online. Internet. 9 Sept. 2002. Available: [www.ew.com/ew/features/00929/falltv/gilmore.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/features/00929/falltv/gilmore.html)
- <sup>217</sup> Verne Gay, “Family Friendly?” in *MediaWeek*. 26 February, 2002, 34.
- <sup>218</sup> Weiner, 66.
- <sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.
- <sup>220</sup> Dow, 153.
- <sup>221</sup> Weiner, 66.
- <sup>222</sup> Walters, 191.
- <sup>223</sup> Megan Brady, “mom blunders” *Seventeen*, May 2002, 106.
- <sup>224</sup> Levy, 264.
- <sup>225</sup> Byars, 11.
- <sup>226</sup> Shattuc, 81.
- <sup>227</sup> Walters, 155.
- <sup>228</sup> Dow, 52.
- <sup>229</sup> Diane Negra, in her article ““Quality Postfeminism?’ Sex and the Single Girl on HBO,” (pending publication, 2003. 2) writes that although this “working vs. staying home” debate has been heightened



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- in the neoconservative era of the 1990s/early 2000s, “the economic feasibility of such a choice for most women has been greatly reduced.”
- 230 Feuer, 153.
- 231 Christina Lane. *Feminist Hollywood: From Born in Flames to Point Break* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 44.
- 232 Ibid., 43. In her chapter “Auteurism and Authorship” Lane cites Janet Staiger’s work in *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) and summarizes how auteurism has been historicized.
- 233 “The Gift of Gab,” in *Los Angeles Times*. Online. Internet. 9 April, 2001. Available: [www.gilmoregirls.org/news/91.html](http://www.gilmoregirls.org/news/91.html),
- 234 Ibid., 1.
- 235 Ibid., 2
- 236 Ibid., 2.
- 237 Ibid., 2.
- 238 Ibid., 2.
- 239 Feuer, 152.
- 240 “A Day on the Set of Gilmore Girls,” in *Sacramento Bee*. Online. Internet. 29, March, 2001. Available: [www.gilmoregirls.org/news/88.html](http://www.gilmoregirls.org/news/88.html), 4.
- 241 Ibid., 5.
- 242 Laurel Krahn. “Featured Pick: ‘Gilmore Girls,’” in *tv picks.net*. Online. Internet. 23 April, 2001. Available: [www.gilmoregirls.org/news/75.html](http://www.gilmoregirls.org/news/75.html), 1.
- 243 Laura Fries, “Gilmore Girls.” *Variety*. Online. Internet. 18, March, 2001. Available [http://www.findarticles.com/m1212/7\\_380/66035748/pl/article.jhtml](http://www.findarticles.com/m1212/7_380/66035748/pl/article.jhtml).
- 244 David Morley, “Cultural Transformations: The Politics of Resistance” in *Media Studies: A Reader*, Eds. Paul Marris and Sue Thornham (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 475.
- 245 Many thanks to Diane Negra for providing material on this subject.
- 246 Susannah Meadows, “Meet the Gamma Girls,” in *Newsweek*, June 3, 2002, 46, 47.
- 247 Jean Nash Johnson, “Above the Fray,” in *The Dallas Morning News*, June 12, 2002, 1C.
- 248 Meadows, 44.
- 249 Ibid., 47.
- 250 Other recent books and media outlets include: *Woman’s Inhumanity to Woman* by Phyllis Chesler, *Fast Girls: Teen age Tribes and the Myth of the Slut* by Emily White and *The Secret Lives of Girls* by Sharon Lamb, *The Washington Post* “Teenage Crisis of the Moment,” “Oprah” and several morning shows.
- 251 Barbara Kantrowitz, “Selling Advice - As Well as Anxiety,” in *Newsweek*, June 3, 2002, 50.
- 252 Ashley Smith, “Girl Power: Feminism, Girlculture and the Popular Media” (M.S. Thesis, University of North Texas, 1999), 12, 13.
- 253 Byars, 25.
- 254 Feuer, 154.
- 255 “A Day,” and “Weekly Rating.” Online. Internet. 27, April, 2001. Available: [www.gilmoregirls.org/ratings.html](http://www.gilmoregirls.org/ratings.html), 2.
- 256 Rick Kushman, “A day on the set of ‘Gilmore Girls’ confirms the quirky charm of the WB’s hottest show.” *Sacramento Bee*, Online. Internet. 11, April, 2001. Available: [www.gilmoregirls.net/media/sb032901.html](http://www.gilmoregirls.net/media/sb032901.html).
- 257 Fan Forum-Roswell 2, “Why the ‘Gilmore Girls’ news is good for ‘Rosewell’.” Online. Internet. 11, April, 2001. Available: <http://bbs2.fanforum.com/Forum12HTML/002385-3html>.

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- 258 “Gilmore Girls Excels for the WB.” Online. Internet. 23, April, 2001. Available:  
www.gilmoregirls.org/news/87.html.
- 259 Jim Rutenberg, “TV Notes: For Thursdays, Heavy Artillery.” *New York Times*, Online. Internet.  
Available: www.gilmore-girls.net/media.ny013103.html.
- 260 Donna DellaPolla, “Girls Power.” *TV Guide*. Online. Internet. 15, December, 2002. Available:  
http://www.tvguide.com/tv/020212.asp.
- 261 Dow, xx. Dow emphasizes Kaplan’s analysis in her article “Feminist Criticism and Television,” in  
R. Allen, ed. *Channels of Discourse* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 211-253.
- 262 Ibid., xxii.
- 263 BBC NEWS/In Depth/Oscars 2002/Halle Berry’s acceptance speech. Online. Internet. 25, March, 2002.  
Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\_dept/entertainment/2002/oscars\_2002/1892608.stm
- 264 Dow., xix.

### NOTES ON CHAPTER 3

- 265 John Corner, *The Art of Record: A Critical Introduction to Documentary* (Manchester: Manchester  
University Press, 1996), 10.
- 266 Paula Rabinowitz, *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (London: Verso, 1994),  
182.
- 267 The Association for Research on Mothering (ARM) was officially launched in September 1997; 150  
women from Canada, the United States, and Europe participated in the first international conference on  
mothering and motherhood coordinated by Andrea O’Reilly and sponsored by the Centre for Feminist  
Research (CFR) at York University, Toronto, Canada that focused on “Mothers and Daughters:  
Moving into the Next Millennium.”
- 268 Alan Rosenthal, *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
(Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern University Press, 1996), 256.
- 269 Maggie Humm, *Feminism and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 13.
- 270 Ibid., 13.
- 271 Consortium of College and University Media Centers. “Fair Use Guidelines for Educational  
Multimedia.” Online. Internet. 11 Dec. 2001. Available:  
http://www.libraries.psu.edu/mtss/fairuse/guidelinedoc.html.
- 272 Rabinowitz, 26.
- 273 Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000),  
157.
- 274 Bruzzi states that the new performative documentaries “herald a different notion of documentary ‘truth’  
that acknowledges the construction and artificiality of even the nonfiction film.”
- 275 Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politic of Peace* (New York: Ballantine, 1989), 40. Also  
used in the introduction of *Mothers and Daughters: Connection, Empowerment & Transformation*,  
eds. Andrea O’Reilly and Sharon Abbey (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 4-5.
- 276 Walters, 4.
- 277 Nichols, 65.
- 278 Ibid., 65.
- 279 Ibid., 67.
- 280 Rosenthal, *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos*, 287.
- 281 Nichols, 38. Direct cinema began in the U.S. in the 1960s with documentary filmmakers Frederick  
Wiseman, Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker and Albert and David Maysles. This  
documentary approach is sometimes referred to as “observational,” waiting for an event to unfold

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without any intervention from the filmmaker. Nichols (as well as other documentary theorists) contend that cinema verite, originating with Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin in France in the 1960s, takes on an “interventionist” position, whereby the filmmaker stimulates the subjects to perform in certain ways.

282 Ibid., 38.  
283 Ibid., 38.  
284 Ibid., 38, 43, 44.  
285 Lllisa Barbash and Lucien Taylor, *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 31.  
286 Rabinowitz, 136.  
287 Melinda Levin, Note to author. MTV’s reality show, “The Osbournes,” involves a multitude of “set-up” situations which does not make it as purely “observational” as the other two examples.  
288 E. Ann Kaplan, “Theory and Practice of the Realist Documentary Form in *Harlan County, U.S.A.*,” in Thomas Waugh, Ed., *Show Us Life: Toward a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary*, (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1984), 212.  
289 Rabinowitz, 21.  
290 Lesage, 231.  
291 Ibid., 235. Other notable portrait film/biographies would include: *Woo Who May Wilson* (1969), a biographical documentary by Amalie Rothschild about an older woman painter, *Yudie* (1974) a portrait film by Mirra Bank, and *Mary Cassatt* (1975) by Perry Miller Adato, examining the life and work of the Impressionist painter.  
292 Consortium of College and University Media Centers, 7.  
293 “Telling Pictures: *The Celluloid Closet*.” Online. Internet. 15 Feb. 2003. Available: [http://www.tellingpicutres.com/films/cc/cc\\_hist.html](http://www.tellingpicutres.com/films/cc/cc_hist.html).  
294 Jocalyn P. Clark and Camillia G. Clark, “Studying and Sharing: Mother and Daughter Learn Academia,” in *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* “Mothering and Motherhood” (Toronto: York University, Spring/Summer, Vol. 1 No. 1, 1999), 169.  
295 Ken Dancyger, *The Technique of Film and Video Editing: Theory and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Focal Press, 1997), 184.

#### NOTES ON CONCLUSION

296 Clark and Clark, 171.  
297 Walters, 8.  
298 Ibid., 234-235.  
299 Baumgardner and Richards, 211.  
300 Rich, 13.  
301 Baumgardner and Richards, 217.  
302 Rich, 255.

## SELECTED FILM CHRONOLOGY

*Imitation of Life*, 1934, directed by John Stahl (Universal)

*Stella Dallas*, 1937, directed by King Vidor (Samuel Goldwyn)

*Now, Voyager*, 1942, directed by Irving Rapper (Warner Brothers)

*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, 1943, directed by Elia Kazan (Twentieth Century Fox)

*Mildred Pierce*, 1945, directed by Michael Curtiz (Warner Brothers)

*Picnic*, 1955, directed by Joshua Logan (Columbia Pictures)

*All That Heaven Allows*, 1956 directed by Douglas Sirk (Universal-International)

*Peyton Place*, 1957, directed by Mark Robson (Twentieth Century Fox)

*Imitation of Life*, 1959, directed by Douglas Sirk (Universal-International)

*Psycho*, 1960, directed by Alfred Hitchcock (Paramount)

*Doctor Zhivago*, 1965, directed by David Lean (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

*Rosemary's Baby*, 1968, directed by Roman Polanski (Paramount)

*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, 1969, directed by George Roy Hill

(Twentieth Century Fox)

*Five Easy Pieces*, 1970, directed by Bob Rafelson (BBS, Columbia)

*Easy Rider*, 1969, directed by Dennis Hopper (Columbia, Pando Productions, Raybert  
Productions)

*Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, 1974, directed by Martin Scorsese (Warner Studios)

*Carrie*, 1976, directed by Brian DePalma (United Artists)

*An Unmarried Woman*, 1978, directed by Paul Mazursky (Twentieth Century Fox)

*Mommie Dearest*, 1981, directed by Frank Perry (Paramount)

*Terms of Endearment*, 1983, directed by James Brooks (Paramount Pictures)

*Mermaids*, 1990 directed by Richard Benjamin (Orion Pictures)

*Postcards from the Edge*, 1990, directed by Mike Nichols (Columbia Pictures)

*One True Thing*, 1998, directed by Carl Franklin (Universal Studios)

*Anywhere But Here*, 1999, directed by Wayne Wang (Twentieth Century Fox)

*Tumbleweeds*, 1999, directed by Gavin O'Connor (Fine Line Features)

*Divine Sisters of the Ya Ya Sisterhood*, 2002, directed by Callie Khouri (Warner  
Brothers)

## SELECTED DOCUMENTARY CHRONOLOGY

*Happy Mother's Day*, 1963, directed by Richard Leacock (Leacock/Pennebaker, Inc.)

*Portrait of Jason*, 1967, directed by Shirley Clark (Film-Makers' Cooperative)

*Salesman*, 1969, directed by Albert Maysles, David Maysles and Muffie Meyer,  
(Maysles Films)

*Gimme Shelter*, 1970, directed by Albert Maysles, David Maysles and Charlotte Mitchell  
Zwerin (Cinema 5, Maysles Films)

*Joyce at 34*, 1972, directed by Joyce Chopra and Claudia Weill

*Nana, Mom and Me*, 1974, directed by Amalie Rothschild (New Day Films)

*Grey Gardens*, 1976, directed by Albert Maysles and David Maysles;co-directors, Ellen  
Hovde and Muffie Meyer (Maysles Films, Portrait Films)

*Daughter Rite*, 1978, directed by Michelle Citron (Women Make Movies)

*Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter*, 1994, directed by Deborah Hoffman,  
(Women Make Movies)

*The Celluloid Closet*, 1981, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman,  
(Brillstein-Grey Entertainment, Channel 4, HBO, Reflective Image,  
Telling Pictures, ZDF)

*Sherman's March*, 1986, directed by Ross McElwee (First Run Features)

## SELECTED TELEVISION CHRONOLOGY

“Father Knows Best,” 1954-1962 (CBS, 1954-1955, NBC, 1955-1958, CBS, 1958-1962)

“Lassie,” 1954-1964 (CBS)

“Leave It To Beaver,” 1957-1963 (CBS, 1957-1958, ABC, 1958-1963)

“Walt Disney Presents,” 1958-1961 (ABC) and “Walt Disney’s Wonderful World of Color,” 1961-1969 (NBC)

“The Donna Reed Show,” 1958-1966 (ABC)

The Dick Van Dyke Show, 1961-1966 (CBS)

“The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” 1970-1977 (CBS)

“All in the Family,” 1971-1983 (CBS)

“Maude,” 1972-1974 (CBS)

“An American Family,” 1973 (PBS)

“Rhoda,” 1974-1978 (CBS)

“Happy Days,” 1974-1984 (ABC)

“One Day at a Time,” 1975-1980 (CBS)

“Laverne and Shirley,” 1976-1983 (ABC)

“Three’s Company,” 1977-1984 (ABC)

“Lou Grant,” 1977-1982 (CBS)

“Taxi,” 1978-1983 (ABC)

“Designing Women,” 1986-1993 (CBS)  
“Murphy Brown,” 1988-1992 (CBS)  
“Roseanne,” 1988-1997 (ABC)  
“Friends,” 1994 – (NBC)  
“7<sup>th</sup> Heaven,” 1996 – (WB)  
“Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” 1997-2001 (WB) 2001 - (UPN)  
“Dawson’s Creek,” 1997 – (WB)  
“Felicity,” 1998 – 2002 (WB)  
“Charmed,” 1998 - (WB)  
“Popular,” 1999 – 2000 (WB)  
“Gilmore Girls,” 2000 – (WB)  
“Survivor II,” 2001 (CBS)  
“Alias,” 2001 - (ABC)  
“The Osbournes,” 2002 - (MTV)



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