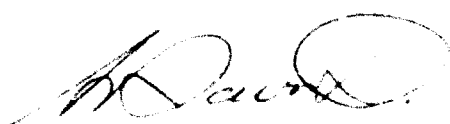


WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS AND MARITAL STRESS

M.J. Danziger

x . . .

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that I
have not submitted it for a Masters Degree to any other University.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M.J. Danziger', is written in dark ink.

M.J. DANZIGER

January, 1985

ABSTRACT

The social sanctification of marriage and its cherished ideals, stand in sharp contrast to Bernard's (1972; 1982) view that marriage benefits men more than women and the research findings reported by Safilios-Rothschild (1981) which indicate that the friendships between women are the most intimate relationships and, as such, sustain their marital relationships. Shostrom's (1966) findings that successfully married couples can be differentiated from troubled couples on the basis of the "friendship" between spouses, rather than on romantic, sexual and other aspects of love, challenges the popular notion that sex represents the apex of intimacy. The paucity of studies which 'dare' to compare the intimacy of marriage (and its benefits) with that of friendship attests to the cultural ideal of the 'private', self-sufficient family which specializes in the emotional sustenance of its members.

The basic assumption underlying this study is that the level of "intimacy" in wives' same-sex 'best' friendships is higher than that in their marital relationships and that in their husbands' same-sex 'best' friendships (in that order) and highest where the marriage is 'low-caring' since, in this situation, the wife is more in need of support from her friend.

Ten 'high-caring' couples and their twenty same-sex 'best' friends and ten 'low-caring' couples and their twenty same-sex 'best' friends were differentiated on the basis of the spouses' respective high and low scores on the Friendship scale of Shostrom's (1966) Caring Relationship Inventory (CRI). The level of "intimacy", that is, the mean Self-

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Disclosure and Perceptual Understanding scores (as measured on Jourard and Lasakow's (1958) Self-Disclosure Questionnaire and Laing et al's (1966) IPM or Interpersonal Perception Method respectively) in the wife-wife's friend, husband-wife, and husband-husband's friend dyads of the 'high- and 'low-caring' groups were compared. The 'conservative' or 'liberal' attitude toward women of each subject, as measured on Spence et al's (1973) short version of the AWS, were assessed and hypothesized to covary with each of the dependent "intimacy" variables. Separate analyses of variance and covariance were performed to ascertain the independent and interactive effects of kind of marriage (i.e., 'high-' or 'low-caring'), dyadic class (i.e., wife-friend, husband-wife and husband-friend) and attitude toward women (i.e., 'liberal' or 'conservative') on the variability of S-D and P.U. scores. Duncan's Multiple Range Test ($\alpha = 0.05$) was used to precisely pinpoint the significant main effects.

Although the findings indicate that husbands and wives disclose significantly more to each other than to their same-sex 'best' friends, and although the 'low-caring' wife disclosed significantly more to her friend than the 'high-caring' wife, the overall inverse correlation between the "intimacy" variables indicated that the more persons, and specifically spouses, disclose to each other, the less they feel correctly understood, and vice-versa. If persons disclose to each other in order to feel understood and to affirm their self-worth or self-acceptance, the findings on the IPM and CRI indicate that spouses are more successful when relating to their friends than to their marital partners. The 'high-caring' husband remains an enigma since he was found to feel better understood by his friend than by his spouse but he derived a greater sense of self-worth in his marital relationship. Both husbands' and wives' same-sex 'best' friendships could be seen to be less exploitive than their marriages.

The findings pertaining to the subjects' attitudes toward women suggest that the quality of marriage (i.e., 'high-' or 'low-caring') hinges on the husband's attitude, when this is 'conservative' the probability that the marriage will be 'low-caring' is high. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the profeminist wife in the 'low-caring' marriage, the profeminist 'high-caring' wife and her husband (in that order) may feel less constrained to fulfill gender-role expectations in their relationships than the 'conservative', 'high-caring' wife and 'conservative', 'low-caring' husband. The 'conservative' husband and 'liberal' wife may be more of a mismatch than the 'liberal' husband and 'conservative' wife.

Despite certain contradictions, clear impressions emerge from the study which challenge the socially valued ideals pertaining to marriage. The findings indicate that the same-sex extramarital friendships of both husbands and wives constitute important, supportive adjuncts to their marriages. Researchers who aim to investigate this complex, if not controversial area, need to recognize, and, where possible, control for the differential, distorting effects of the response sets, "social desirability" and "assumed similarity", on self-report scores. Further research into the expression and role of subjects' dependency needs (and the interrelationship between these and their attitudes toward women) is suggested, since dependency is a central issue in all relationships (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983) and, as such, may have far reaching effects on the manner in which men and women are motivated toward and relate in friendship and marriage.

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CHAPTER 1

1 INTRODUCTION

The present study explores the relationship between friendship and marriage, and more specifically, how the friendships between women could help to sustain their marital relationships.

At present, there are some indications that close intimate friendships between women are the most open, the most comfortable, the most supportive, the most reciprocal, the most "mature", intimate relationships which in turn sustain women's relationships with men as friends, colleagues, lovers and husbands. There are, furthermore, research indications that men's friendships with women may serve for them (but not for the women involved) the same central, crucial, supportive role for all their relationships with men and women. Thus women still play a supportive, expressive role for men without reciprocation but at least women's new awareness has opened up the road for intimate, reciprocal relationships among women (Safilios-Rothschild, 1981. p. 380).

In socialscientific research, marriage and friendship are generally regarded as separate, independent topics and most existing research on extra-familial social network focusses almost exclusively on kinship bonds. This serves to highlight the distinctly 'private' character of marriage and the family in the modern world and reflects the cultural ideal of the

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self-sufficient family which specializes in the emotional sustenance of its members.

The assumption of a "zero-sum-love-involvement" (Safilios-Rothschild, 1981. p. 380) rather than the opposite "additive" (Ibid. p. 381) assumption is implicitly accepted and upheld by many researchers. According to the former assumption, the more a person becomes involved in one relationship, the less he/she would be involved in other relationships. According to the "additive" assumption (Bartell, 1971; O'Neil and O'Neil, 1972; and Huang, 1974) an individual's involvement in one relationship tends to be helpful, supportive and enriching for his/her involvement in other relationships. Bott's (1957) pioneering study of the "normal" family's relationship to its social network rests on the "fund of sociability" thesis (Seneca, 1979. p. 21) which, like the "zero-sum-love-involvement" assumption, holds that there is a limited "fund of sociability", a fixed amount of socializing energy, which an individual either concentrates on the marital relationship or diffuses over many people. Weiss (1969) presents evidence which directly contradicts Bott's thesis - he finds that all spouses require friendships for a sense of well being and that marriage and friendship involve different, incomparable types of sociability and fulfill distinct psychological needs.

Despite Weiss and others' findings and Bott's own recent criticism of the "fund of sociability" (Bott, 1971. p. 279)

many researchers assume that marriage and friendship vie for a limited reserve of socializing energy - intimate friendships are regarded as drains on the marital relationship. Safilios-Rothschild poses the question: "Which of these assumptions" ("zero-sum-love-involvement" or "additive") hold true for different types of people involved in different types of relationships?" (Ibid. 1981, p. 381).

A survey of the literature on family and marital therapy yields ample evidence of the hazards of family isolation - healthy individual and family functioning is associated with the availability of supportive extra-familial networks (Kammeyer and Bolton, 1978; Pattison, 1976). However, most existing research focusses on kinship bonds which have been found to be based on strong and persistent feelings of obligation (Adams, 1967). Seneca (1979) suggests that the very persistence of kinship obligations makes them poor indicators of changes in the meaning and conduct of family life and analyses of voluntary social relationships (i.e., friendships) are more appropriate for understanding such changes.

The study of the "normal" family's relationship to its social network has developed slowly. What is often overlooked in such studies is the fact that the strong, involved kinship networks found in some working class communities, with few exceptions, do not exist among the middle class, often geographically mobile families and that friendships, because they are voluntary, are more malleable to influence by marriage than are family relations.

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Extra-familial friendships, specifically, the sex differences in the level of intimacy of such friendships, could reflect the demonstrated difference between husbands' and wives' perceptions of their marriages (Bernard, 1972; Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983; Frank and Kupfer, 1976) and the management of such differences (Seneca, 1979). Shostrom, et al. (1976) found evidence to suggest that the level of friendship between spouses is an important factor in marital 'success' - spouses scoring high on the Friendship scale of the Caring Relationship Inventory (CRI) can be differentiated from "troubled" and divorced individuals who score significantly lower on this particular scale. Seneca's (1979) findings indicate that where extra-familial friendships serve both to validate the marital relationship and simultaneously allow for an "emotional release from the marriage" (p. 360), the family is most satisfactorily supported in its struggle to provide for the emotional sustenance of its members. Seneca's findings substantiate Shostrom et al's contention that the most challenging task of marriage "is that of deepening the identity of each partner while still retaining the intimacy" (Shostrom, Knapp and Knapp, 1976. p. 264), but neither of these researchers place sufficient emphasis on the sex differences that exist as regards the meaning and function of 'identity' and 'intimacy'. If, as Bernard (1972) and Eichenbaum and Orbach (1982; 1983) report, wives struggle more than their husbands to adjust to the demands of marriage, it seems logical that they might have more need for intimate, supportive extra-familial friendships.

Smith-Rosenberg's research (1975) on the mid-nineteenth century American woman suggests that their same-sex relationships may

have surpassed the marital relationship in terms of their emotional significance. Rich (1976) hypothesizes that nineteenth century feminism together with the first surges of freedom experienced by women of the 1920's and the increasing acceptance of birth control options, began to alter the heretofore stable role of women and subsequently weakened the female support system. In addition, as Freudian thought became more popular, adult same-sex friendships came to be regarded as regressive and neurotic. Davidson and Packard's (1981) study on the therapeutic value of friendships between women indicates that there is, amongst women, a clear endorsement of their friendships as "therapeutic" (p. 507). These authors hypothesize that the Women's Movement has positively effected change in women's attitudes toward friendship with other women or that, as an oppressed minority, women may have always appreciated their same-sex friendships and learned to covertly maintain them. Davidson and Packard conclude that, although the nature of friendship between women may appear vacuous, such friendships actually reflect an important "parallel mutual understanding" (1981. p. 508).

Most studies of relationships recognize self-disclosure as an important aspect of the intimacy of such relationships and there is usually an implicit assumption that self-disclosure will lead to a more accurate and better adjustment of reciprocal role taking (Cozby, 1973). Wong (1981) ascertains that in the husband-wife relationship the communication process can be so routinized that there is a very limited amount of

"self-exposure" (p. 443). Self-exposure, according to Wong, is the degree to which an individual in a relationship is willing to communicate private concerns, fears, anxieties, and shortcomings and is able to feel comfortable in the relationship. Self-exposure, thus defined, involves the transcendence of institutionalized roles which allows intimate partners to relate without the conventional 'props' of self-presentation and includes the element of reciprocal mutual understanding. In the present study, the levels of both self-disclosure and reciprocal mutual understanding in relationships are used to reflect the intensity of intimacy of such relationships. (See Chapter 3).

In examining Safilios-Rothschild's (1981) suggestion that women's close intimate friendships with women could serve to carry the "psychological burden" (p. 380) of their marital relationships and are therefore significant in enabling them to sustain their marital relationships, the level of intimacy in the relationship between wife and same-sex 'best' friend, wife and husband, and husband and same-sex 'best' friend are compared. Ten couples and their twenty self-appointed same-sex 'best' friends constitute the 'high-caring' control group (viz., both spouses' standard scores on the CRI Friendship scale fall on, or above the fiftieth percentile score); ten couples and their twenty same-sex 'best' friends constitute the 'low-caring' experimental group (viz., either husband's or wife's, or both spouses' standard scores on the CRI Friendship scale fall below the fiftieth percentile score). The level of caring

of the married couples (viz., either 'low' or 'high-caring') is recognized as an important factor in accentuating the differences in intimacy that could exist in the three kinds of dyad. It is hypothesized that, irrespective of the level of caring in the marriage, the level of intimacy in the friendships between women will be higher than that found in the husband-wife and husband-husband's 'best' friend dyad and that this difference will be more marked where the marriage is 'low-caring'. That is, the mean level of intimacy in the wife-wife's friend dyads will be highest where the marriage is 'low-caring'. Each subject's attitude toward women is measured and treated as a covariate of intimacy. (The full range of hypotheses have been spelled out in Chapter 3, section 3.3).

A better understanding of women's friendships and their possible contribution to marital stability could serve to elucidate the dynamics of the marital relationship and could begin to clarify the important relationship between internal family functioning and the nature of the family's interchange with the external social world.

CHAPTER 2

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study explores the relationship between marriage and friendship, more specifically how the friendships between women could sustain their marital relationships.

A growing body of research suggests that there is a relationship between the presence of significant interpersonal relationships outside the family and healthy family functioning (Pattison, 1976; Llamas, 1976; Tolsdorf, 1976). Friends can be seen to function as a "psychological support" system (Duck, 1983; O'Neil and O'Neil, 1972), this being especially relevant when considering the friendships between women (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983; Safilios-Rothschild, 1981).

This chapter introduces a portion of the literature which pertains to the present study. In the following chapter, "Theoretical Considerations", some of the relevant literature which is excluded from consideration here, is reviewed and discussed.

2.1. THE ISOLATION OF THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

2.1.1 The Birth of the Private Family

In contrast to the distinctly private character of marriage and the family in the modern Western world, the pre-industrial family regarded itself as an element of community life. The separation of work and

home which occurred during the Industrial Revolution transformed the family from a multifunctional unit, inseparable from public life, to a private, specialized agency whose traditional social obligations such as education and health care, were slowly assumed by the bureaucratic institutions.

As industrialization and bureaucracy progressed in the world outside the family, the family became, according to Parsons, et al. (1955), structurally and functionally independent of other elements of the kinship system. Parson (1955) recognizes a "sharp discrimination ... between family members and non-members" (p. 19) in contrast to the pre-industrial family in which relatives and friends played major roles. Many family sociologists and "social network" researchers reject the notion that the family is highly isolated. Virtually all of their studies focused on kin, as opposed to friends, and they found that relatives rely on each other for emotional and instrumental aid, and socialise frequently (Irving, 1972). Sussman and Burchinal (1962), major proponents of the kin network thesis, admit however that middle class nuclear families function "autonomously" bearing the "right" to make decisions about their actions, and the "accountability" for them (p. 240).

Seneca (1979) argues that the "either/or" terms in which the debate about the family's isolation has proceeded confuses the issue since social participation and isolation are points on a continuum, rather than antitheses. "Either/or" categorizations fail to describe the majority of families who fall between the two extremes. The crucial question is the relationship between the family and the social network.

2.1.2 Marriage : The Loving Partnership

The loss of many of its social functions loosened the family's ties to the community in two major respects. First, the household became a private space; commerce and community affairs no longer freely intruded on it. Second, the family came to concentrate more intensely on internal family matters (Seneca, 1979, p. 13).

The concept of marriage as a primarily instrumental arrangement came to be supplanted by the notion of marriage as a loving partnership, providing for the emotional sustenance of both husband and wife. Udry (1974) claims that both men and women today look to the family as their greatest source of life satisfaction. Goode (1963) stresses that the expectation of emotional intimacy is an element of modern marriage in the Western world. Aries (1962) recognized that as "sentiment" (pp. 405-407) infused marriage and the family, public sociability declined. Birdwhistell (1970) argues that the expectation that spouses should fulfill all of each other's emotional and physical needs "illegitimizes all those associations outside the marriage which threaten to become personal" (p. 196).

Research has indicated that as the family fortifies its boundaries in an effort to provide psychic solace, and in the extreme to 'protect' its members from a "disturbing" external reality, it becomes more private or isolated. The reality constructed within the family acquires a stubborn facticity, and becomes the standard by which larger social reality is judged. Parsons, et al. (1955, p. 16) argue that the socialization of children and the stabilization of adult personality becomes the task of the family "on behalf of

the personality "rather than on behalf of the society.

One of the most common disorders reported by family therapists is family "enmeshment" where internal harmony is rigidly maintained at the expense of individual development and autonomy (Klugman, 1976; Minuchin, 1967). In enmeshed families the external world is perceived as dangerous and such families have few emotionally significant bonds outside their borders.

A growing body of evidence suggests that the family's posture of emotional self-sufficiency is ultimately self-defeating. Kanmeyer and Bolton (1968) report that families who lack significant external relationships are more likely than others to seek professional counselling. Pattison (1976) found a clear inverse association between the size of the social network and the severity of individual psychological dysfunction. Daniels (1977) found that couples experiencing marital maladjustment interact with fewer people and have fewer people available for emotional and instrumental support in time of need.

Seneca (1979) comments on the fact that modern marriage exerts considerable influence upon an individual's existing and potential friendships since it constitutes a primary attachment relationship in which spouses expect the mate to be lover, best friend and therapist-on-call. She argues that the soaring divorce rate attests to the difficulty of meeting these demands and that friends could help to provide alternative sources of emotional support to individual spouses and thereby reduce the intensity of the demands placed on the marital unit.

Despite their demonstrated importance, our society tends to ignore the role of extra-marital support systems. Unlike some pre-modern cultures, we fail to institutionalize or socially legitimate friendship relations.... In contrast to married couples in pre-industrial societies, who inherited pre-existing networks of community and kin relations, modern couples must build their own networks of support (Seneca, 1979, p. 355-356).

2.2. THE FAMILY'S RELATIONSHIP TO ITS SOCIAL NETWORK

2.2.1. The social network

Research on the relationship between the nuclear family and the social network is limited in quantity and scope. The bulk of the research reports on psychiatric clinic populations, rather than on "normal" families in their natural environments. Elizabeth Bott's pioneering study, Family and Social Network, first published in 1957, remains the seminal work.

The work of social anthropologist Elizabeth Bott represented an attempt to combine a psychological perspective of the personalities of husband and wife with the manner in which they interacted with external persons and groups.

Research was conducted in urban London with a sample of 20 'normal' couples. The requirement that none of the sample families could have been seen for treatment of family problems was subsequently dropped when Bott recognized that these families are often more "normal" in the clinical sense than those families which do not seek help.

The specific area of inquiry was the relationship between the marital organization of couple and their social network. She differentiated between "complementary organization" in which the activities of husband and wife are different and separate but "fitted together" to form a whole, between "independent organization" in which activities are carried out by husband and wife together, or the same activity is carried out by either partner at different times (Bott, 1971, p. 53).

Bott found that in "joint organization" marriages, spouses enjoy joint leisure and shared friendships. In marriages in which "complementary" or "independent" organization dominates, sex segregated social networks exist in which spouses take leisure independently. The networks surrounding the "joint organization" marriages lack internal cohesion, that is, their members are strangers to each other, and are drawn from varied social contexts. The sex segregated networks in contrast are cohesive and "close knit", their members know each other and share a common social reality and normative perspective. Bott introduced the term "density" to describe the degree to which the members of a particular social network know each other.

Two central theses emerge from Bott's study, these are that (a) there is a limited "fund of sociability" (p. 53), or amount of socializing energy, which an individual either concentrates on the marital relationship or diffuses over many people, and (b) the "density" (p. 60) of the social network influences the degree to which spouses depend upon each other and the degree of conjugal role segregation. According to the "fund of sociability" thesis,

spouses who socialize together, as in "joint organization" marriages, seek less sociability outside the marriage than do spouses who find no sociability together. According to her "density" thesis, Bott reasons that strong cohesive networks reduce spouses' dependence upon each other - without close knit networks, spouses depend more fully upon each other and are thus more likely to share and interchange their role obligations.

Bott was not specifically interested in the question of marital compatibility or marital happiness, her typology of marriage reflects only the superficial aspects of marital organization. There also remains the question of whether the network configuration is responsible for the psychodynamics between husband and wife or that the latter is a cause of the first. The importance of Bott's study was to focus on the interface between these two areas and to stimulate further research.

According to Seneca (1979, p. 22) neither of Bott's theses have been convincingly verified. Robert Weiss (1969), for example, found that all spouses require friendships for a sense of well-being and that persons with many friends often desire a primary 'attachment' relationship as well - marriage and friendship are seen to involve different, incomparable types of sociability, and fulfill distinct psychological needs. See also section 2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2, and 2.2.2.3 in this chapter.

Despite Weiss' findings and Bott's own recent criticism of the 'fund of sociability', many researchers implicitly accept her original thesis and assume that marriage and friendship vie for limited reserve of socializing energy. Strong friendships are regarded as drains on the marital relationship (Seneca, 1979, p.22).

Bott's second thesis has sparked off numerous investigations which fail to suggest a consistent theory of the relationship between network density and conjugal role segregation. The variability of research methodology, and especially the lack of standardization in measurement of the social network and the marital interaction, constitute major obstacles.

Those who followed after Bott in social network research have refined her very general definition of the social network. Bott defined the social network as "all or some of the social units (individuals or groups) with whom a particular individual or group is in contact" (Bott, 1971, p. 320).

Pattison (1976) recognized that a social network may be objectively or subjectively defined. In the case of an objectively defined network, the specific criteria which motivate the analysis arbitrarily define the network's composition. The subjective network can only be defined by the individual and consists of those relationships which the individual recognizes as ongoing parts of his/her life. Relationships of varying degrees of significance coexist within this network - Boissevain (1974), for example, orders networks into various "zones of intimacy" (pp. 46-48).

Boissevain (1974) conceptualizes the first zone as including nuclear family members, with whom one resides. The second order zone contains the extended family, close friends, neighbours and co-workers with whom an individual has regular contact, including

instrumental and affective exchange. Within the second order zone, kin and friends constitute distinct groups but unlike friendships, family bonds endure over a lifetime and are often permeated by feelings of obligation.

In the present research the friendship component of the social network is explored, more specifically the self-appointed, same-sex 'best' friends of the husbands and of the wives. The level of intimacy of these friendships will be examined and compared as well as the level of intimacy in the friendship between spouses.

Bott's work into social networks revealed relatively limited structural analysis when compared with later authors. For example, Bott did not seem to feel that there was sufficient reason to separate the individual networks of her couples and therefore created a joint network of their friends. Her research paradigm implied that individual differences in marital networks are either absent or unimportant.

This author agrees with Mitchell's (1969) argument that research should focus on the lowest level of abstraction, that of the personal social network. It is felt that the friendships between husbands and their male friends and those between wives and their women friends differ structurally and functionally. The level of friendship, or degree of caring between spouses is recognized as an important factor in accentuating or intensifying these differences.

While Bates and Babchuk (1963; 1965) and Lopata (1971; 1973; 1973) had originally raised the question of the relationship between marriage and friendship, they fall short of answering it. Bates and Babchuk (1963; 1965) found that middle class husbands initiated the majority of couples' mutual friendships, and that these friendships were affectively richer than wife-initiated mutual friendships - they interpreted this asymmetry as evidence of male dominance. These authors failed to investigate the marital relationship and their assertions about male dominance are speculations rather than grounded conclusions. In contrast Lopata (1971; 1973) presents data about the marital relationship. She found that when women worked outside the home, the pattern reported by Babchuk and Bates was reversed; working wives initiated more of the couples friendships. Lopata also found the tendency, among the middle class couples, for individual friendships, if they were to endure, to be converted into "couple companionate" friendships such that wives "tend to define their best friends as the female partners of the couple with whom they socialize on weekends" (Lopata, 1973, p. 183). Lopata's data consists exclusively of wives' reports; conclusions about marriage based upon this one-sided data are extremely tenuous. The literature on marital interaction abounds with the demonstrated difference between husbands' and wives' perceptions of their marriages. (See section 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.2 of this chapter).

2.2.2 Marital interaction

Nineteenth and early twentieth century literature on the family treats it almost exclusively as a social institution, the focus

was on the institutional aspects of marriage rather than the interpersonal aspects (Lasch, 1977). With the rising rates of divorce and illegitimacy in the early twentieth century, attention was shifted from the family's relation to other social institutions to the internal family environment. Burgess and Locke (1945) recognized that the modern family had evolved from institution to companionship. In the "institutional" family, behaviour was seen to be controlled by "the mores, public opinion and law"; in the "companionate" family, behaviour arose from the "mutual affection and consensus of its members" (Ibid pp. 26-27). Burgess' definition of the family as a "unity of interacting personalities" is implicitly accepted by many in the field of family therapy. See section 2.3 in this chapter.

"Marital adjustment", according to Spanier (1976) is the most often studied dependent variable in family sociology. Nevertheless, the term "adjustment" lacks precise definition - different studies measure happiness, satisfaction, consensus, and stability under the rubric of "adjustment". Many marital adjustment researchers assume that a stable, successful marriage is one on which happiness, agreement, satisfaction and togetherness prevail, disagreement and conflict are treated as disruptive influences which threaten the system's survival.

Much of the research on marital adjustment has been severely criticized on methodological grounds. Critics, such as Safilios-Rothschild (1969), deplore the lack of consistency and precision of conceptualization, and the tendency to accept the reports of one spouse as descriptive of the couple's views. The most important

methodological critique of the marital adjustment studies asserts that these studies simply measure 'conventionalization' or the extent to which subjects distort the appraisal of their marriages in the direction of social desirability. Edmonds (1967; 1972) finds that the tendency to describe one's marriage in glowing terms is widespread, and that it strongly contaminates the measurement of marital adjustment.

A more fundamental critique of the marital adjustment literature concerns the concept of "adjustment" itself. Some assert that happiness, satisfaction, stability and adjustment are unrealistic, value-laden criteria of the soundness of a marriage. While conflict in marriage is implicitly recognized by adjustment researchers, their theoretical framework is often unable to accommodate the variable except as an indicator of disequilibrium and instability (Sprey, 1969).

New fields of inquiry, for example, sex role differences, women's psychology and equity theory, are introducing a new conceptualization of the marital relationship.

2.2.2.1 "Marital adjustment" from the perspective of sex roles.

Bernard (1972) reports on the consistent evidence that wives' emotional and physical health, as measured by a number of different indicators, is poorer than that of their husbands, and poorer than that of single women. It has nevertheless been found that married women generally describe themselves and their marriages as happy. Of this paradox Bernard comments:

The married woman has adjusted to the demands of marriage, she is reconciled to them. She interprets her reconciliation as happiness, no matter how much she is paying for it in terms of psychological distress. (Bernard, 1972, pp. 55-56).

Cunningham, et al. (1982) studied marital-status and sex differences in problems reported by married and cohabiting couples. Bernard's thesis that marriage benefits men more than women, particularly as compared to single counterparts, was found to apply much more to married than to cohabiting couples. Married women were found to be "worse off" on quantitative indices of happiness in problem situations than cohabiting women, and married men "better off" than cohabiting men. It was found that wives were most likely to take issue with their husband's careerism and the consequent lack of attention afforded to them. Cohabiting women demanded less stringent norms of loyalty than did married women but their partners' more common complaint was that they were too independent emotionally and physically.

Gigy (1980) explored the differences and similarities in the self-concepts of single and married women. The results of the study suggest that among the sample of single women, a self-concept involving independence and self-determination may be a strong determinant of the choice not to marry - perhaps these qualities in women make them unattractive to prospective husbands?

Argyle and Furnham (1983) explored the sources of satisfaction and conflict in long-term relationships (viz., the relationships between subject and neighbour, work associate, opposite-sex friend,

same-sex friend, work superior, parent, sibling and spouse were compared). It was found that "satisfaction in marriage was greater for males and older subjects" (Ibid, p. 492). Females were found to derive more satisfaction in the emotional-support area and from friends and family; men were found to get more satisfaction from spouses and work superiors.

The notion of marital "adjustment" is deceptively simple. It obscures the struggle between husband and wife which wives often lose. Drawing heavily from the work of Jetse Sprey, La Rossa (1977) states that the reasons for a conflict approach to marriage:

- (a) Ambivalence in the marital relationship is inevitable because marriage is a commitment made "under societal duress" (Ibid. p. 105) - there is "no real alternative to the married state as a life career" (Ibid. p. 105).
- (b) Marriage is a societal institution which reflects and embodies structured conflicts in the larger society—relations between the sexes is especially relevant here.
- (c) The marital relationship is a paradox; intimacy requires "attraction and repulsion, connectedness and separateness, unity and individuality" (Ibid. p. 116).

The conflict approach to marriage adopted by LaRossa represents a return to early sociological thinking about the family. Simmel, Engels and Freud developed conflict theories of the family (Simmel and Freud emphasized the ambivalence of family attachments, while Engels focused on the struggle between the sexes). Current family conflict theorists draw heavily upon the rich

work of these early theorists and simultaneously recognize that the family behaves as a system in that its parts are interrelated in a reasonably stable manner. A systems approach currently dominates the field of family therapy. This will be discussed in more detail in section 2.3 of this chapter.

Of particular importance to the present study is Bernard's and other's finding that marriage benefits the husband more than the wife. This finding focuses on the question, "What do women want?" Drawing upon a feminist psychoanalytic approach, Eichenbaum and Orbach (1982; 1983) attempt to answer this question and, in doing so, link up an understanding of women's and men's psychology, its interplay and consequences for couple relationships and women's friendships.

2.2.2.2 Marriage and emotional dependency needs

Eichenbaum and Orbach (1982; 1983) ascertain that dependency, a basic human need in both men and women, is a central issue in all relationships and is especially critical in intimate sexual relationships.

At the same time as intimacy grows in a relationship, the people are developing emotional dependency on one another. There is a recognition of caring, of a connection, of emotional nurturance given to each other that is both needed and wanted. Commitment and a sense of being responsible towards the other person are facets of this dependency (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1982, p. 92).

In the model of the "healthy" couple, both members come to the relationship with a secure, defined and generally positive sense of self which frees them to open up, merge emotionally, physically

and sexually, and to separate without the fear of loss of self or loss of the other person. This ideal state is uncommon according to Eichenbaum and Orbach (1982). One important factor is that "both the man and the woman have all kinds of assumptions and expectations as a result of sex-role stereotyping in patriarchal society"(p. 95), especially as these pertain to the expression of dependency. The common tendency found with most couples is that one person, usually the woman, "carries" the insecurity and feelings of dependency for both partners.

In our culture, both men and women come to feel ashamed of feeling dependent. It seems to signify weakness in both sexes but in different ways. Boys grow up on the other side of an unbalanced coin. Their dependency needs are hidden from view, but more successfully answered. A boy grows up learning to depend on women, first his mother and then his wife. A girl grows up learning she will have to give up her mother without getting wifely love in its place. Paradoxically, precisely because men have the continuity that women are denied, male needs are less exposed. Women and men collude in this process of keeping from view men's dependency needs. The true picture of women's and men's dependency on each other is not acknowledged (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983. p. 18).

In many marriages "women come not to expect satisfactory emotional nurturance and understanding from their partners, men's inadequacy in giving this nurturance is to some extent accepted and even anticipated by women" (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983, p. 88). Although this knowledge is accepted on one level, on another level a woman may fight this knowledge since her need for emotional attention and care does not weaken or atrophy. She resolves this conflict by coming to feel that "her needs are too great" (p. 89) and that her "insatiability" (p. 89) is what motivates her partner's

apparent inadequacy. The woman does not want to expose her man's inadequacy because then she loses the illusion of his being the replacement of her mother, that is, someone who can love and take care of her. The man cannot psychologically afford to have his woman trying to expose that part of him which he sees as "feminine":

In order for a man to give the very things a woman feels are lacking, the contact that a woman wants, he is involved in a process that directly threatens his conception of self (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983, p. 89).

For many couples the dynamic described above remains consistent, that is, one partner remains "closed" behind tight boundaries while the other, usually the woman, seems to be searching and reaching out for contact with the other. In certain couples this dynamic may shift back and forth - this "cha-cha phenomenon" (1983, p. 78) represents a fear of intimacy and a frustration for both partners.

Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) contend that "women's relationships with one another must play important and sustaining parts in their lives" (p. 149). These authors recognize that women's friendships and their dependency on one another do not detract from the intimacy in a committed sexual relationship or a marriage. Such interdependent friendships can be seen to aid the success and longevity of the marriage by providing alternative objects for transference and by spreading the burden of need. When women are able to give each other emotional nurturance and understanding, less pressure is brought to bear on the men with whom they relate. Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) maintain that women's friendships have, however, been relegated to a position of lesser importance than their relationships

with men. Caplan (1981) feels that women have not often used their friendships with other women to improve their lot:

In a sexist society, women's tendency to ally themselves with a woman continues to be (a) temporary, until a man comes along, and/or (b) as members of an oppressed class and therefore united by their difference from men (and, at the extreme, against men themselves) (Caplan, 1981, p. 131).

Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) echo Caplan's sentiment but stress that the Women's Liberation Movement has served to sanction women's friendships and has encouraged women's attempts to support each other in developing their strengths.

Forisha-Kovach (1982) feels that the challenge today for women is in the realm of power (or autonomy). In using their power women must come to recognize their sense of separateness (viz., they must be willing to express their anger, to compete openly instead of covertly and to work toward their own success) whilst being able to admit to their vulnerabilities. Men today are having to deal with the fear of losing their power while they are encouraged to be more open to their feelings. The task for both sexes is a new integration of love (or intimacy) and power (or autonomy).

Backed by experiences in the Women's Liberation Movement, a feminist-oriented practice in the United States and the Women's Therapy Centre in London, and drawing on the disciplines of psychoanalysis, sociology, social psychology, mythology and literary criticism, Eichenbaum and Orbach formulated their theory on the expression of, and the role of the dependency

need in the psychology of women and of men, how this relates to marriage and friendship. Although not put to empirical test, their theory would seem to offer an explanation for the finding that marriage benefits men more than women. Important is the accent on women's friendships which have, with very few exceptions, been found to be more intimate than men's friendships with men. In the present study the friendship between husband and wife will be measured and compared with the friendship between the wife and her self-appointed same-sex 'best' friend. An inverse correlation is expected between the level of caring which includes a measure of friendship, of the marriage and the level of friendship or degree of intimacy between the wife and her same-sex 'best' friend. The attitudes towards women's roles in general of all subjects will be taken into account.

2.2.2.3. Friendship in marriage.

The cliché 'my husband/wife is my best friend' has not been satisfactorily tested, except indirectly. Friendship itself is an elusive concept. It has been variously defined as one of the forms of love and the processes of loving. It can be seen to be a relational behaviour which McGinnis (1979, p. 9) defines as the "springboard to every other love" or "the model for all intimate encounters". Duck, (1983, p. 11) conceptualizes friendship as "a process that continues through the life of a relationship, with a constant and perpetual need for the right actions and activities at the right time to keep it all alive". In this latter sense, friendship can be seen as a skill.

Shostrom (1975, p. 3) describes friendship as "a peer love based on common interest and respect for each other's equality and individual identity". Friendship is recognized as one of the essential elements of love or caring and the degree of friendship between a married couple can be measured on the Caring Relationship Inventory (CRI) devised and validated by Shostrom in 1966. The inventory was administered to samples of "actualizing" or "successfully" married couples, troubled couples receiving marital counselling and divorced individuals (1976, p. 48). Mean differences between the successfully married sample and samples of troubled or divorced individuals were significant for all CRI scales but the greatest differences were obtained on the CRI Friendship scale. This indicated that "faltering" marriages reflect a lack of appreciation of common interests rather than a lack of romantic, sexual, or other aspects of love" (1976, p. 48).

Eros, empathy, friendship and agape (or affection) are seen by Shostrom et al. (1976) as the dimensions of love or caring which develop sequentially through stages of childhood, youth, adolescence and adulthood respectively. This process of development is called the "caring sequence" as compared to the "relationship" sequence which is a parallel process of development occurring during the marriage years:

Just as the development of the human species may be said to be recapitulated in the development of the fetus, so the early developmental stages of the caring sequence are recapitulated in the four love dimensions of the relationship sequence (Shostrom et al., 1976, p. 263).

As marriage deepens, building on accumulated foundations of eros (the romantic form of love which involves a strong element of positive projection) and empathy (the ability to accept with

compassion and tolerance the separateness and masculinity/ femininity of the opposite partner), through friendship one seeks to increase common interest. Shostrom et al. (1976, p. 264) ascertain that one of the most challenging tasks during the "friendship years" of marriage "is that of deepening the identity of each partner while still retaining the intimacy". These authors advocate that during these years the couple should actively search out new interests to which each can find allegiance, this may include making friends with another couple, enabling friendship to develop in a four-way relationship.

Seneca (1979) investigated marital interaction and friendship networks in eleven married couples. The focus was on the management of differences in marital interaction where differences were seen to include "all the ramifications of each partner's irreducible individuality, or separateness from each other" (p. 357). Seneca's concept of "different-ness" could be seen to be almost synonymous with Shostrom, et al's concept of "individual identity". Four main "difference management patterns", denial, conflict, overt separation and covert separation, represent the processes "through which spouses establish the terms of individuation and togetherness in their marriage" (p. 261). Every couple relied predominantly upon one difference management pattern. Each of the patterns consisted of a unique combination of two variables: the extent to which the differences were acknowledged; and the extent to which physical separations to express different-ness were allowed. The couples' difference management patterns were found to be closely related to the form of their friendship networks, that is

difference management patterns were found to be reflected in the degree of overlap between husband-wife friendship networks:

(a) Group I: Couples with a high degree of overlap.

Couples who saw different-ness as an occasion for "denial" or a call to "conflict", had friendship networks which were organized around the couple unit, that is, the spouses had few significant independent friendships or activities. In this group the network validated the couple relationship although the capacity to provide emotional release from the intense marital relationship was limited, the couples were opposed to the practice of confiding in friends, and many of the spouses involved in such networks felt trapped or bored with current friendships and leisure activities.

(b) Group II: Couples with a low degree of overlap.

Couples in this group were found to place few restrictions on independence in marriage and generally accepted the practice of self-disclosure to friends. Of the four couples in this group, three were found to use the "covert separation" pattern (viz. spouses exhibiting overt separation patterns recognize the "right" to differ and to express different-ness, those exhibiting the pattern of "covert separation" uneasily tolerate the expression of different-ness in marriage and tend to diffuse the issue rather than confront it directly). One couple exhibited overt separation. Friendship networks in this group included comparatively high proportions of individual friendships and were seen to provide an emotional release from the intensity of marriage but spouses were intensely aware of, and saddened, by the inability of their friendship networks to provide for validation of the marital relationship.

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(c) Group III: Couples with a medium degree of overlap.

For three of the eleven couples studied (all employed "covert separation" as their primary pattern of difference management), most important friendships tended to be converted into "emotionally significant shared friends" (p. 331) and the bulk of their social activity was organized around the couple unit. These couples also tended to have some individual friends and they engaged in some separate activities.

Rather than simply reflecting the emphasis on togetherness or separateness inherent in the couple's difference management pattern, these networks offered opportunities for both togetherness and separateness. They provided both a significant source of validation for the married relationship and an emotional release from the marriage in individual friendships and activities (Seneca, 1979, p. 360).

Two important distinctions between this group and the others emerged. In the first instance, the friendship patterns of couples in the latter group were found to be partially forged by institutions and organizations which existed independently of the couple and whose members were linked by formal ties or common experience.

"The common interests of both spouses as individuals in these communities or organizations facilitate the development of an emotionally significant shared friendship group" (Seneca, 1979, p. 351). The desire for individuation could be seen to be largely contained within the group, the independent friendships occurred within the context of the larger forged group which is "forged by forces and interests outside the narrow sphere of control of the individual couple" (p. 352). Seneca found that the independent friendships involved persons who stood in some relationship to the

non-participating spouse and the confiding of marital disappointments in these semi-individuated friends became "somewhat awkward" (p. 352).

Seneca concluded:

Contrary to the popular belief that institutions outside the family are eroding its strength, these findings suggest that the family is strongest where it is closely linked, through bonds of friendship, to established extra-familial groups (Seneca, 1979, p. 361).

A second distinction between the medium overlap group and the others was found to be the realm of "psychic autonomy". Seneca distinguishes between the low overlap and medium groups on the basis of the "extent to which the pursuit of autonomy is a salient issue in marriage" (p. 335). The wives of the low overlap group demonstrated a "strident defense of autonomy" (p. 334) as compared to those in the medium overlap group (only one wife pursued autonomy in this group but "voluntarily" limited her pursuit). Seneca fails to place as much importance on this finding, she fails to adequately interpret its significance in the light of her other findings - (perhaps because of her systems approach to marriage and the family). Seneca, for example, found that wives in her study defined the desire for individual freedom "from a strongly defensive posture" (p. 155), they saw individual freedom as the antithesis of "the crippling dependence on men which they had seen or experienced (p. 156). This finding and its interpretation as "defensive" partially substantiates Orbach and Eichenbaum's theory that women generally do not expect to have their dependency needs met in marriage. For husbands, the most common interpretation of individual freedom centered upon simple physical freedoms, the freedom to momentarily disengage from the confines of marriage. Seneca found that female desires for "psychic autonomy" tax an intimate relationship

more heavily than does the predominantly male desire for momentary detachments; however, such momentary detachments become difficult to manage for wives when their purpose is diffuse, and they constitute major problems when they intersect with wives' unfulfilled desires for psychic autonomy (pp. 165 - 167).

Seneca's findings lend support to Shostrom et al's theory that in marriage a balance must be struck between "identity", or separateness, and "intimacy", or togetherness. Shostrom's et al's contention that such a balance finds expression in shared friendships and in interests to which each spouse can find allegiance, are also supported. In this present study Shostrom's Caring Relationship Inventory (CRI) will be used to measure the degree of caring (which includes a measure of friendship) between the spouses and the level of friendship between each spouse and his/her self-appointed same-sex 'best' friend. The level of Self-Disclosure will also be measured and compared as well as the level of Perceptual Understanding (see Chapter 3).

The literature on self-disclosure suggests that self-disclosure facilitates perceptual agreement between partners in a relationship. Seneca (p. 144) found that "togetherness-orientated" spouses find differences disturbing and their perceptions of differences tend towards certain distortions which serve to mute the awareness (or pain) of different-ness, self-disclosure towards outside friends is discouraged, restricted or merely tolerated. "Independence-orientated" couples tend to perceive each other's differences more accurately and self-disclosure outside marriage is accepted. Self-disclosure and interpersonal perception can be seen to be

important ingredients of friendship and indicators of the level of intimacy or the intensity of a relationship - these variables will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

2.3. MARRIAGE AS AN OPEN SYSTEM IN DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM.

A detailed discussion of systems theory is beyond the scope of this paper, however, some of the major tenets of the systems approach to the family and marriage are noted here.

According to the systems approach, the parts that comprise the family system are seen to be reciprocally influencing. A circular or cybernetic relational model is more appropriate than a linear causal model for describing the relationships among systems parts. Secondly, the family or marital unit is generally understood to be an "open" system (Foley, 1974). The family is seen as open to interchange with other social institutions and with people outside the family and it is open to internal changes in the routines, relationships and patterns of family life. Kantor and Lehr (1975) argue that the family system depends upon interchange with the environment for its survival, by virtue of its "openness", the family system is adaptive. As mentioned, a growing body of research suggests that there is a positive relationship between the presence of significant interpersonal relationships outside the family and healthy family functioning (Pattison, 1976; Llamas, 1976).

Family systems are seen as information processing systems, the inter-relationships between component parts of a system are seen to depend primarily on the communication process to maintain a fluidity

of structure. Jackson (1965) and others argue that most families establish organized, stable patterns of interaction, which are repeated in all areas of family members' shared lives — insofar as families seek stability in their internal environments, they tend toward "closure" which restricts the development and growth of its component parts, the family members.

Family systems operate through mechanisms of "feedback" which is "a process by which a system informs its component parts how to relate to one another and to the internal environment in order to facilitate the correct or beneficial execution of certain system functions" (Kantor and Lehr, 1975, p. 12). Feedback can act to maintain constancy within the system, or to provoke variety and further structural elaboration (Kantor and Lehr, 1975).

A good deal of clinical evidence reveals the homeostatic, or equilibrium-maintaining tendency of family systems. Jackson, (1957, p. 79) defines family homeostasis as "the relative constancy of the internal environment, a constancy, however, which is maintained by a continuous interplay of dynamic forces". The notion of equilibrium implies neither health nor harmony. Jackson (1967) maintains that individual psychiatric symptoms may be "functional, even necessary" (p. 145) for the organization of some family systems. The notion of equilibrium is dynamic rather than static, because change and adaptation are inherent in family systems. The family's homeostatic tendencies are revealed in its regularly preferred means of managing the inevitable challenges to its organization, rather than in simple resistance to change.

According to Seneca (1979) the homeostatic tendencies of marital and family systems are especially important features of family life in the modern industrialized world because, unlike its pre-industrial predecessor, the modern family aims to provide a private retreat from society. Although many doubt the notion that the family "protects" or "shelters" the individual, cultural imagery, popular opinion, social scientific thought and helping service models "celebrate the family as a stable protective shelter" (Ibid. p. 57). The modern family is also expected to provide the individual with nurturance. Current social changes are escalating the demands for nurturance in the family. Of importance here is the influence of Women's Liberation Movement which has stimulated or heightened the demands, or expectations of women for a deep friendship in marriage. Differences between the sexes, especially in the area of intimacy, the giving and receiving of emotional support, are highlighted in marriage. Alternate sources of support, in the form of extra-familial friendships, do exist but are not generally sanctioned or recognized for their positive contributions.

Ironically, the family may best secure itself by lowering its protective borders. Perhaps we can most effectively bolster the fragile family by shoring up community life (Seneca, 1979, p. 361).

The conceptualization of the family system as an open system, which depends on interchange with the environment for its survival, is widely accepted. Informal relations with the external environment, according to Seneca (1979, p. 78), fulfill two important functions for modern families; they provide an emotional outlet from the intensity of family relations and they may validate the family unit.

Seneca (1979), does not differentiate between the wife's marriage (and extrafamilial relations) and those of the husband. In accord with Bernard's (1972; 1982) observations, this author recognizes that important differences may exist in the level of "intimacy" of wives' and husbands' marital and friendship relations.

In the following Chapter, theoretical considerations pertaining to the constituents of "intimacy", the possible inter-relationships between these constituents, and their functions will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

3. FRIENDSHIP: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

This study explores the relationship between marriage and friendship. Such an exploration is rooted in the theoretical conceptualization of the family as an open system and of marriage as a system in conflict. Essentially, however, what is being examined here is Barnard's (1972) claim that every marriage is composed of two marriages - "his" and "hers". The focus is on how these two perspectives are reconciled through friendship in and out of marriage. An inverse relationship is expected between the level of caring (including a measure of friendship) in marriage and the level of intimacy in the friendship of the spouses, specifically that of the wife, with their same-sex 'best' friends.

3.1 THE FUNCTION OF FRIENDSHIP.

Duck (1983), p. 15-29) has delineated essential functions of friendship:

3.1.1 A sense of belonging. Loneliness or the feeling of alienation can cause depression, illness and even death. Friends can offer a sense of community or belonging which helps to stave off the most severe consequences of loneliness.

3.1.2 Emotional integration and stability. Communities can be seen to provide people with the opportunities

to develop, measure, test and change their opinions, beliefs and emotional responses - the psychological community influences the way its members react. Without friends people are deprived of the stability which comes from the chance to compare their own reactions to life with those of other people that they know, like and respect. That is, loneliness and isolation can cause emotional instability, with uncertainty about, and vacillation of thoughts, feelings and opinions.

3.1.3 Opportunities for communication about ourselves.

3.1.4 Provision of assistance and physical support.

Duck quotes Chown's (1981) study on friendship in old age which suggests that the relationship between two people is most often defined by what the people in it provide for one another, the resources that they distribute and exchange. Providing services, as opposed to intimate disclosures could keep a relationship on a neighbourly level rather than on a level of friendship.

3.1.5 Reassurance of our worth and value. Whereas loss of communication, help and physical support lead to feelings of isolation, a chronic and perpetual sense of loneliness generates a feeling of worthlessness. Friends can therefore be seen to contribute toward a self-esteem.

3.1.6 Opportunity to help others. The trust and dependent stance of a friend provides for the opportunity to take responsibility for that friend, to help or 'nurture'

and to feel worthwhile in providing such help.

3.1.7 Personality support. Duck and Miell (1982) and Duck and Lea (1982) found that the sense of community, emotional stability, communication, provision of help and the maintenance of self-esteem which friendship provides can all be seen to contribute toward the support and integration of a person's personality. When people's close relationships are disturbed they suffer mentally and physically.

Friendship, according to Shostrom, et al. (1976), is an important ingredient of the marital interaction. See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.3. Seneca (1979) found evidence to suggest that extra-familial friendships are a reflection of the marital interaction, specifically the management of differences between spouses. In this study the friendship between the wife and her same-sex 'best' friend is hypothesized to reflect the differences, based on gender, that arise in marriage.

3.2 GENDER AND FRIENDSHIP.

3.2.1 The developmental roots of friendship.

Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) note that studies on gender identity suggest that by the time a child is two years old, its gender is firmly fixed and that femininity and masculinity are psychological entities defined within a social context and are not biological imperatives. Being a girl or a boy shapes personality development in different ways. Mothers can be seen to relate differently to

their daughters and to their sons because of the social consequences of gender - much of the difference is intentional and prescribed by the requirements of sex-role stereotyping and some come from a mother's unconscious feelings about being a woman and raising a daughter or raising a son. This difference is seen to be most obvious in the expression of emotional dependency needs which have far-reaching effects on the manner in which boys/men and girls/women are motivated toward and relate in friendship and marriage. (See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.2).

Eichenbaum and Orbach (1982) maintain that a mother's response to her daughter is paradoxical: While the mother hopes for a fuller and less restricted life for her daughter, she simultaneously fears that her daughter will not learn the essential feminine characteristics of restraining her own needs and desires and curbing her attempts toward independence. From very early on the mother weans her daughter from the expectation of having her dependency needs met, the little girl comes to feel that her needy, "little-girl" parts and would-be autonomous parts are wrong and learns to defend against their expression:

From girlhood to womanhood women live with the experience of having lost these aspects of maternal nurturance. This nurturance is never replaced. Women look to men to mother them but remain bereft. These needs for nurturance do not decrease any the less for the loss. This loss, which causes tremendous pain, confusion, disappointment, rage and guilt for the daughter, is buried and denied in the culture at large as well as in the unconscious of the little girl (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1982, p. 36).

In the development of boys there is the psychological task of "being-like-daddy" through a denial of "being-like-mommy". The

mother is seen to collude in her son's psychological negation of her while she continues to offer him support and love. While both girls' and boys' dependency needs are hidden, boys' and mens' emotional dependency needs are more continually met.

Men continue to have a 'mother'; women do not (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983, p. 60).

3.2.1.1 Childhood (birth to six years).

According to Shostrom, et al. (1976) childhood can be seen as the dependency or "eros" period. From birth to six years of age the child is at first dependent on the mother for its survival and is involved in an erotic relationship with her (the first contact is through the breast and the feeding process), later the child becomes dependent on authority figures for an understanding of 'proper' behaviour.

Shostrom, et al. (1976, p. 117-118) maintain that there are three major developmental tasks that the child must begin to resolve:

- (a) The handling of warmth and affection. Affection can be traced to the dependency phase of childhood, from birth to approximately two years, where the child is given love and security and thus learns to trust in, or rely on others.

Love at this stage is a primitive dependency love that is largely received from parents... the child who has received love generously and unconditionally seems to be able to give love later in life with less effort (Shostrom, et al. 1976, p. 112).

Duck (1983) claims that self-esteem, the basic ingredient of friendship, is developed in early childhood and that the level of self-esteem must be high enough to create and encourage the desire for relationships with others. Satisfactory concepts of friendship are learned in later childhood. Duck (1983, p. 117) maintains that children pick up the essential elements of friendship separately, consolidate them, and go on to the next one:

Failure to pick up one element may create problems in moving on to the next one, or may 'throw' the whole process of learning (Duck, 1983, p. 117).

- (b) The handling of hostility and anger. Managing acceptable aggressive tendencies later in life is dependent on the way in which the parents deal with the child's tantrums and negativistic behaviours during the stage of autonomy from ages 2½ to 3½. Buhler (1951, in Shostrom et al., 1976) sees the period from 8 months to 4 years as one in which the child tests others' love.
- (c) The management of sexual tension. During the interdependent phase from 3½ to 6 years the child begins to accept its own sex through the process of identification with the same-sex parent and parental controls are internalized as inner controls or conscience.

Normal heterosexual relationships tend to result if, during the interdependent phase, the child's affections are accepted by the parent of the opposite sex... the foundations of "liking" members of the opposite sex begin first in relationships to one's parents (Shostrom et al., 1976, p. 117).

According to Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983, p. 201) the experience of past generations of girls has been one of emotional deprivation since the father figure did not offer a real alternative to the mother's ambivalence.

When both parents nurture and raise children, the psychological period of separation-individuation will be much easier and more successful than it presently is.... girls will be able to develop a secure sense of self which will enable them to separate psychologically. Boys will not have to separate themselves defensively from mother and create a false sense of secure self in the world whilst repressing an infantile part of themselves (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983, p. 201).

3.2.1.2 Youth (6 - 12 years).

From the ages between six and twelve years, the capacity to love, which was hitherto qualified by dependency, identification and narcissism, begins to expand into an empathic feeling for others (Shostrom et al., 1976). Fromm (1975) contends that empathy usually does not develop before the age of nine.

As the youth is thrust into dependence on a peer group, he/she comes to learn more about conformity (including sex-role conformity), co-operation, sharing and a concern for the needs of others. Friendships with other children of the same sex predominate.

Duck (1983) quotes La Gaipa's (1981) findings which indicate that although the child of six is beginning to understand the importance of co-operation and reciprocity in friendship, he/she is still self-centred and not truly concerned about mutual interests or the

friend's needs. At nine years and onward there is a shift toward a more objective and less self-centred view where friendship is seen as collaboration with others in the furtherance of mutual common goals or interests. Not until the age of twelve do people come to realize that an exclusive relationship cannot fulfill all their personal needs.

3.2.1.3 Adolescence (12 - 21 years).

During this "friendship stage", according to Shostrom et al. (1976), a sense of intimacy and identity emerge. The peer influence is of utmost importance. The adolescent, in learning a new set of rules for relating to the world, moves from dependent and independent stages to "interdependence"; a synthesis of both dependence and independence and a necessary ingredient of a mutually nourishing relationship with a spouse and with others. During adolescence opposite-sex friendships become acceptable, desirable and important.

Duck (1983, pp.131-138) maintains that during adolescence the management of relationships, that is, the proper ways of behaving in, and conducting friendships, constitutes the major area of relational learning and involves the following:

- (a) An expansion of the development in understandings about friendship. The adolescent becomes aware of the differences in degrees of friendship that can exist and the different stages in the growth of friendship.
- (b) A growing capacity to form friendships based on a knowledge of the other. Adolescents become increasingly

concerned about the character of their friends and place great importance on loyalty and trust.

- (c) A development of the adult concern for psychological or personality support and a development of the skills of detecting and exploring such sources of support. Normal adolescents select friends who help them develop and define their personality.
- (d) A move toward independence and a feeling of responsibility for the conduct and success of friendship. The skills of forming and stage-managing relationships become better developed as they come to be applied to relationships with the opposite sex.
- (e) A greater appreciation of the difficulties inherent in maintaining relationships.

During adolescence, the gangs and cliques to which boys and girls belong provide the adolescent with a base from which he/she can safely run the risk of forming first relationships with the opposite sex. Such gangs and cliques provide psychological support and guidance (Duck, 1983).

According to Forisha-Kovach (1982) there can be seen to be differences between male and female adolescents:

Boys, unlike girls, tend to focus more on who they will be, rather than who they will be with (Ibid, p. 36).

Forisha-Kovach notes that while girls have more interpersonal skills and social graces than boys at late adolescence, boys at

this stage score higher on maturity (as measured on the Eriksonian Measure of Personality Development). Boys develop a wider self-knowledge and are not unduly handicapped by their later acquisition of interpersonal capacities. Girls, in contrast, learn to be with others but not with themselves, they emphasize friendship and romance over self-knowledge during the years of adolescence and usually "find themselves" much later:

Suddenly after marriage and children, they ask "Who am I?" The answer, when they find it, often shakes the structure of their lives in ways which they did not anticipate. Developmentally, the answer comes late, because as young girls they focussed on love rather than power (Forisha-Kovach, 1982, p.37).

Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) claim that the mother/daughter transference phenomena that occur in women's friendships with other women would seem to retard the development of self-knowledge and well-being:

If women must cling to one another to fill up the emptiness inside them, and if women friends unconsciously act towards one another as if they were each other's mothers, then autonomy, separateness and fulfillment in a friend will indeed feel threatening to one's sense of self and well-being (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983, p. 171).

3.2.2 The essential ingredients of friendship.

Friendship involves.... a reasonable level of self-esteem, an understanding of the meaning of co-operation, ability to use and comprehend non-verbal behaviour, recognition of the activities that suit a particular level and style of relationship, trust, intimacy, self-disclosures, and an ability to reciprocate - and that is an incomplete list (Duck, 1983, p. 117).

3.2.2.1 Self-esteem. Schachter (1959) showed that different individuals have different levels of drive for friendship which could be seen to be a function of their circumstances and their personalities. Self-esteem can be seen to be a covariate of intimacy in that an individual with high self-esteem has a higher drive toward friendship than an individual with low self-esteem.

Duck (1983) mentions two forms of self-esteem that have been researched:

- (a) A global and relatively permanent form of self-esteem referred to as the level of aspiration which defines the level of attractiveness of the kind of partner that the person is confident that he/she can draw. Such confidence is based on a subjective evaluation of social attractiveness. Research indicates that people with similar levels of aspiration tend to marry one another.

And (b) a temporary or vicarious level of self-esteem.

Fischer and Narus (1981), in a survey of sex roles and intimacy in ongoing, close relationships, found that while age and need (that is, the extent to which the respondent felt that he/she needed others and wished to have others around) were related to decreased intimacy, self-esteem in men was significantly related to intimacy in their relationships with women but not in their relationships with men. These authors hypothesized that this finding may reflect the sex-role stereotype of women functioning to raise the male ego. The younger age of women in male-female relationships was found to be associated with greater intimacy. The authors hypothesized that in a youth-orientated society, younger women would be found more attractive, or socially valuable, and would be involved in

relationships of greater intimacy with men. Intimacy was defined as the mutual sharing of personal concerns and information, accepting and caring for another, using skills for problem solving within the relationship, and exchanging assistance, encouragement and constructive criticism. A multiple regression analysis indicated that femininity was the only sex role significantly related to intimacy, true only for female respondents regardless of the sex of the target person. In the relationships of women with other women, androgynous women had significantly higher intimacy scores than sex typed and the undifferentiated women.

In view of the significantly higher scores of the androgynous women in these relationships, perhaps behavioural flexibility is shown first in situations where it is permissible and receives greater social support, such as from the women's movement (Fischer and Narus, 1981, p. 453).

In this study self-esteem and sex role orientation, per se, are not to be measured. The attitude towards women's rights and roles in general of each subject, measured on Spence, Helmreich and Stapp's Attitude toward Women Scale will be measured and tested as a covariate of intimacy. The AWS, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, measures the liberal or conservative attitude of a subject toward the rights and roles of women in general. Logan and Kaschak (1980) found that both males and females with more liberal scores on the AWS, scored higher on the Well-Being Scale of the California Psychological Inventory, no differences in androgyny were found:

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.... perhaps well-being is the antecedent of liberal attitudes toward women's roles rather than vice versa; that is, perhaps those who have fewer doubts about themselves are more inclined to allow freedom of movement to others (Logan and Kaschak, 1980, p. 577).

Bell (1981) found the friendships of women to be generally more personal and emotionally based than that of men but the general social psychological state of "Conventional" vs "Nonconventional" was found to cut across gender lines in describing friendship. Those defined as "Nonconventional" were found to experience an overall satisfaction with life combined with a willingness to risk themselves in order to influence change, seek greater happiness and gain more control over their lives. The "Nonconventional" group's values and attitudes toward life contrasted sharply with those belonging to the "Conventional" group, especially in regard to their feelings about friendship and aloneness. Bell's findings suggest that "Nonconventional" women and men have more in common than do "Conventional" women or men. Both "Nonconventional" men and women were found to place high value on aloneless and on friendship. Whereas the "Conventional" person's experience of friendship and aloneless was in the pragmatic and end-serving areas, the "Nonconventional" group's setting for these experiences were "mainly within the emotional and private realm of the self" (Ibid. p. 416).

Bell's constructs of Conformity and Nonconformity can be hypothesized to parallel the construct of low Well-Being (with a 'traditional' attitude toward women's roles and rights) and high Well-being (with a 'liberal' attitude toward women's roles and rights) respectively.

3.2.2.2 Age. In section 3.2.1. of this chapter, the developmental stages of friendship are discussed. The discussion here pertains to age as a function of the friendship drive in adulthood, from twenty-one years onward.

Erikson (1959; 1968) contended that the need for intimacy becomes most salient in young adulthood. Orlofsky, Marcia and Lesser (1973) operationalized the outcomes of Erikson's psychosocial crisis of intimacy vs isolation as falling into the categories (or intimacy statuses) of "intimate" (viz., the individual who has close friends and a deep and enduring committed sexual/romantic relationship), "preintimate" (viz. the individual who has close relationships but has not yet committed himself/herself to one), "pseudointimate" (viz., the individual who is committed to an enduring sexual/romantic relationship but has not achieved depth), "stereotyped relationships" (viz., the individual has many friends and dates relatively frequently but lacks depth and commitment in his/her relationships), and the "isolate" status (viz., the individual has few social relationships and is extremely private and reserved). These statuses can be seen to be based on the degree of mutuality, openness, physical closeness, commitment and sexual maturity in peer relationships. Those who combine depth and commitment in their relationships, that is, those placed in the "intimate" and preintimate" categories, are seen to be the most mature.

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Also defining intimacy as a developmentally acquired capacity, Dahms (1972) proposed that the elements of intimacy are acquired hierarchically beginning with intellectual intimacy (viz., exchanging words, ideas, opinions and preferences), progressing to physical intimacy (viz., touching, caressing, sexuality), and finally emotional intimacy (viz., mutual accessibility, naturalness, and sharing of feelings). Erikson (1959) contended, however, that sexual or physical intimacy was not dependent on the development of "a true and mutual psychological intimacy with another person" (p. 95). Holt's (1977) Intimacy Development Inventory allows for an assessment of the levels of intellectual, physical and emotional intimacy proposed by Dahms.

Prager (1983), using Holt's inventory, set out to determine whether placement into an intimacy status would predict an individual's level of intellectual, physical or emotional intimacy development. Distinct differences were expected between those in the "intimate" status and those in the other statuses. Prager also hypothesized that because the crisis of intimacy vs. isolation is theoretically successfully resolved sometime in young adulthood, individuals within this age group in the "intimate" status would be older than those in the other four categories. Prager found the following:

- (a) Women, but not men, in the "intimate" status scored higher on emotional and intellectual intimacy than those in the "preintimate" status and "stereotyped relationships". No differences were found between women in the "intimate" and "pseudointimate"

statuses, the latter group also scored higher on emotional and intellectual intimacy than "preintimate" women.

- (b) For men, the mean differences among the intimacy statuses on the intellectual physical and emotional scales were not significant. A discrepancy between the interviewers' views of the men and the men's written descriptions of themselves was found. Prager hypothesized that men may be less objective than women in evaluating their own behaviour. See section 3.2.2.4. of this chapter.
- (c) Intimacy status did not differentiate among mean levels of physical intimacy for either sex, this finding suggests that, contrary to Dahm's theory, the intellectual dimension may be more developmentally advanced than the physical dimension.
- (d) Women in the "intimate" and "preintimate" statuses were significantly older than women in "stereotyped" relationships.
- (e) Men in the "intimate" and "pseudointimate" statuses were older than those in the "preintimate" and "stereotyped relationship" statuses, only the "preintimate" were significantly younger.

Prager (1983) concluded that for women the deep "intimate" and "preintimate" statuses most likely represent higher levels of

maturity than does the status of "stereotyped relationship". For men, the results indicate that the commitment dimension is more closely associated with age than the depth aspect of intimacy:

It might be inferred that as men grow older, they are more likely to develop a willingness to commit themselves, although the commitment may or may not be to a deep, close relationship (Prager, 1983, p. 756).

Hacker (1981) found that self-disclosure increased with age for women but not so for men. Self-disclosure is seen as an important index of the 'closeness' of a relationship. See section 3.2.2.4 of this chapter.

Duck (1983) quotes Dickens and Perlman's (1981) findings which suggest that friendship declines sharply after the age of thirty except for people who experience serious disruptions in their life, such as divorce, change of career, or death of a spouse. According to Lopata (1973, p. 182-183) the primacy of the family in modern emotional life deprives friendships of a truly significant role in adult life, emotional absorption in the modern family pushes friendships into a "background of unimportance". Argyle and Furnham (1983) explored the sources of satisfaction and conflict in long-term relationships and found that younger people have more emotional conflict and more with spouses, this is especially relevant to young married women who were found to have the lowest satisfaction from spouses in some (unspecified) areas.

In this study only those married couples where the wife's age ranges between thirty-five to forty, will be tested. This age

corresponds to the "friendship" years of marriage (Shostrom et al., 1976). See section 2.2.2.3, Chapter 2.

3.2.2.3 Social class. Booth and Hess (1974) found class differences in the confiding behaviour of married women. Hacker (1981, p. 399) corroborated Booth and Hess' findings, her study suggests that women of working class origin, as compared to those of middle class and upper middle class origin, are more likely to be high self-disclosers in both same-sex and cross-sex friendships. Men from working class backgrounds are less likely to be high self-disclosers except in their friendships with other men.

In this study married couples from middle-class origin will be studied.

3.2.2.4. Self-disclosure. Jourard (1959) writes that an important index of the 'closeness', affection, love or trust that prevails between two people in a relationship is the amount of personal information that one person is willing to disclose to another. Derlega and Chaikin (1977) maintain that a major function of friendships and love relationships may be to validate one's self-concept by obtaining the support and understanding of the other person, a closeted self cannot be validated.

Duck (1983) claims that the dextrous control of self-disclosure serves to stabilise, establish and develop relationships of all types:

The development of friendship occurs through the skills of partners in revealing or disclosing their attitudes first, and later their personalities, inner character and true selves. This must be done in reciprocal manner, turn-by-turn, and in a way that keeps pace with the revelations and disclosures made by the partner (Duck, 1983, p. 67).

Miell et al. (1979) found that females disclose more intimate information to their partners than males do, whether the partner be male or female.

Hacker's (1981) study provides interesting insights into the relationship between the amount of self-disclosure and the closeness or depth of a relationship:

- (a) When individuals in female-female, male-male and female-male friendship dyads are ranked according to their degree of self-disclosure, only negligible differences in same-sex friendships emerge, but in cross-sex friendships fewer men than women are low self-disclosers. Hacker hypothesized that listening may represent a burden that men are less willing to bear than women, or, men may feel less social distance toward women than women toward men.
- (b) In female-male dyads men tended to hide their weaknesses while women tended to conceal their strengths. Hacker hypothesized that in cross-sex friendships both sexes feel more constrained to fulfill gender role expectations in their relationships with the other sex, or that men experience greater subjective awareness of strengths than

women do. (Bell's (1981) findings in section 3.2.2.1 of this chapter, could be relevant here).

- (c) No appreciable difference in the closeness, or depth, of male-male and cross-sex relationships were found although the percentage of female-female dyads found to be close were significantly higher. Hacker concluded that neither the heterogeneity of cross-sex dyads nor special definitions of appropriate behaviour between men and women was responsible for the lack of closeness in male-female dyads "but rather the fact that the dyad contains a man" (p. 398). Hacker's ultimate conclusion was that women have a greater capacity for intimacy and self-disclosure.
- (d) The correlation between feelings of closeness and self-disclosure in friendly relationships, as opposed to stranger-like relationships, was far from perfect. High feelings of closeness did not always bring about high self-disclosure nor vice-versa.
- (e) The findings supported the expectation of enhanced self-disclosure on the part of married women, in the case of men, marriage made less difference.

Perhaps problems requiring discharge to a sympathetic ear accumulate more for women in the marital state than for men (Ibid, p. 398).

Hacker's findings, in her own words, are "only suggestive in view of the small size and non-representative character of the sample" (1981, p. 395), nevertheless these findings provide important insights which are relevant to the predictions made in the present study. In the present study a self-disclosure scale devised by Jourard (see Chapter 4) and the Interpersonal Perception Method

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(Laing, Phillipson and Lee, 1966) are used to determine the level of intimacy or 'closeness' of the relationship between husband and wife, between wife and same-sex 'best' friend and between husband and same-sex 'best' friend. Married couples will be divided into two groups, 'high-and-low caring' according to the C.R.I. (see section 2.2.2.3, chapter 2). It is predicted here that female-female dyads will show the highest degree of 'closeness' or intimacy, but that this will be more marked in those female friendships where the wife belongs to the 'low-caring' marriage group.

The therapeutic value of friendships between women has been demonstrated by Davidson and Packard (1981). Their findings suggest that women perceive that both 'best' and "slight" friendships have therapeutic value (that is, contributing to one's personal growth, support or change) but best friendships are seen as having more therapeutic value.

Strength of friendship is apparently an important factor to take into account when exploring the therapeutic value of friendship (Davidson and Packard, 1981, p. 503).

Important is the finding that "expression of feelings" was rated and ranked as one of the most important therapeutic items in both best and slight friendships.

The experience of feelings was valued because the women felt that it enhanced their capacity to cope with difficult emotions and gave them a person with whom they could express joyful ones (Davidson and Packard, 1981, p. 507).

"Communion", perceived as a closeness involving a special kind of sharing and commitment which "freed them up and created a unique shared feeling" (Ibid. p. 506) was rated and ranked as important. Since the item "Self-disclosure" was rated but not ranked as high, it is hypothesized here that women enjoy the sense of being understood by their friends without having to 'spell it out'. In Davidson's and Packard's words:

.... the nature of friendship between women has a special quality which may appear vacuous but actually represents parallel emotional understanding as evidenced in Communion or Expression of Feeling (Davidson and Packard, 1981, p. 508).

The research on self-disclosure would seem to yield the most consistently demonstrated behavioural differences between the sexes. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) comment that the mass of contemporary research on sex roles has yielded evidence of very few reliable behavioural differences between the sexes, this may be due to the variability of research methodology and especially due to the lack of precise conceptualization and lack of standardization in measurement.

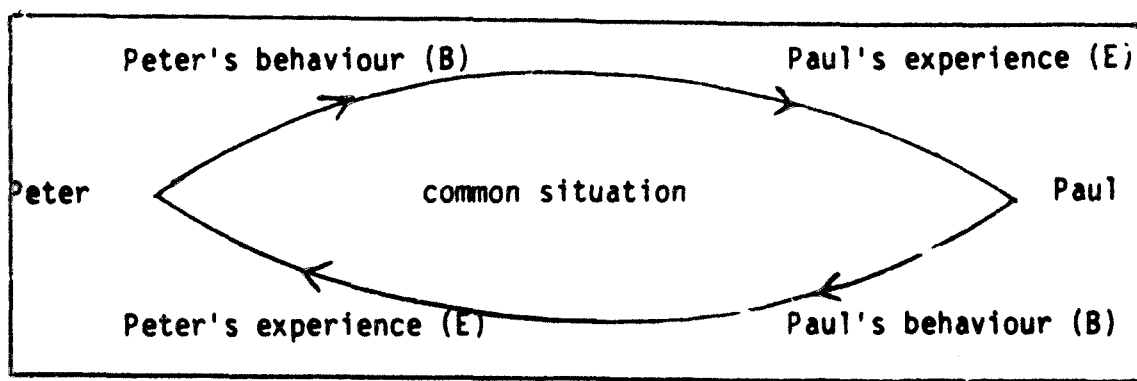
The finding of Hacker, that is, that sex differences are negligible in same-sex friendships, would seem to contradict previous research findings on self-disclosure. Her finding that high self-disclosure is not always a concomitant of high feelings of closeness (nor vice-versa) suggests that further study is needed to clarify the relationship between closeness (level of intimacy) and self-disclosure.

The present study addresses itself to this issue. In this study self-disclosure and perceptual understanding (see next section 3.2.2.5 of this chapter) are seen to reflect a measure of the level of intimacy of a dyadic relationship -- that is, self-disclosure and perceptual understanding constitute simultaneous, dependent variables and indices of the level of intimacy of a relationship. The level of intimacy of a relationship, between wife and same-sex 'best' friend or between husband and same-sex 'best' friend, is hypothesized to be a function of the sexes involved in that dyad (that is, whether the dyad contains a man) and the level of caring between husband and wife (as measured on Shostrom's C.R.I.). See section 3.3 in this chapter, "Research Hypotheses".

3.2.2.5 The relevance of Interpersonal Perception.

One method of studying understanding in husband-wife dyads is by means of the Interpersonal Perception Method (IPM) devised by Laing, Phillipson and Lee (1966). The IPM makes use of sixty dyadic issues to measure the interaction and interexperience of a dyad. These authors state that (a) behaviour is a function of experience and (b) both experience and behaviour are always in relation to someone or something other than self.

FIGURE 1
THE DYADIC CIRCUIT



Source: Laing, Phillipson and Lee, *Interpersonal Perception Method*, 1966, p.9.

In terms of the above scheme "the behaviour of each (Peter and Paul) towards the other is mediated by the experience by each of the other, just as the experience of each is mediated by the behaviour of each" (Ibid. pp.9-10). Experience is seen to entail the perception of an act, that is, selection and reception, and interpretation of it. Even if acts selected for interpretation are the same, even if each individual perceives these acts as the same act, the interpretation of the identical act may be very different. Interpretation is based on past learning, "particularly within our family (i.e. with our parents, siblings and relatives) but also in the larger society in which we travel" (Ibid. p. 12), and the act itself is interpreted according to the context in which it is found.

When communication is optimum between two people, even when they do not agree on the meaning to be assigned to a particular act, they understand that they differ on the interpretation and also

realize that they both understand that they differ in its interpretation.

Often when there is disagreement there is also misunderstanding.

Human beings are constantly thinking about others and about what others are thinking about them, and what others think they are thinking about the others, and so on.
(Laing, Phillipson and Lee, 1966, p. 23).

At the first level of Laing's model, person's A and B both have a direct perspective of some object or concept. The comparison between A's view and B's view on the same issue provides information on their "agreement" or "disagreement" (Laing et al., 1966, p. 60). At the next level, persons A and B both have a perspective of the other's direct perspective, which Laing calls metaperspective. A comparison of these two levels represents the traditional notion of "predictive empathy" (Cahn, 1983, p. 923) since concern here is with the accuracy or the degree of consistency between B's direct perspective and A's view of B's direct perspective. Laing et al. define the conjunction/disjunction between the metaperspective of one person and the direct perspective of the other as "understanding/misunderstanding" (1966, p. 82). At the third level, A and B both have perspective's of the other's metaperspective, called a meta-metaperspective. The conjunction/disjunction between the meta-metaperspective of the one person and the metaperspective of the other is defined as "being understood/being misunderstood" (1966, p. 29) or can be defined in terms of realization. Realization may be a correct appraisal either of understanding or of misunderstanding. The perception or feeling of being understood/misunderstood involves comparison of one's own direct

perspective with one's own meta-metaperspective (Laing et al., 1966, p. 29; Cahn, 1983, p. 923). Cahn (1981 in Cahn 1983, p. 923) defined the perception of being understood/misunderstood as "the communicator's assessment of his success or failure when attempting to communicate with another person".

This concern at the third level is not so much with accuracy as with comparison of one's own direct and meta-metaperspective (Cahn, 1983, p. 923).

Laing et al. (1966) maintain that people vary as to whether or not they would rather be understood or understand.

An important aspect of each person's self-concept is the extent to which he feels capable of being understood. An important aspect of one's image of the other is the extent to which one feels the other can or does understand oneself (Laing, Phillipson and Lee, 1966, p. 30).

Laing, Phillipson and Lee (1966) administered the IPM to a group of "disturbed" couples, that is couples seeking help, and a group of "non-disturbed" couples, that is couples supposedly satisfied with their marriages, and found the following:

- (a) Agreement in the "nondisturbed" group was consistently and significantly greater than in the "disturbed" group (p. 81).
- (b) In both groups husbands understood wives to the same extent that wives understood husbands but the measure of understanding in the "nondisturbed" group was consistently and significantly higher than in the "disturbed" group (p. 82).
- (c) An examination of the relationship between agreement

and understanding (A + U), agreement and misunderstanding (A + M), disagreement and misunderstanding, (D + M) in the two groups suggests that in general disagreement is less frequently recognized or assumed than agreement - both groups tended to assume they agreed even when they disagreed.

Disagreement is seldom assumed when there is agreement, and often unrecognized when it exists (Laing et al., 1966, p. 85).

In the "nondisturbed" group there were fewer disjunctions than in the "disturbed" group.

- (d) Realization, the conjunction between A's metaperspective and B's metaperspective or a correct appraisal either of understanding or of misunderstanding, was very high in the "nondisturbed" group.
- (e) When comparative figures were tabulated for feeling understood, feeling misunderstood, feeling understood correctly, feeling misunderstood correctly, feeling understood incorrectly and feeling misunderstood incorrectly, it was found that to feel misunderstood was rare in the "nondisturbed" group. The "disturbed" group often were wrong to feel understood and right to feel misunderstood (p. 86).
- (f) Disjunctions in the "nondisturbed" group appeared mainly in attributions that each subject made about his/her own or the other's self-relatedness. The HH (that

is, the husband's relationship with himself) and WW (that is, the wife's relationship with herself) directions appeared more problematical than the others.

Laing et al. hypothesized that a "high degree of collusive ideation" (p. 81) could exist in the couples belonging to the "nondisturbed" group. The possibility that each partner independently expressed the same socially conditioned stereotypes of what is a good or happy relationship, is suggested (p. 74). The problematic HH and WW directions which appeared in the "nondisturbed" group suggests that "each person's relation to self is in a sense more impenetrable to the other than the self-other or other-self relation (p. 74). The possibility exists that such impenetrability is a function of the genders in the dyad, that is, the fact that the dyad contains a man?

Cahn and Frey (1982 in Cahn, 1983) found some evidence to suggest that the perception of being understood/misunderstood constitutes a factor in the development of a positive interpersonal relationship. Cahn (1983) recognized that it is not clear in what contexts perceived understanding is important in the development of relationships and he aimed to discover whether perceived understanding is as important initially in the development of a relationship as in later stages. Cahn's analysis suggested that perceived understanding is less important in the initial stages of the development of a relationship than in later stages. Cahn (1983) hypothesized that perceived understanding may provide an index of intensity of

a relationship since it appears to be more important later.

In addition to showing the minor role played by perceived understanding in an initial interaction, the present study suggests that the perception of being understood/misunderstood functions as an index of intensity of development as opposed to a marker variable. An intensity variable is incremental; its effects become stronger as the relationship develops. Marker variables, on the other hand, are defining and are qualitative in nature for their effects remain relatively constant throughout development (Cahn, 1983, p. 928).

In this study the perceived understanding/misunderstanding of each subject will be measured on the IPM, more specifically the feeling of being understood correctly. It is hypothesized that in the dyads composed of the wife and wife's 'best' friend the measure of perceived understanding, realization plus understanding of partner, will be consistently greater than in the dyads composed of husband and wife and the dyads composed of husband and husband's best friend - the measure of perceived understanding will be significantly higher in the dyad of wife and wife's best friend when the wife's marriage is 'low-caring'.

3.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1:

- 1.1 In the 'low-caring' group, the mean "intimacy" score (i.e., the mean S-D score and the mean P.U. score) for the husband-husband's 'best' friend dyads will be LOWER than the mean "intimacy" score for the husband-husband's 'best' friend dyads of the 'high-caring' group.
- 1.2 In the 'low-caring' group the mean "intimacy" score (i.e., the mean S-D score and the mean P.U. score) for the husband-wife dyads will be LOWER than the mean "intimacy" score for the husband-wife dyads in the 'high-caring' group.

- 1.3 In the 'low-caring' group the mean "intimacy" score (i.e., the mean S-D and the mean P.U. score) for the wife-wife's 'best' friend dyads will be HIGHER than the mean "intimacy" score for the wife-wife's 'best' friend dyads in the 'high-caring' group.

Hypothesis 2:

- 2.1 In both 'high-' and 'low-caring' groups, the mean "intimacy" score (i.e., the mean S-D score and the mean P.U. score) for the wife-wife's 'best' friend dyads will be HIGHER than the mean "intimacy" score for the wife-husband dyads.
- 2.2 In both 'high-' and 'low-caring' groups, the mean "intimacy" score (i.e., the mean S-D and P.U. scores) for the wife-husband dyads will be HIGHER than the mean "intimacy" score for the husband-husband's 'best' friend dyads.
- 2.3 In both 'high-' and 'low-caring' groups, the mean "intimacy" score (i.e., the S-D and P.U. mean scores) in the wife-wife's 'best' friend dyads will be HIGHER than the mean "intimacy" score for the husband-husband's 'best' friend dyads.

CHAPTER 4

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study is a comparative one. The unit of comparison is the dyad, that is, the wife-husband dyad, the husband-husband's same-sex 'best' friend dyad, and the wife-wife's 'best' friend dyad. A group of 'high-caring' couples (who both score above the fiftieth percentile on the Friendship dimension of Shostrom's Caring Relationship Inventory) and their same-sex 'best' friends, are compared to a group of 'low-caring' couples (where either wife or husband, or both, score below the fiftieth percentile on the CRI Friendship scale) and their same-sex 'best' friends. The comparison between the two groups is based on the level of intimacy, that is, both the level of Self-Disclosure and Perceptual Understanding, in the respective relationships. This study examines the assumption that the level of "intimacy" (dependent variable) in the wife-wife's same-sex 'best' friend dyad will be higher than that in the husband-wife and husband-husband's same-sex 'best' friend dyads, and highest where the marriage is 'low-caring'.

4.2 THE SUBJECTS

A sample of ten 'low-caring' married couples and their twenty self-appointed, same-sex 'best' friends constitute the

experimental group. A group of ten 'high-caring' married couples and their twenty self-appointed, same-sex 'best' friends constitute the control group.

The experimental and control groups were comparable on the following variables:

- Age of wife to the nearest year;
- Socio-economic level of the couple;
- First marriages.

The age of the wives ranged between thirty-five to forty years.

The mean age was thirty-eight years. Socio-economically the majority of the husbands held commercial jobs. These ranged from executives and professionals in sixty percent of the cases to middle range employees of small and large companies in forty percent of the cases. Thirty percent of the wives were housewives while seventy percent were employed in jobs outside the house and, of these, three of the wives were professional women. Hacker (1981) corroborated Booth and Hess' (1974) finding that there are class differences in the confiding behaviour of married men and women and that self-disclosure increased with age for women but not for men. In a study on age and self-disclosure, Jourard (1961) found that, as people get older, the amount they disclose to other people in their lives, especially parents and same-sex friend, gradually diminishes, whereas disclosure to opposite-sex friend, or spouse, increases from the age of seventeen up to about the fifties and then drops off.

Shostrom et al (1976) claim that "friendship is a characteristic

of a mature relationship" (p. 265) and that as a marriage progresses and deepens, "the maturing years" can be described as the "friendship years" (p. 264). Although Shostrom, whose Caring Relationship Inventory (CRI) is used in this study to differentiate between 'low-' and 'high-caring' married couples, does not specify at what age or point in the duration of the marriage "the friendship years" occur, his normative sample of seventy-five couples were found to be married for approximately fifteen years and the average age of the wives was thirty-six years and six months. In the present study the approximate duration of the marriages (first marriages) was found to be sixteen years, ranging from thirteen to nineteen years.

The attitude toward women in general, measured on Spence, Helmreich and Stapp's (1973) short version of the Attitude toward Women Scale (AWS), was ascertained for each subject. In this study the attitude toward women is recognized as a covariate of "intimacy" and through an analysis of covariance this variable was controlled statistically rather than experimentally. See section 4.3.2.

Although not intentional, the relationship between each couple's same-sex 'best' friend, that is, whether the wife's same-sex 'best' friend is, or is not, married to the husband's same-sex 'best' friend, was controlled. Five couples in the experimental group and five in the control group were found to have "shared" friends, that is, the husband's 'best' friend was married to the wife's 'best' friend.

The married couples and their friends were all white, middle-class, English-speaking, South African citizens. Additional subject variables are summarized in TABLE 4.1 below.

TABLE 4.1
SUMMARY TABLE OF SUBJECT VARIABLES

Average Age of Wife and Female Friend (in that order)	Average Age of Husband and Male Friend (in that order)	Couples: Average duration of marriage	Couples: Average number of children
38; 37	43; 44	16 years	3 children

Towns in which couples and friends reside in South Africa	Religious Denomination	High-Caring Group	Low-Caring Group
Johannesburg: 19 couples and 36 friends	Jewish	5 couples + 10 friends	6 couples + 12 friends
Pretoria: 2 friends	Protestant	3 couples + 9 friends	3 couples + 7 friends
Brakpan: 1 couple and their 2 friends	Catholic	2 couples + 1 friend	1 couple + 1 friend
	TOTAL	Jewish: 20 Protestant: 15 Catholic: 5	Jewish: 24 Protestant: 13 Catholic: 3

The sampling procedure used in this study consisted of notifying persons of the study, soliciting referrals to potential participants and enlisting volunteers who met the criteria for inclusion. Table 4.2 below indicates the various means by which potential subjects were notified and the number of volunteers and actual participants located by each of these means.

TABLE 4.2
MEANS OF CONTACT, AND NUMBER OF POTENTIAL AND ACTUAL PARTICIPANTS

Means of Contact	No. Potential Participants	No. Used in Study
1. 500 letters sent to parents of children attending Hyde Park High School	5 couples	3 couples (all 'high-caring')
2. Referrals to potential participants obtained from 5 original volunteer couples	20 couples	6 couples (4 'high-caring' and 2 'low-caring')
3. Family Life Centre (marriage guidance counsellors)	15 couples	0
4. Referrals from acquaintances of researcher including remedial and speech therapists and psychotherapists	25 couples	11 couples (3 'high-caring' and 8 'low-caring')

As can be seen from TABLE 4.2, the most productive source of volunteers was the researcher's own personal and professional network which supplied many referrals to potential subjects. It was found that couples were more willing to participate in research when they felt some personal connection with the researcher through mutual

acquaintances. Bott (1971. p. 16) also noticed this in her study. In most cases the person who acted as the contact person with couples was only minimally acquainted with the researcher. None of the study couples were personal friends of the author, distant connections were preferred because they were less likely to feel concerned about confidentiality and more readily self-disclosing.

Initially notices explaining the study were sent to couples whose children attended Hyde Park High School. The reason for selecting this particular population was the availability of subjects within a geographical area who were easily accessible, in terms of distance, to the author and their possibly comparable socio-economic status. The purpose was to generate a substantial number of volunteers from which the final sample of couples could be drawn. The response was poor. Of the five hundred couples notified, forty-seven (9.4%) replied and only five (1%) of these agreed to participate. Three of the five volunteer couples qualified for inclusion and these were found to belong to the 'high-caring' control group. Each of the original five volunteer couples was asked to furnish the names of other potential participants and, of the twenty referrals thus obtained, an additional six volunteer couples were included in the study. Of these, two couples were found to qualify for inclusion into the 'low-caring' experimental group.

Fifteen coded envelopes containing coded questionnaires and stamped, self-addressed envelopes intended for 'troubled' couples and their same-sex 'best' friends were delivered to marriage guidance counsellors at the Family Life Centre. Criteria for inclusion

into the study were stipulated. The use of coded questionnaires ensured the anonymity of their clients. This method proved unsuccessful since the counsellors were loathe to "disrupt" the therapeutic process with the introduction of questionnaires and reported their clients' resistance to have their marriages probed by an "outsider". Many psychotherapists, who were asked to act as referral agents, reported similar findings.

Through referrals from acquaintances of the researcher, a further twenty-five couples were contacted. These were judged to be 'troubled' by the referring agent. Three 'high-caring' and eight 'low-caring' couples were thus recruited.

The sample size is small. Given the relatively extensive time commitments required of participants and, in particular, the difficulty experienced in locating subjects who will allow the invasion of family privacy by researchers, a random sampling procedure proved inappropriate. As such the results obtained cannot be given any general status.

The sample consisted, then, of twenty couples, ten 'high-caring' and ten 'low-caring'. Although this research was intended to comprise some thirty couples, the difficulties encountered in finding willing subjects, as indicated above, were enormous. The researcher appreciates that the small sample is another factor that limits the generalizability of the results, but under the circumstances this was beyond her control. It does not militate against the findings nevertheless being suggestive, and their value lies in their being seen in this light.

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